

**VOICES OF WOMEN IN MIZO NOVELS**

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

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**MZU REGISTRATION: 3088 of 2010-11**

**Ph.D. REGISTRATION: MZU/Ph.D./1518 of 19.09.2020**



**DEPARTMENT OF MIZO**

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES**

**JULY, 2025**

**VOICES OF WOMEN IN MIZO NOVELS**

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**Submitted**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Mizo of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

# MIZORAM UNIVERSITY



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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **‘Voices of Women in Mizo Novels’** submitted by Lalzarzovi has been written under my supervision.

She has fulfilled all the required norms laid down within the Ph.D regulations of Mizoram University. The thesis is the result of her own investigation. Neither the thesis as a whole nor any part of it was submitted to any other University for any research degree. It is also certified that the scholar has been admitted in the Department through an entrance followed by interview as per UGC regulation 2019.

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Year: 2025

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

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

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank God for giving me with health, idea and strength to complete this work. Throughout my research, I received his presence and guidance without any problems. Without his grace and mercy, it is impossible.

I would also like to thank my supervisor Dr. Zoramdinhara, Mizoram University for his carefully considered my research and gave me good advice. I received his support from the beginning to the end of my research. He did his best to encourage and guide me to complete my research.

I acknowledge to the Department of Mizo, Mizoram University for giving me the opportunity to do this research. I also thank to my colleagues and the Principal of Govt. Hnahthial College for who understood me when I needed to understand my work because of my research.

I must say that I am able to reach this level thanks to my parents' support and prayers. I will never repay them for the rest of my life, and I am very grateful to them.

Place: Aizawl

(LALZARVOVI)

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## CHAPTER - 1

### INTRODUCTION

Women's studies commenced in the year 1960s. According to Margaret H. McFadden, "Women's studies, as a concept and site of learning, really began with the second wave of the women's movement in the late 1960s." Stevi Jackson also said, "Women's studies as an academic enterprise had its roots in second wave feminism and originated as a challenge to male-defined and male-centered knowledge." It can be seen that Women's studies originated with the onset of the second wave of feminism. According to Jean Fox O'BARR, "The first courses in women's studies were taught at Cornell University and San Diego State University in 1969."

Oxford Lexico also defines on women's studies as, "Academic Courses in sociology, history, literature, and psychology which focuses on the roles, experiences, and achievements of women in society." Merriam Webster also defined Women Studies, "Is the multidisciplinary study of the societal contributions of women and the relationship between power and gender." Women's studies encompass a wide range of studies and it can be based on sociology, history, literature, psychology, economics and many others. Women's studies is vast and plays an important role in higher studies even in the present times. What Maithreyi Krishnaraj has said on Women's studies is, "Inter-disciplinary is the hallmark of WS. It meant an integration of more than one discipline to create a new epistemology, build new organizing concepts, methodologies, skills and reciprocal assimilation within disciplines. New conceptual schema like gender, patriarchy, sexual division of labour, distinction between production and reproduction in their composition, were all new pathways," (2). This indicates that Women's studies is deeply rooted and related with feminism and gender studies.

Women's studies have a major role in literature, and this is not a new phenomenon in research. However, studies and approaches to it vary. 'Voices of

Women' is not a new issue; many learnt scholars have conducted research on 'Women's Voice' and 'Voice of Women' in literature and other fields of study. Even in Mizo literature, research on feminism and women's studies is not new. However, the research on "Voices of Women in Mizo Novels" is the first of its kind because no research has been conducted using this approach before.

Kali Lauren Oldacre finished a research project in 2016 titled "A Women's Voice and Identity: Narrative Metissage as a Solution to Voicelessness in American Literature." There are several studies and books based on this technique, but it would be impossible to include them all at this time. However, it was evident that this was not a new topic. In 2018, the Feminine Voice hosted a literature-themed meeting in Coimbatore. During that meeting, many participants discussed how women had a voice in literary.

Kali Lauren Oldacre have conducted a research based on, "A Women's Voice and Identity: Narrative Metissage as a Solution to Voicelessness in American Literature," and completed it in 2016. There are many researches and books based on this approach but it is not possible to mention them all at this moment. But this made it clear that this is not a new topic at all. The Feminine Voice held a meet at Coimbatore in 2018 based on Literature. In that meet many people studied how women have a voice in literature. In the paper presented by N. Asharudeen called "Voice of Women Writers in English Literature", "Many women writers like Mary Wollstone Craft, Emily Dickenson, Toni Morrison, Taslima Nasreen, Maya Angelou, Virginia Woolf, Kamini Roy and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni etc. discuss the man-women relationship. These writers believe that they should concentrate on the issues which must be revolving around the domestic and public problems of women and those discussions are always against male community," (200). The relations between men and women by various writers, the difficulties faced due to the responsibilities and power concentrated on men in community and household affairs and the fight against it is mentioned in this paper.



Madhuri V. Brahmane wrote “Voice of Women in Indian English Literature” in the IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Here she mentioned the voice of women and the works and contribution of Indian women in the Indian English literature. Venkateswarlu Yesapogu published a research paper “The Voice of Indian Women Novelists and their Status in the Contemporary Indian Literature- A Critical Study” in the American Research Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Adeola James also published *In Their Own Voices African Women Writers Talk* in 1990. Many researchers focused their studies on authors and writers. Women novelists and authors are depicted and targeted as the ‘Voice of Women’ in their studies.

The term ‘Voice’ has several definitions. The Merriam Webster dictionary define it as, “Sound that passes out of the mouth and throat of vertebrates and especially human beings and is produced mainly by the vibration of the vocal cords within the larynx (as in speaking or shouting)...the right to express a wish, choice, or opinion,” (“Voices” 479). It is the sound produced by a human being from the mouth and released via the throat; it is also defined as the right to express one's own beliefs, choices, and birth rights. The term ‘Voices of Women’ refers to the opinions expressed by women about their rights, status, and liberty. Women have historically raised their voices, and continue to do so, about their place in family, community, religion, education, identity, and other areas. They advocated for equality and condemned rape. Feminists declared that women were subjected and subordinated all over the world, and thus they fought for men's and women's equal rights. The majority of clans and tribes around the world are under patriarchal leadership, and so community, Church, and even state affairs are managed according to patriarchal doctrine. Keeping this in mind, many women began a movement to gain their rights and dignity, claiming that women had enormous abilities equivalent to men's, and calling for equality. This gave rise to Feminism and Feminist Theory.

Early writings that relates to feminism such as Marry Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and later Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) had deep impact on feminism. In her novel, Woolf's wrote that boys and girls were treated differently when it comes to education. She exclaimed,

“A women must have money and a room of her own if she is to write a fiction,” (7). Woolf was overwhelmed with anger by the writings of one Professor called, ‘The Mental, Moral, and Physical Inferiority of the Female Sex’ and she exclaimed, “My heart had leapt. My cheeks had burnt, I had flushed with anger” (32). In 1949 Simone de Beauvoir’s published *The Second Sex* (1949) which elaborates the status of women in the society and how women were subjected to the will of men in the society. By this, we can see that women had long raised their voices regarding inequality, partiality and how they were treated to be inferior to men. Let’s have a brief study on feminism-

### Definition of Feminism

The term Feminism began in France around 1880. Hunbertine Auclert in her journal *La Citoyenne as la Feminite* and she wrote against the suppression and subjugation of women by men in this journal. She also stated that she had high hopes that women's participation to the French Revolution would result in their independence from male oppression. Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini described this as the earliest evidence of feminism. Feminism became popular among the English in the twentieth century, and it spread to America around 1910. Feminism is derived from the Latin term femina, which means “women's issues.”

Many scholars had tried to explain the word “feminism” but many of their results differed since they have different perspectives. Merriam Webster defined feminism as, “The belief that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities,” (“Feminism” 159). And according to Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini, “Women were able to spread it all over the world, make it a symbol of equality, and make all people believe that men and women deserve equality in all opportunities, treatment respect and social rights,” (16). In the words of Rajiva Ranjan, “Feminism is a noble concept against ignoble thought of discrimination on the grounds of sex,” (120). Feminism is the belief that women have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities with that of men. This is how Nagarajan defined the two basic reasons for the birth and growth of feminism, “Gender difference is the

foundation of structural inequality between men and women by which women suffer sympathetic social injustice” and “the inequality between the sexes or not the result of biological necessity, but is produced by cultural construction of gender differences,” (206). This notion has a deep impact on the feminist movement, and it quickly activates and motivates the movement.

Feminism is against the discrimination of women and considering them to be inferior compared to men. It is the belief that women have equal rights and opportunity with men in matters relating to education, and men and women should have a fair share of responsibilities in political and religious affairs. It is against the tyranny of men that suppress the rights of women and the rules and regulations in the society that goes only with the will of men. So, the belief that every woman must have a voice in the society as a whole led to the birth of the so called ‘Women Movement’. Feminism is classified into different waves which are- First Wave Feminism, Second Wave Feminism and Third Wave Feminism.

Rajiva Ranjan stated, “The first wave of women movement started in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and lasted till the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” (120). In the first wave, women campaigned against educational disparity between boys and girls, as well as educational discrimination against females. They held campaigns to develop and promote women’s education. They pushed for women’s rights to work outside the home, as women were only allowed to conduct domestic chores, rights to entitlement and inheritance of property in marriage, and the right to vote in general elections. The first wave of Feminism started from the United States. In the words of LeeAnne Gelletly, “Men and women’s lives were supposed to take place in separate spheres. A man’s place was the public sphere. He engaged in business and politics. A woman’s place was in the domestic or private sphere. She was to care for home, children, and her husband,” (10). During those times, women were dominated by men and were not free to pursue their own aspirations. Marion Reid published *A Plea for Women* in 1843. Reid admits that the job of a woman is household chores and look after the family at home, she had nothing against it. But her question is that, “If women’s rights are not the same as those of man, what are they” (Margaret Walters, 42). She

could not understand why men and women do not have equal rights. Walter wrote, “A married women- living in a ‘shackled condition’ – has no rights over her own property; even the produce of her own labour is at the disposal of her husband, who can, if chooses, take and ‘waste it in dissipation an excess’. Moreover, ‘her children, as well as her fortune, are the property of her husband’,” (42-43). Feminist were against all of this and wanted to be treated equally with men.

In the United States, the blacks started the anti-slavery movement at the beginning of the 29<sup>th</sup> century. In the words of LeeAnne Gelletly, “England had banned the international slave trade in 1807. The United States followed in 1808...Only blacks and white men belonged to the AAS...The Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery was also founded in December 1833. Both black and white women made up its 60 members,” (21-22). There was a campaign for the blacks and women’s Right to Vote in a Women’s Convention held at Seneca Falls, New York in 1948. Angelina published *An Appeal to the Christian Women of the Southern States* in 1863 and published *Letters on The Equality of the Sexes* after two years. Although women campaigned and raised their voices, all their efforts were not accounted for a long time. It was only in 1920 that women were granted their rights and freedom. LeeAnne Gelletly wrote, “Only one women who signed the 1848 Declaration of Sentiments, Charlotte Woodward, would be alive in 1920, when women finally won the right to vote,” (55). But the blacks only won their right to vote in the United States in the year 1970.

The Women’s Movement in England began after the second half of the nineteenth century. In this movement, Barbara Leigh Smith and a group of friends founded an organisation called ‘Ladies of Langham Place.’ The motto and campaign of this group is to promote a better opportunity for women education, to make better opportunity for jobs and to make better marriage laws for women. Margaret Walters said, “Like Barbara Leigh Smith, she insisted that women’s education must be extended and improved, and that a ‘fair field’ should be opened to their ‘power and energies’,” (60) talking about how Barbara Leigh Smith bravely demanded the promotion of a better educational system for women. They faced many obstacles and

criticism during their campaign. Barbara Leigh also campaigned for Women's Right to Vote a number of times and even held a signature campaign in 1866 collecting 1499 signatures to persuade the government.

During the First Wave Feminism at the turn of the twentieth century, English women campaigned for women's legal and civil rights. Women demanded equal rights with males in marriage laws, equal income with men, equal treatment in public affairs, and equal educational opportunities. Eleoner Rathbone and her organisation NUSEC, Rebecca West, a journalist and novelist, Virginia Woolf, and others all played major roles in the Feminist Movement. Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini said, "In this wave, Verginia Woolf wrote a famous book about rights 'A Room of One's Own' (1929) in which she helped Mary Wollstonecraft and others to built a new road for women to change her life. This idea of giving women a new image and place started to spread in all over the world," (14) and mentioned how they paved a way for women inspiring them to think differently.

Second wave Feminism began following World War II. This movement flourished in the United States and extended to other Western countries. The fundamental issue of the First Wave was the struggle for women's right to vote, whereas the main goal of the Second Wave is to address bias perpetrated by individuals and the community at large. It is a struggle against rape, a fight for women's rights, a fight against domestic abuse, a fight for women's workplace protection, a fight against defamation of women, and a fight to make the world a better place for them; it is, in short, a Women's Justice movement. Betty Friedan in her book *The Feminine Mystique* published in the year 1963, she wrote, "Many women no longer left their homes, except to shop, chauffeur their children, or attend a social engagement with their husbands. Girls were growing up in America without ever jobs outside the home," (44). She also said, "Then American girls began getting married in high school. And the women's magazines, deploring the unhappy statistics about young marriages, urged that courses in marriage, and marriage councilors....," (44). She prioritized the status of middle class women, how they are

unable to work freely outside their homes and their low salaries when they were paid for works.

Betty Friedan conducted a research on the middle class women and suburban housewives and recorded the reports of their status, and it is seen from their confessions that they could not pursue higher education due to early marriage, and as they were expected to do only household chores they have no freedom outside their home and this made them weary and tired in their hearts. And another problem of women she found out in her research is identity crisis. On an interview with some of the women she asked them their identity, and from their answers she finds that they only have the identity of a wife and a mother and that they are fully submissive to their husbands. And she wrote, "It is my thesis that the core of the problems for women today is not sexual but a problem of identity...it is my thesis that as the Victorian culture did not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfill their potentialities as human beings," (101). In the second wave feminist even proclaimed the topic of identity crisis.

The assembly of women under the feminist movement formed the National Organization for Women (NOW) in June 1966. They had a conference in October 1966 and elected Betty Friedan to be the first president of National Organization for Women and elected Kay Clarenbach as chair of the board. Aileen Hernandez who was not present at that conference was elected Executive Vice President. Richard Graham was the vice president, and Caroline Davis was elected as a secretary and treasurer of the organization. NOW have seven purposes for the upliftment of women- 'Equal Opportunity of Employment', 'Legal and Political Rights', 'Education', 'Women in Poverty', 'The Family', 'Image of Women' and 'Women and Religion'. Every year NOW worked in many ways for the upliftment of women.

American writer Susan Brownmiller after studying the nature of rape for a long period published her book *Against Our Will* in 1975. In her book she recorded the testimonies of women, testimonies of girls who were victims of rape and how they fought back rapist during the World War I & II and the Vietnam War. In her

book Sunsan Brownmiller said, “A female definition of rape can be contained in a single sentence. If a women chooses not to have intercourse with a specific man and the man chooses to proceed against her will, that is a criminal act of rape,” (18). If a man forcefully sexually assault an unwilling girl, it is called rape. It is a sin and against the law. There are many men who are against the protection of women, many rape victims received condemnation and denunciation from another girl, Sunsan Brownmiller points out this problem as, “A problem that haunts the social organization of women to this very day,” (17) telling readers how problematic and menacing it is. Women considered rape as a capital crime, a contempt and dishonor towards women and as such they wanted a fair trial, they want justice for the victims of rape and tried their best to reduce and stop this violation against women. They are also against pornography; they believe that porn movies and porn associated products increased the number of rape and sexual violence. “The case against pornography and the case against toleration of prostitution are central to the fight against rape...,” (390) wrote Brownmiller indicating the fight against pornography.

The Third Wave Feminism began in the 1990's. Regarding the emergence of The Third Wave Feminism, Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini stated, “This wave of feminism referred to a group of feminist activity. They were appeared in the early 1990s and continuing to the present. Rebecca Walker is the symbol of this wave. She used this term ‘third wave feminism’ at the first time in 1992,” (19). Gloria Steinem's journal, M.S journal, published by Rebecca, is a strong supporter of Third Wave Feminism. Opportunities for women's careers in political affairs opened up in the United States as early as 1990, with Hilary Clinton becoming the first woman to serve as Attorney General and Secretary of State. In 1995, she spoke at a UN conference on the topic of ‘Women's Rights are Human Rights’. ‘Family Medical Leave Act’ was validated in the year 1993. ‘Violence Against Women Act’ was also amended in the year 1995. As a result, Women's empowerment began in the United States.

During this wave, young feminists popularized the word “Grrl”. This is like a reminder of assurance that girls are equipped with abilities and strength, and it is

used as an encouragement. Tara Anand defined how the third wave feminism differs from the first wave and second wave said, “The Third Wave is different from the First and Second Waves as it spread further into pop culture and media, and laid emphasis on the voices of the young. Girl bands such as *Riot Grrrl* spread messages of female empowerment through punk rock and started discussions of patriarchy and body image amongst teenagers listening to their music.” The younger generations demonstrates their opinions through Pop Culture. In the definition of Cambridge Dictionary pop culture is, “Music, TV, Cinema, books etc. that are popular and enjoyed by ordinary people, rather than experts or very educated people.” There are entertainment (film, music, television, video games), sports, news, politics, fashion, technology and slangs inside the realm of pop culture. Pop culture is used as an instrument in the third wave feminism.

The Riot Grrl Movement was started in the year 1990 in the Washington State by the Bikini Kill band and their lead singer Kathleen Hanna. In their manifesto they wrote things like, “Because we wanna make it easier for girls to see/hear each other’s work so that we can share strategies and criticis-applauh each other...Because we are angry at a society that tells us Girl=Dumb, Girl=Bad, Girl=Weak,” “Because I believe with my whole heart mind body that girls constitute a revolutionary soul force that can, and will change the world for real,” and many more. This band used punk rock to reveal the strength and abilities of women, and the needs for empowerment. They protested against discrimination faced by female artists and the contemned of girls in a society through their punk rock songs.

Besides, the third wave feminism is projected in many movies such as-‘The craft’, ‘Thelma and Louise’, ‘Orlando’, ‘Silence Of The Lambs’, ‘The First Wives Club’, ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ and many others. Third wave feminism is against the consideration of the quality of women to be bearing and tolerant, quiet, weak and feeble. In the theory of third wave feminism women are regarded as strong and powerful, strong enough to control their lust and feelings.



Along with the preceding statements, J.A. Fisher described other aspects of third wave feminism-

The roots of Intersectional Feminism can be said to be found in the roots of third-wave feminism, which usually incorporates elements of queer theory, anti-racism and women of colour, as well as people of colour, consciousness, womenism, girl power, post-colonial theory, postmodernism, transnationalism, cyber feminism, ecofeminism, individualist feminism, new feminist theory, Trans\*gender politics and a rejection of the gender binary. ("Today's Feminism: A Brief Look at Third-Wave Feminism")

The First Wave Feminism was a movement that prioritized and fought for Women's Right to Vote and upliftment of education for girls. It was a fight to uplift the status of women in household affairs and the fight to enable women to work and have jobs away from home like office works etc. In the Second Wave of Feminism there is a discussion on the topic of sex. According to the theory of the second wave, even-though sex is biological, gender classifications is made by culture. It is about the fight for the need of amendment and change in the community and government as a whole, it is a movement for equality. It was also seen that women were unable to pursue further education due to early marriage, they were mentally unstable and weak as they were restricted to stay indoors, they were not allowed to work outside their premises and feminism movement fought against this issues.

The movement fought against the discrimination, sexual abuse and violation that many women faced during those periods. It is a movement that fought for the social and judicial Rights of Women. The Third Wave of Feminism is associated with pop culture. It is against definition of women as weak, feeble, tolerant and gentle. Through punk rock and movies they showed that women have great strength and abilities, they showed how brave a woman can be and her ability to tolerate pain. Along with this, this movement fought against injustice towards women, violation and sexual abuse.

Even within Mizo society, significant drawbacks persist regarding women's status and gender inequality. As a patriarchal society, Mizoram has historically subjected women to male authority. Lalnghakthuami observes, “We know that women in Mizoram are subjected to the rules of men as the Mizo society is patriarchal. Even our thoughts and ways of life are governed by this patriarchy” (9). Historically, Mizo society considered women inferior, treating them accordingly. Within the household, men have traditionally held the position of head, while women often lacked decision-making authority and remained marginalized. Consequently, women's status remained low across multiple domains. Despite this marginalization, women undertook extensive labor both inside and outside the home. James Dokhuma's description of women's historical status illustrates this contrast clearly:

Most of the household chores like cleaning, dehusking rice, taking care of poultry in the morning and evening, feeding the pigs, cooking for the family, spinning and weaving, cooking for the livestock, fetching water from the pond and collecting fire woods from the forest are considered to be the task for girls. They carry all the essentials like tiffins and agricultural tools on their way to their paddy fields and still had to carry vegetables, food for their livestock, fire woods etc on their way home while men carried nothing on their way back and forth. Even a man from a small conjugal family is unwilling to help a women on tasks that were considered to be handled only by women because of the fear that others might tease him and call him a henpecked husband. (267-268)

According to him, Mizo women historically possessed scarcely any leisure time throughout their lives. They were occupied from dawn to dusk, often continuing domestic labor after nightfall. Their daily routines included dehusking rice each morning, fetching water from ponds, and preparing family meals. Subsequently, they ventured into the forest to work in paddy fields. Following this laborious day, they returned home, cooked dinner, fed livestock, and spent evenings spinning thread while simultaneously preparing animal feed. Even on days exempt from agricultural work, they were engaged in weaving cloth or gathering firewood

from nearby forests. This pattern illustrates a gendered division of labour within Mizo households and society, where chores were systematically assigned according to sex. Significantly, it was considered atypical for a man to assist a woman with her tasks, even if he was idle while she was occupied, unless she was incapacitated by illness.

Thus, despite dedicating the majority of their time and energy to familial sustenance, women remained subordinated and regarded as inferior. A proverbial expression such as “Hmeichhe finin tuikhur ral a kai lo” (literally: a woman’s wisdom does not reach beyond the village well boundary) suggests that historically, women’s thoughts were devalued and deemed lacking in wisdom.

This saying may also have functioned to reinforce male domination. Another adage, “Hmeichhia leh palchhia chu a thlak theih” (literally: bad paling and women can be replaced), demonstrates the low regard afforded to women. By equating women with defective fencing (easily replaced), this saying implies they were perceived as disposable assets. Further proverbs reinforce this marginalisation: “A woman’s voice is not a voice and as such, crab meat is no meat at all,” and “A crab and woman have no religion.” James Dokhuma observed: “Seeing how they looked down upon women, it seems like they are going too far. They regarded women too lowly and inferior that the voice of women is not even considered credible. The old Mizo saying, ‘A woman’s voice is no voice at all, and as such, crab meat is no meat at all’ was always brought up every time a woman tried to raise her voice,” (269). Dokhuma’s analysis, alongside these proverbs, clearly indicates that women were systematically marginalised and devalued in traditional Mizo society.

Women within Mizo society have historically faced significant limitations regarding entitlements, particularly concerning heirship, inheritance, and guardianship. Traditionally, inheritance passed exclusively to sons when present. Conversely, a divorced woman retained only the property she possessed at the time of her marriage; no further claims were recognized. James Dokhuma noted this disparity: “In case of divorce women have no stake or share when it comes to inheritance and guardianship. Under any circumstances and reasons for the cause of

divorce, men always win inheritance and guardianship,” (267). Provisions within the Mizo Customary Law partially modify this exclusion, but only conditionally. Chapter 12, Section 178 states: “If the possessor does not have a son and only have a daughter, the daughter can inherit the said property,” (94). Similarly, Section 18(3) stipulates: “If the deceased man only have a daughter and no sons, and if his widowed wife who have lived under the same roof with their daughters died later, the daughters who lived under the roof of that house will inherit the household and property of their father,” (96).

Therefore, while women possess the opportunity to inherit family property, this right remains conditional and is activated only in the absence of direct male heirs. As Lianzela argues: “The Mizo Customary Law mentioned very little about the chance of women about the inheritance or ownership of properties. Problems will always arise if women do not have right of Property Ownership. If we are to make use of inclusive development and financial inclusion in Mizoram it is a must for women to have Property Ownership Rights,” (37). This highlights the continued marginalization of women within the legal framework governing property rights.

Even on educational grounds many parents in the recent past did not find it necessary to educate girls. The main reasons for this are poverty, girls are expected to take on household chores from a young age, and they will often be married off to live with another family. Below is Lalkima and Jasmine Lalremmawii’s view on the growth and development of education for girls-

Negative thoughts on women education influenced the mind of the Mizo people for a long time, before 1940 there were only a few graduates and matriculation among the Mizo girls, only the few determined girls came out successful. As time goes on there was a rise in population and as development was growing the gender discrimination gradually stopped from around 1950-1960. But the insurgency in Mizoram had its negative effect and pause the growth of education. But nowadays, youths who had no glimpse of the insurgency surfaced to maturity, there are no more problems like the gender

issues which was seen in the past. In the present day girls are now leading in excellence. (22)

In the present day it can be said that there is no more discrimination on the basis of gender in the Mizo society when it comes to education. Now that every girl has the right to education they are more hardworking and determined than most boys. It looks like they excel over boys in education as their ability is not inferior to that of boys. Mizo women worked both at home and in the forest from olden days. They have freedom and liberty when it comes to work. Even after girls freely pursue education these days, they are still busy with household chores and outside works as well. Let us take a look into the study of Mizoram Synod Social Front in the year 2012-

Table 1.1 Gender Comparison in Employment

Sl. No	Place/Institute Office	No. of Survey	No. of Men	Men's Percentage	No. of Women	Women's Percentage
1.	Office	9	582	46	695	54
2.	Millenium Centre Shop Owners	185	68	37	117	64
3.	Millenium Centre Shop Keepers	314	89	28	225	72
4.	New Market Workers	101	31	31	70	69
5.	Stone Quarry Workers	69	26	38	43	62
6.	School Students	3340	1621	48.5	1719	51.5
7.	Mizoram University Students	1278	678	53	600	47

8.	Mizoram University Teachers	130	104	75	34	25
9.	School Workers	155	83	54	72	46

This studies Contemporary studies indicate that women significantly outnumber men as marketers, shopkeepers, office workers, and quarry laborers in Mizoram. While these findings originate from 2012 data, they remain substantially relevant for socioeconomic analysis. This demographic dominance suggests women contribute substantially to Mizoram's economy.

Historically, Mizo women undertook extensive labor in domestic and agricultural spheres. Beyond fieldwork, they assumed primary responsibility for childcare, nurturing during illnesses and managing household needs, while simultaneously fulfilling duties toward their husbands. Such demands left minimal opportunity for physical or mental rest. Furthermore, patriarchal structures constrained women's autonomy, rendering familial cooperation essential yet often unattainable.

Scholarly perspectives on this dynamic reveal ideological tensions. J. Malsawma (Thanpuui Pa) contends: “The Mizo women who had long been enslaved by patriarchy from olden days are now liberated, now they are too free, too free that it seems like they are trying to subjugate men under their will,” (67). Conversely, Darrokima acknowledges the legitimacy of gender equity efforts: “I don’t condemn or criticise them for trying to lift the status of women, I know it is an important thing to do” (“Hmeichhia an rap bet maw?”). He concludes by advocating balanced representation: “They should not only talk about their feelings on how they were disregarded and trampled upon, they should also talk about and emphasize their role and hard-work in making the community a better and peaceful place to live” (“Hmeichhia an rap bet maw?”).

Debates concerning women's status frequently emerge, suggesting such discourse will likely persist indefinitely. Lalnghakliani observes: "Unless we have a voice that can change or conclude discussions in politics, matters relating to the Church or community matters, we are never really free. This is way I define the status of women, 'Free but still a slave'," (7).

While women have experienced upliftment and development in certain domains, pervasive barriers remain. Specifically, no comprehensive legal framework ensures equitable inheritance rights vis-à-vis men. Furthermore, resistance persists regarding the appointment of women as church officials (e.g., pastors, elders). In politics, without gender-based reservations, women are still systematically marginalized—widely perceived as inherently unfit for leadership due to gender-based biases associating them with inferiority. Concurrently, assertive women face stigmatization as "shameless and outrageous." Feminist analysis interprets these patterns as indicative of unsatisfactory progress toward gender equality.

Despite measurable liberation and development, empirical evidence and testimonies confirm that Mizo women continue to expend disproportionately greater time and energy on familial obligations compared to men. Yet, pervasive societal attitudes held by both men and women still position them as unequal. Lalhming-chhuanga Zawngte articulates this double standard: "In the Mizo society many deeds that are deemed normal if done and performed by a man is deemed unusual and shameful if it is done by a woman. This feeling somehow regulates the mind of women to a great extent," (253).

But Mizo women enjoyed many freedoms compared to women of other cultures. They have equal rights with men in terms of voting. Mizo women enjoyed liberty when it comes to work, in the past education was denied to women but now a days they are not denied of the rights to education anymore. The status of women in the Mizo society can be considered to be good compared to women from another society. But there are still many drawbacks and they faced many difficulties in many aspects. The feminist among the Mizo society had raised their voices regarding this. In the meantime, Mizo women had many voices in literature. With reference to Mizo

novels, the voices of women can be heard from novels written by both men and women in the Mizo society. This chapter will be about the growth of Mizo novels and how Mizo women contributed in the field of novel writing.

*Hawilopari*, recognized as the inaugural Mizo novel, was authored by L. Biakliana. B. Lalthangliana affirms: “The novel *Hawilopari* was written in the year 1936. It consisted of 29 chapters in it and the book had 203 pages. Till date it is considered as the first Mizo novel,” (306), establishing its foundational status in Mizo literary history. K. C. Vannghaka further corroborates: “Khuangruma a resident of Madanriting in Shillong said that he had read Biakliana’s novel by the end of November on that very year. So it can be said that the year 1936 was the year in which novel writing started among the Mizo writers,” (216). Additionally, B. Lalthangliana notes: “The most well known amongst his works *Maymyo Sanapui* was written around the year 1946 and was published in 1950 as a single. It was the first Mizo novel to be published as a single and the first novel which had illustrations on its cover,” (317), implicitly contrasting it with Capt. C. Khuma’s work as the earliest printed novel. Though unpublished in 1936, *Hawilopari*’s manuscript secured its primacy as the first Mizo novel.

Male authors historically dominated early Mizo novel writing, producing significantly more works than women. L. Biakliana, as the pioneer, crafted *Hawilopari* (1936) as a complete narrative centering on Hminga and his siblings, who flee their evil stepmother with Zema, a loyal companion regarded as an elder brother. Their prolonged disappearance obscures their whereabouts. The novel emphasises *Hawilopari*’s unwavering fidelity to Hminga despite years of silence, while extolling sacrificial friendship through Zema’s actions. It further chronicles the group’s enlistment as soldiers and their superiors’ favouritism, reflecting the author’s portrayal of Mizo male superiority. Biakliana’s second fiction, *Lali* (1937), constitutes the earliest Mizo short story yet remains integral to discussions of novelistic emergence. Set post-Christianization, it characterizes Mizo households as rigidly patriarchal and depicts women’s domestic misery.



The third Mizo fiction, *Chhingpuii* (1939) by Kaphleia, is classifiable as a short story. This work draws upon Mizo historical narratives, specifically the 'War of the East and the West'. Kaphleia portrays the historical figure Chhingpuii while inventing the male protagonist Kaptluanga. The narrative documents precolonial Mizo communal life, including hunting practices, warfare, and tribal customs, while exploring human nature through Kaptluanga's characterization. Despite their pioneering status alongside L. Biakliana in Mizo fiction, both authors succumbed prematurely to tuberculosis, resulting in limited literary output.

Lalzuithanga emerged as a subsequent significant figure. K. C. Vannghaka notes: "Some years after them Lalzuithanga wrote a story called Thlahrang around the year 1940-41. This and the short story called Char Huai I Hlau Lo'm Ni? were said to be the first two stories he wrote. And after a short while from this in 1950 he wrote the story Phira leh Ngurthanpari," (218). His works markedly diverged from earlier traditions through unexpected plot resolutions, demonstrating narrative sophistication likely influenced by English literary exposure. Vannghaka further observes: "His short stories *Thlahrang Thawnthu* and *Aukhawk Lasi* greatly resemble the Gothic novel *Vathek* (1786) by William Beckford and *Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliff which were written in the late 18th century during the period Spain and Italy were under the reign of Germany and the Catholic Church," (219). This Gothic affinity is substantiated by R. L. Thanmawia's study, *Aukhawk Lasi* as a Gothic Fiction. Lalzuithanga's extensive short fiction oeuvre includes: *Rina Lohva Ui Buk Sa*, *Hrangkhupa Khua*, *Char Huai I HlauLawm Ni?*, *Kawla Tlan Zel Rawh*, *Khawmu Chawi*, *Tu Thiam Loh Nge?*, *Min Hriatreng Nan*, *Chawngi*, *Tuma Hriat Loh Tur*, *Ka Damchhung Leihlawn Chanve*, *Engnge Pawi?*, *Eng Dan Nge Ni?*, *Khawfing Chat*, and *Aukhawk Lasi*.

In 1945, C. Thuamluaia authored the complete novel *Engtin Awm Ta Zel Ang Maw?* Zoramdinthara evaluates the work: "The novel shows Thuamluaia's ability to probe deep into the ways of the world and shows how deeply entertained are his ideas and imagination," (79), highlighting the author's intellectual depth. The narrative features unconventional character names (eg. Allan, Jama, Koke, Januari)

and an entirely fabricated village called Kantu, distinct from typical Mizo toponyms. Thuamaluiaia deliberately constructed Kantu's social dynamics, material culture, and character psychologies to deviate from normative Mizo communal representations.

His later short stories, *Sialton Official* and *Leitlang Dingdi* (composed between 1952–1958), similarly employ fictional settings. Zoramdinthara notes their basis in fiction, emphasizing that villages like Kantu (from *Engtin Awm Ta Zel Ang Maw?*) and Zolawn (from *Sialton Official*) represent pure authorial invention.

Capt. C. Khuma, an author and Burmese government army officer residing in Burma, emerged during this literary period. He authored the novel *Maymyo Sanapui* (1946), set in the Burmese city of Maymyo, which chronicles the relationship between Liana (a Mizo soldier) and his Burmese lover Ma Hla Kya. Significant thematic parallels exist between Khuma's *Maymyo Sanapui* and C. Thuamaluiaia's *Sialton Official*, as both narratives conclude with unresolved romantic relationships: the protagonist of *Sialton Official* does not marry Dorothy (his Khasi girlfriend), while Liana similarly fails to wed Ma Hla Kya. These works constituted the earliest Mizo fiction printed commercially. K.C. Vannghaka confirms: "Capt. C. Khuma was the first Mizo novelist from another country and the first to published a novel printed in a press," (222).

Khuma's short fiction includes *Hmangaih Thiamna*, *Fahrah Nun*, *In In Chu Ka In A Ni*, *Phuloh Zunleng*, and *Chhungkhual Lungdi*. Regarding the unpublished *Phuloh Zunleng*, B. Lalthangliana explains in Rev. Dr. Zairema leh Capt. C. Khuma hnuhma: "The novel *Phuloh Zunleng* is about a diversion from the paths of hell and a pilgrimage towards the path of heaven. It was not published as a book, and the handwritten copies were thrown away during the insurgency period to avoid unwanted troubles from the army. It is a pity that we are unable to read it as it is not available anymore," (101). Consequently, this work remains inaccessible, though Khuma's other writings are preserved in Lalthangliana's compilation.

After Capt. C. Khuma renowned writers Zoramdinthara, B. Lalthangliana and K. C. Vannghaka who wrote about the evolution of Mizo novels in Mizo literature placed K. C. Lalvunga (Zikpui Pa) after Capt. C. Khuma. But Khawlkungi might

have emerged before Zikpuii Pa in the world of Mizo novels. In the words of B.Lalthangliana, “At the age of 19 in the year 1946 she wrote the novel *West Wind and East Wind* and that is the start of her career as a novelist,”(463). Khawlkungi herself also said, “This short story *West Wind and East Wind* is a war novel and I had already written it in the year 1946. During those days there was only one printing press in Mizoram i.e. Loch Printing Press and they were unable to make cyclostyle during those times. I only had handwritten copies which was borrowed and passed around by many readers that it got lost. I had to look back in my diaries and rewrite it from the beginning,” (90). According to K. C. Vangnghaka, “Around the end of the decade of the 1950’s, Zikpuii Pa(K. C. Lalvunga) wrote a few short stories,” (222-223). B. Lalthangliana also said that he wrote a story called *Lalringa leh Thangzuali, Hmangaihna Vanduai* in the year 1948 while he was studying class-x, a high school student,” (55) but this novel is not available anymore.

Looking through all this it can be seen that Khawlkungi was earlier than her so called predecessors, even if it is handwritten or printed copies her novels were still earlier than L.Biakliana’s, Kaphleia’s and Lalzuithanga’s novels. Still they were considered to be the first and foremost. Khawlkungi wrote a novel before Zikpuii Pa but in Zoramdinthara’s book, “Mizo Fiction Emergence and Development” he placed Khawlkungi in the 9<sup>th</sup> position in terms of early novel writings. He placed K. C. Lalvunga, Rev. Zokima and James Dokhuma before her, but in reality she was an earlier novel writer than them all. Even though B. Lalthangliana noted that Khawlkungi had already written a novel in 1946 he still placed her below Zikpuii Pa in the book “Mizo Literature”. In his book ‘Fiction: Mizo Thawnthu’, K.C. Vannghaka quoted that Khawlkungi appeared after James Dokhuma in the history of Mizo novel/fiction. The reason behind this is really troubling, the people who wrote the history and conduct studies on Mizo novels are men. And as such, did they place Khawlkungi below all those male writers for no reason in particular other than for reasons that they considered women to be inferior or do they place their favourites and the ones they admire before others. If not, Khawlkungi should be placed above K. C. Lalvunga (Zikpuii Pa).

Khawlkungi wrote many novels. But after *West Wind and East Wind* there was a huge time gap before she wrote another novel. Her most well known novel after this is a novel called *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. She also added “Christian Love Story” in a bracket next to the title of this book. According to Khawlkungi, “I wrote this for the Christian Love Story writing competition in the year 1977. Due to lack of information regarding the scheduled time to finish the competition I only had the month of October to finish my work, I hurriedly fabricated the story while typing it out at the same time and finally I was able to submit it on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1977,” (*Zawlpala Thlantlang* Thuhmahruai). In this story Vanlalremi’s father died a few years after her mother passed away, so she had to live with her paternal aunt. Her aunt’s husband was a drunkard and tried to exploit Remi as much as possible, he even tried to marry her to Lalmuana which against her will. Remi’s aunt was powerless and did not have a voice in her own house. In the end Remi fled to Aizawl where she learnt the art of tailoring and met Malsawma the love of her life. It is a story how they got married after many hardships that befalls them. Other novels written by Khawlkungi are as follows- *Sangi Rinawmna* (1978), *A Tlai Lutuk Ta* (1979), *Pasal Duhthlan* (1982), *Duhtak Sangpuui* (1998) and *Palai Bawngte* (2012). Khawlkungi did not only have novels during the dawn and early stage of novel writings, her works are still relevant even in the present day itself.

K. C. Lalvunga (Zikpuui Pa) emerged with his works after Khawlkungi. Most of the early works of Zikpuui Pa can be classified in the category of short stories. *Lalringa leh Thangzuali Hmangaihna Vanduai* which he wrote in the year 1948 seemed to be the first story he wrote. He wrote his other short stories after the year 1950. He started writing the short story *Lalramliana* in the year 1950, but he finished it in the year 1994. As told by B. Lalthangliana, “He completed a very interesting and meaningful book called *Lalramliana* by the year 1994, a short while before he answered heaven’s call,” (55). The other short stories he wrote were- *Silverthangi* (1958), *Kraws Bulah Chuan* (1959), *Hostel Awmtu* (1959), *C.C Coy No 27* (1963). His novel *Nunna KawngThuam Puiah* was published in the year 1986. Zoramdinthara noted, “The novel *Nuna Kawngthuam Puiah*, published in 1986 is the

last and one of the best of Zikpui Pa's novels," (107). It was the only one that can be considered a novel among his works.

The story in this novel is based on the insurgency that occurred in Mizoram and so it is considered as a historical novel, the story portrayed events and incidents that occurred during the insurgency period. It is also a story about two lovebirds Chhuanvawra and Ngurthansangi and the author added interesting mysteries in this novel that can leave readers wondering. F. Vanlalrochana said that, "Beside everything, the story itself is a classic. We might not have many novels better than this among the Mizo novels. Even novels yet to be written might find it hard to better this one," (186) appraising Zikpui Pa's novel *Nunna Kawng Thuam Puiah*. Some people might approve or disapprove his comment.

Whenever there is a discussion on the growth and development of Mizo novels it can be seen that there is a huge time gap between the works of many writers. So, it is necessary to mention their other works while talking about their work i.e. the topic of discussion. Although fresh novel writers began to appear after L. Biakliana, it was paused by the insurgency in the state after the M.N.F declared independence in the year 1966. This insurgency greatly affects the development and growth of novel writings and literature as a whole as there was chaos everywhere. K. C. Vannghaka said, "From the 1960's the air of Independent Movement dwelt in the minds of many youths in Mizoram, the feeling of fighting independence from the Indian Government changed the mindset of many youths that it led them to carry arms against India and due to this not many books were published during this period," (223) explaining how the insurgency stopped the growth of literature in Mizoram. This is how Zoramdinthara explained how the insurgency started in Mizoram-

As such, the leaders of the Mizo National Front declared Independence on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1966. Subsequent attacks were launched at the quarter guard of the 1<sup>st</sup> Assam Rifles at the heart of Aizawl and Aizawl Police Station. On learning the situation, the Government of India declared Mizo National Front as an unlawful political party. This political movement considered by the Mizo

National Front activists and their supporters as freedom struggle or fight for Independence was turned as insurgency by the Government of India. (75)

After this the district of Mizoram was declared a disturbed area and Armed Forces Act was proclaimed all over Mizoram. Civilians were not as free as before and it was difficult for them to lead a normal life. According to B. Lalthangliana, “As a whole, 168,853 people from 516 villages panicked and there was chaos and disorder everywhere. This had never happened in the history of Mizoram. Many villages were burnt down to ashes and the occupants were grouped together at a certain place where they did not have proper houses for shelter, they did not have enough to eat, they were really miserable and poor,” (263). The sufferings of the Mizo people was worst during this insurgency. And this greatly effects the growth and development of Mizo novels. Beside Zikpuii Pa’s 1950-1963 short stories, this is how K. C. Vannghaka commented on novels that came before, in and after the insurgency:

Two short stories *Chawngpui*, *A Ti Vawl Vawl Thin* by Vanlalropuia and *Harlene Irene-i and James Mellory* a story projecting the life of the English people were published in the year 1964; *Senhripari* by Sapthankhuma was also published in 1967. Two short stories by R. L. Rina *Lungtiawii leh Parchuaulova* (1961) and *Lungngaihna Virthli* (1962) were also published from Burma. There is no record of any other books published during this decade other than the ones mentioned above. During those years the people in Mizoram were unstable, the insurgency caused by the MNF brought panic and chaos everywhere and this might be the reasons that writers could not work with a free mind and concentrate on writing. (223)

They could not concentrate on writing novels since the air of rebellion and once it started they were not in a liberty to write due to the insurgency within the district of Mizoram. But the rebellion was gradually suppressed with the passing of time. In Zoramdinthara’s book *Mizo Fiction: Emergence and Development*, he placed Rev. Zokima second to K. C. Lalvunga (Zikpuii Pa). Rev. Zokima was the

author of *Pathian Samsuih* (1970), *Inneih Hunah Le!* (1973) and *Hmangaihna Lamtluang* (2005). Rev. Zokima wrote his books before the end of the insurgency in Mizoram but none of them were based on incidents and events of this insurgency. This makes his writings uncommon and different compared to other writings of that decade. Most of the stories in novels that came out after his works were either based on or related to the insurgency. According to Lalawmpuia Vanchiau, “Stories based on this insurgency “Rambuai Fiction” are a part of creative writings where authors fabricated stories based on true incidents. It is really resourceful as most of the stories are comprised of incidents and events that occurred during the insurgency,” (85). He mentioned how novels that were written during those periods were important documents that relates to life during the insurgency and portrayed authors point of view on the insurgency.

James Dokhuma one of the most prominent writer appeared after Rev. Zokima. In the words of B. Lalthangliana, “He is the one who had the most achievements and works among the Mizo writers, he can be considered as a fortress of Mizo literature,” (464). But according to Peter Lianhleia on his review of *Thlahlei Nga Zan*, “Lastly, it looks like James Dokhuma still needs improvement. The idioms and phrases he used, his view on the life of a Mizo society and his knowledge of tales and stories of the olden days can be put to a great use in Mizo literature,” (95) talking about his view on James Dokhuma. From Peter Lianhleia’s view can see that conclusions can vary and greatly depends on the eye of the beholder. James Dokhuma wrote *Khawhar In* from the year 1970. Zoramdinthara also mentioned, “Khawhar In, begun in 1970 and it was published in 1977. It was the earliest published novel of James Dokhuma,” (125). These are the works of James Dokhuma- *Thlahlei Nga Zan* (1970), *Rinawmin* (1970), *Ni leh Thla Kara Leng* (1978), *Tumpang Chal nge Saithangpuii* (1981), *Hmangaihna Thuchah* (1982), *Irrawady Lui Kamah* (1982), *Good Bye Lushai Brigade* (1983), *Kimoto Synora* (1984), *Gabbatha* (1989), *Silaimu Ngaihawm* (1992) and *Kham kar Senhri* (1995). The stories in James Dokhuma’s works comprise of events relating to the insurgency in Mizoram, some of them are romantic love stories, some are based on the Bible, some are related to World War 2 and pre-colonial periods.

Lalengmawia Ralte also contributed a lot in the Mizo novels category. In the words of Zoramdinthara, “Engmawia proved himself a prolific Mizo fiction writer. He is paramountly to be remembered as a novelist of social purpose. Till now he wrote incessantly and has produced about sixteen remarkable novels,” (149). The novels written by Lalengmawia Ralte are as follows- *A Sawt Tawh Lo* (1981), *Honey Moon* (1985), *Tu Fa Nge* (1986), *Eternal Bliss* (1986), *Never Leave Me Alone* (1987), *Min Thungrul Suh* (1988), *Ka Thianghlim Tawh lo* (1988), *Engvang Nge?* (1989), *I Tan A Tawk* (1989), *Happy Home* (1994), *Chhum Zinna Ram* (1995), *A Tlo Lo* (1999) and *Rahbi Inthup* (2000).

As mentioned before, male writers played an important role in the growth of novel writings in the Mizo literature. Well known and popular writers that appeared after Lalengmawia Ralte are as follows- C. Laizawna, Lalhmingliana Saiawi, H. Lallungmuana, Lalhriata, R. Rozika, C. Lalnunchanga, Lalrammawia Ngente, Samson Thanruma, Lalpekkima, Lalengzauva and others. In the modern period there are many male writers who write novels and publish them into prints. Now, take a look into the involvement of Mizo female writers, their works in the novel category, the progress they made and their works.

Khawlkungi (1927-2015)

Khawlkungi stands as the inaugural female novelist in Mizo literature and ranks among the earliest novelists irrespective of gender. Beyond novels, she authored plays and pioneered pathways for subsequent Mizo women writers. Her significant contributions to Mizo literature were recognized with the Padma Shri, one of India’s highest civilian honours, in 1987. While her major works are noted in prior discussions, a brief analysis of select narratives follows.

*Duhtak Sangpuii* centers on the protagonist Sangpuii, raised under the guardianship of her maternal uncle Lalliana following her father’s death. Lalliana facilitates her higher education abroad. The narrative depicts the dissolution of



Sangpuii's relationship with Tluanga due to his mistaken belief in her involvement with Hussein. Upon completing her studies, Sangpuii returns to her village as a schoolteacher.

The novel further explores patriarchal constraints through the character Lianphunga, who attempts to coerce Sangpuii into sexual compliance. Alongside Sangpuii, the narrative portrays Hmingi's experiences: her pregnancy by Hussein, his abandonment, and her resilient confrontation of the ensuing challenges. *Duhtak Sangpuii* thus foregrounds female resilience, illustrating the hardships imposed by male actions and women's capacity to overcome adversity.

*Palai Bawngte*: In this story Khawlkungi depicts the life of girls working abroad. The story shows how some Mizo girls had relationships with the mainlanders in order to make easy money. This story tells how those girls are deemed a disgrace to the Mizo society and how they were mocked and despised by the society. But the story also showed the situation of those girls, how they did not have much of a choice other than this in order to make ends meet.

Lalruali (1924-2001)

Lalruali is renowned primarily as a Gospel hymn composer; however, she also authored two fictional works: *Ka Hmangaih Tlat Che* (1991) and *Nula Vanduai Sumchani* (1992).

Her novelette *Ka Hmangaih Tlat Che* falls within the genre of Christian fiction. With a length of 98 pages, the work may not meet conventional criteria for a novel and is thus classified as a novelette. The narrative centers on Thanpuii, a beautiful protagonist admired by numerous suitors, who is afflicted by an illness resulting in partial disability, specifically, weakness in her left leg causing intermittent lameness. As the text describes: "As Thanpuii could not work the crops in their farm due to her sickness she became worried and emotionally tormented by her sickness," (8).

Inferiority complex built up due to her unfortunate condition and she was mentally hurt. But, Thanpuii was a woman of God and this story shows how Sanga, a man of God came to fall in love with her through God, ignoring her worst situation. *Nula Vanduai Sumchani*- This story is based on life before the dawn of Christianity in Mizoram. Although Sumchani is a very beautiful girl she was a slave of a village chief. She spends her whole life working as a slave in the house of the village chief. It is a story about how a bachelor named Dokunga from that village wished to marry her asking the chief for her hand in marriage and how the chief was against the proposal. To make matters worst Sumchani was blamed to be possessed by khawhring an evil spirit despised and feared by the community.

H. Lalngurliani (1951- )

H. Lalngurliani appeared as the third earliest Mizo women novels writer, she is among the Mizo women with the most works as a writer.

H. Lalngurliani sacrificed all her prime years in the service of God. Novels written by H. Lalngurliani are as follows- *Mangtha mai aw Mama I & II* (1994), *Mary Lanzas* (1996), *Thian Rinawm* (1998), *Lungawina Kim* (1999), *Zirtirtu Tha* (2000), *Rinawmna Rah* (2000), *Inneihna Thilpek* (2000), *Thisena Thutiam Ziak* (2002), *Zorinpari*(2004), *Thudik leh Saihlum A Nget Lo* (2009), and *Trisha* (2012). The novels of H. Lalngurliani had a deep attachment to Christianity and its teachings. As she was a mission worker who used to work in mission fields abroad, many of the stories in her novels are based on mission works and the life of people outside Mizoram. Let us have a quick and brief study on some of her novels.

*Zorinpari*: Zorinpari (Thoichanu) is the main character of her novel *Zorinpari* which won Mizo Academy of Letters Book of the Year Award in 2005. The main character in this story Zorinpari is not of Mizo origin, she is the daughter of Romen and Romila (Thoithoii) a Meitei couple from Manipur. Pi Puii was a mission worker in their locality and this is how they came across each other and Pi Puii was really fond of their daughter Thoichanu. She even gave her a Mizo name Zorinpari and

used to call her Parte. Romila and her daughter Zorinpari were so happy and content with the mission works, they were deeply touched by the mission works that they decided to get Christian and so they convert into Christianity from their religion.

But Zorinpari's father Romen did not approve this and was against their conversion. So in his anger he brought a mistress named Bindiya in the house in the presence of his family. But Romila and her daughters were not willing to denounce their faith. After Thoithoi passed away Zorinpari fell ill and was suspected to be a leper and so she was moved to a leprosy hospital where she stayed there for a long time. While her stay in the Leprosy Hospital one old woman converts into Christianity because of her influence. It was then found that Zorinpari was not a leper after she died. When she went back home, she was despised by her family. But, Zorinpari was calm and peaceful even after the ill treatments she received from her family and at the end her father regrets his actions and became a Christian himself.

*Trisha:* Trisha is also a story based outside Mizoram, the characters in this story are also not from the Mizo community. Prasad Das and his family live in one of the localities in Silchar, they were among the few Christian families who live in a place populated by other religions. They had a maid named Trisha who hailed from a Hindu family. Looking at their way of life Trisha also wanted to become a Christian, but there are many obstacles on her path. The ways of her religion and Christianity was really different, and besides, her father was against her faith in Christ.

Anindita the adopted daughter of Prasad Das envied Trisha so much that she placed the family's money under the pillow of Trisha and accused her as a thief. Prasad and his wife find it hard to believe that Trisha would steal from them but the money was found under her pillow on her bed. Being a family of God they did nothing to her but had to make excuses to send her back to her village. This is how Prasad Das's wife Ranjita felt, "In her mind the best way to serve God is to love all his creations," (177). Trisha never forgets Prasad Das's Family and Christianity. On her way to give a Christmas card to Prasad Das and his family she was beaten on the back of her head with a wooden club by Rajesh the son of Prasad Das. Rajesh acted

out on the words of Anindita as he was like a puppet for her. Trisha succumbed to death due to her injury. Anindita could not hold her secrets forever and later on confessed all the wrongs that she did.

*Thudik leh Saihlum A Nget Lo:* Unlike her other stories mentioned above the main character portrayed in this story is a male character. The name of the main character is Jerry Lalnuntluanga. He is a God fearing person and was born again while he was a student of class-ix. He became a police officer and tried his best to fight against crimes to maintain law and order in the society. He setup an operation called RD Operation where he give training to youths and used them to fight against drugs and other bad things. His girlfriend Machhuangi passed away while he was working and running the RD Operation.

While he was still mourning the death of his girlfriend, R. V-i proclaimed that she was with child and accused Jerry to be the father of her child but Jerry knew that the child was not his. Obeying his father's words Jerry did not deny R.V-i's accusation and even gave a fine called 'sawn man.' After she gave birth R.V-i's family kept the baby in Jerry's house most of the time. Jerry's mother and father grew fond of the baby so much that they looked after the baby as their own. But after all this, R.V-i tried to take the baby away from them declaring that she was the mother of the child. She was so obsessed with getting the child that she spilled the truth and told everyone that she lied about who the father of the child really was and that Jerry was not the father of her child. The guilt on Jerry was removed due to her confession.

Romuanpuii Zadeng (1979 - )

She published her first novel *Puk Dangdai* in the year 2000. It was among the top ten holders of Mizo Academy of Letter's Book of the Year. She published her book *Parfung Chawi* in the year 2004 and this book was also among the top three of the Mizo Academy of Letter's Book of the year. Her other novels are- *Tainamfa* (2007), *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* (2009), *Tawksir* (2010), *Sihlipui* (2012) winner

of MAL Book of the Year and *Inleh* (2018). Beside Khawlkungi and Lalngurliani, Zadeng is one of the Mizo women writers with most achievements.

*Puk Dangdai*: In her first novel *Puk Dangdai* although Ramngaihzeli (Lucy) is portrayed as the main character, Ramngaihzeli's daughter Ramhlimpuii can also be considered as the main character of the story. In this novel Ramngaihzeli is an orphan who got married to Thangzaua when she comes of age. As her husband was a soldier in the army she followed him to his post. But after a few days from the birth of her first child her husband Thangzaua eloped with a local girl called Laxmi and this made life difficult for Ramngaihzeli. She took care of her child with many difficulties but to make matters worst she lost her child. She had to sell herself in a brothel to make ends meet. She went back to Mizoram and started a brothel called Cave Dream. Her lost child was found by strangers and a guy called Valtea looked after her as his own.

Many years later, Ramngaihzeli's daughter Bawihthei (Ramhlimpuii) tried to rescue girls from her mother's brothel by disguising herself as a prostitute and not having a clue that the woman who runs that place was her mother. She preached the gospels of God among them and rescued many girls from the place. She got married to Dr. Rodingngheta a doctor who was also interested in rescue mission of girls from brothels. In the end Ramngaihzeli and Bawihthei (Ramhlimpuii) realised each others and were reunited happily. She also led her mother the queen of prostitutes to follow the right path.

Being a women writer, most of the leading characters in Zadeng's novels are girls/women. In her novel *Inleh* the life of Masaii's family is portrayed in the story. Masaii had to help her mother in all the chores due to the untimely death of her father. She had no time for normal education and she could not pursue higher education as she had to look after her seven younger siblings. The story also showed how she was heart broken and suffered tremendously as her brother Sangpuia

became a drug addict. Masaii's brother Sangpuia eloped with their Church elder's beautiful daughter Biakpuui.

Masaii's mother knew that her son was good for nothing and for the sake of Biakpuui's future she asked her to go back home. But Biakpuui did not take her words seriously. She believed that she will be able to reform Sangpuui and make him leave his bad habits. The story shows how things turn out quite the opposite of her expectations and how Sangpuia failed her many times after promising her that he would mend his life and this leads to Puui's desperation. Even though Masaii was a good girl and beautiful too she fell in love with Pu Vara who was an old man. Her mother did not approve of this relationship and ask her to marry someone else of her age. But Masaii was adamant and refused to change her mind. She remained faithful for Pu Vara till the end of the story.

*Sihlipui*: In this story there is a famous Gospel singer called Laltei. It is a story how Laltei was impregnated by her friend Mampuia who went away from her and how she went through the pregnancy in spite of the humiliation as pregnancy without marriage is considered a sin in their society. This story also showed how Ramparmawii was sold by her father as he desperately in need of money. The story showed how she had to work rigorously and even became a prostitute and how she married a rich oldman and inherited all his wealth after his death. "She went to the place where they keep the girls and looked at the fear in their eyes and their terrified looks. With tears in her eyes she looked towards them and gently raised her arms lovingly towards them," (93). This is a story that showed how Parmawii (Shona) helped the exploited girls who came to that place from her homeland with all her efforts and how she rescued them.

Rozamliani (1984 - )

Rozamliani wrote three novels, her first novel among them is *Lawm A Kim Lo* and it was published in the year 2005. She explained the content of the story in her novel in the introduction saying, "There can never be full contentment in our life.

Even if we tried our best at something and have great achievements we can never be fully content. In this story I try to explain that success comes from determination along with hardwork and labour,” (7). The main character of the story in this novel is a girl named Zonunmawii. Zonunmawii is a girl who overcomes many obstacles, she is brave, determined and nothing can stand in her way from achieving her goals.

She was kicked out from her previous home where she worked as a maid just for the sake of taking a night out to enjoy herself in a party. So she had to stay at Nunpuia’s place as she wish to pursue her education. She signed a contract with Nunpuia to bear a child for him. Although Nunpuia loved her very much she was so determined to pursue her dream career to be a college lecturer that she left him with her child. She was later married to Dr Trevor and they seemed to love each other dearly but he left her for another girl as she could not bear him a child. The author of this novel portrayed women to a great extent and showed how brave and tolerant women can be from this story.

The name of her second novel is *Tuarna Phenah* and it was published in 2007. Lalrinsangi (Sangtei) is the leading character in the story of this novel. It is a story about a little girl who was looked after by her uncle and aunt as her parents passed away when she was very young and how she was mistreated by her own blood relatives. The story showed how she was forced to fetch liquor for her uncle and how she was beaten violently. She was not only beaten by her uncle but he also often tried to abuse her sexually. “He grabbed Sangtei and slapped her continuously. Sangtei cried bitterly due to the slappings and feared that her uncle will slap her again,” (13). Domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking can be seen in this novel. Even her maternal aunt did not stand by her side, she took her to Delhi and sold her for five thousand rupees.

She was forced into prostitution by her buyers in that place. She met a Mizo guy named Hluna in the brothel where she worked. Hluna fell in love with her and rescued her from that place and brought her home as he wanted to marry her. But Hluna’s mother on hearing her past life was against their marriage. She exchanged

Sangtei's blood with the blood of an H.I.V. patient and accused her of having AIDS. But in the end Hluna and Sangtei find out that she did not have AIDS after facing many troubles.

Rozamliani's third novel *A Mak A Na* was published in 2012, Rozamliani have not yet released anyother novel after this. In the introduction of this novel Rozamliani wrote, "I try to depict the needs and importance of guidance among the youths and describe a better way to mould their characters in this story. This book is prepared in such a way as to emphasize the necessity of discussing sex education in every family," (7). It can be seen that Rozamliani have a certain topic in mind before she wrote this novel. The leading character in this novel is a girl named Lalnunmawii, she was in love with a boy named Rinawma and this story blatantly points out how they often have sexual intercourse.

Mawii was so badly in love with Rinawma that she could not refuse his sexual urges and often surrendered to his desires. At last she became pregnant with Rinawma's child but Rinawma who only wanted sex from her refused to take responsibilities as a father of his unborn child. In this story Lalnunmawii said, "People never complained about having pain after a sexual intercourse. But this is not true, there is no pleasure but only pain," (51). By saying this she meant that nothing but pain only comes out of a sexual intercourse if a boy did not really love a girl and only uses her for sexual fun. Rinawma even asked Mawii to go for abortion. But, this story showed how Mawii bravely refused to abort the baby and successfully bear his child. Mawii is also tolerant and brave like the other two female characters in Rozamliani's previous novels.

Florence L. R. Ralte (1982 - )

She started writing novels in her high school days from the year 1996. But she stopped writing for a long time because she did not have much time to write as she was still a school student and had to work in her free time. The name of the novel that she wrote is *Tawn Leh Ni A Her Ang* and she have completed it. But she hasn't



published it yet. She wrote her first novel *Chenghnemi* while she was studying M.A. and completes it in the year 2004. But it was only published in the year 2005. Beside this novel she had also released two novels *Theipui Hnuaiah* (2017) and *Susani* (2018). Not only did she write novels she is also a playwright. She wrote a play called *Zonunmawia* in the year 2012 and it was released in 2013. Florence is still very young and has a good chance to achieve higher degrees in literature. It is hopeful that she will have many more contributions in the Mizo Literature.

Florence wrote her two novels *Theipui Hnuaiah* and *Susani* based on the Bible. In the introduction of her novel Florence herself said, “It is really difficult to write a novel based on the Christian Bible, I am afraid to make mistakes because I fear and respect God,” (*Theipui Hnuaiah*, v) In the story of her novel *Chenghnemi* the leading character is a brave, clever and beautiful girl named Remruatpuii (*Chenghnemi*). She fell in love with Zohmaa who was regarded as a relative and a big brother to them but kept it a secret for a long time. Ruatpuii had a boyfriend and his name is Victor. Zohmaa too had a girlfriend and her name is Dr. Mary. When Ruatpuii and Victor were about to get married she found out that Victor was unfaithful and had a baby with Maria. Although Victor desperately wants to marry Ruatpuii she refused him because she did not want his child to lead the life of an orphan. She left him eventhough this made her heartbroken.

At the same time Zohmaa and Dr. Mary’s relationship could not have a positive outcome. All this opened an opportunity for Zohmaa and Ruatpuii who have kept their feelings for each other a secret for a long time. In this novel, *Chenghnemi* is also a brave female news reporter who unveiled the truth behind the rape of an underaged girl uncovering all the dirty lies and deeds that were hidden to cover up the crime. In the end she became very famous and she was nicknamed Princess Reporter. The Women’s Wing of Delhi also gave her an award because of her works.

Novel writers are rare among the Mizo women writers. The ones mentioned above are the most well known among them with the most number of works and achievements. Beside them there are a few who wrote one or two novels. K.

Laldawngliani wrote one novel *Mangtha Ka Ti Phal Lo Che* and it was published in the year 1986. BuangiSailo also wrote and published her novel *Rodang Hmelthai* in 2007. K. Lalmuanpuii also published her novel *Petunia* in 2014. She might not have written another novel other than this. C. Zolianpari started writing novels from the year 2000. She had completed writing nine novels but she did not keep track of her novels that she currently did not possess most of the copies. Her novel *Ka Rose Par M.K* published in 2014 is the only novel that can be seen at the moment although she had written many novels. The names of her other novels are- *Nunhlui Tahna*, *Hmangaihna Mittui*, *Thamral Lo Mitthla*, *Hmangaihna Hi Ka Tan Hmelma*, *Beiseina Beidawnthlak*, *Kumhlui leh Lunglen*, *Hling Zinga Rose Par* and *Hijacker*. The time of publish of these novels cannot be marked since the author herself could not tell the exact time of publish.

There can be many notions on the reason why men wrote more novels than women. The reason behind this is worth a study. According to Florence L. R. Ralte, “We girls do not have enough leisure time to write books. Money is powerful and everyone wants to make money. Most girls are not interested in writing novels as the reward or the money they make from writing novels is not worth the effort, besides many people are not interested in novels written by a girl. And in the Mizo society as a whole the experts in the fields of literature are still degrading the status of women,” (Interview with Florence L. Ralte, 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021) talking about her opinions on the reason why there are only a few novel writers among the Mizo girls. According to Romuanpuii Zadeng, “One needs to be free and have enough free time to write a novel. Most of us women are soft on the inside. Even the ones considered headstrong always have a soft corner. Sometimes one has to be opinion and arrogant in order to write novels. Most girls did not have the guts for this,” (Interview with Romuanpuii Zadeng, 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2021). Most girls might share the same opinion regarding this issue. Virginia Woolf also said, “All I could do was to offer you an opinion upon one minor point-a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction; and that, as you will see, leaves the great problem of the true nature of women and the true nature of fiction unsolved,” (7). Saying that a woman will be able to write a novel if she have money and a room for her own. She also believed that a woman

will be able to write a novel if a woman had money and a freedom to write in a quiet place of her own. But, it is the opinions of women, and it can be different from the other points of view.

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## CHAPTER 2

### Women Voices on Patriarchy in Khawlkungi's Selected Novels

Khawlkungi was born between H. Chhuma and Zokaiveli on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 1927 in Mission Vengthlang, Aizawl. She died at the age of 88 on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015. She had six siblings. According to Laltluangliana Khiantge, "She got married after roaming freely for more than thirty years on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 1960, at last Khawlkungi who was considered a spinster during those times finally got married. She was married to her beloved Bualkhuma," (14). So, it can be considered that Khawlkungi married when she was beyond the usual age of marriage during those times. Her husband Bualkhuma passed away on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004. They had four children, namely- K. Thanpara, Lal̄tanpuii, Ramnghakliani and Zothansangi.

Khawlkungi only studied up to class-vi in school. But Khawlkungi cannot be judged on basis of her educational background. She had achievements which are far greater than many learned scholars. Khawlkungi was unable to pursue higher education due to family issues, mainly poverty during those times. She joined the First Lushai Company, Bharat Scout & Guide in 1941. In the words of Laltluangliana Khiantge, "During the Second World War (1939-1945) she even served under the Women Auxiliary Corp. She start working as an Airforce Clerk in 1944 and during those times women were not expected for such kind of work," (16). So, from the kind of work and occupation she pursued it can be seen that Khawlkungi was not just an ordinary woman. She left her job as an Air force Clerk in 1947. She came back to Mizoram and work as a PWD Clerk in Aizawl. And she left this job on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1991.

Khawlkungi can be placed as a pioneer in literature among the Mizo women. Before her, Nuchhungi collected Mizo stories. According to B. Lalthangliana, "She hailed from Serkawn, Lunglei. She collected Mizo stories from around the year 1938. She named it Serkawn Graded Reader and published four books," (225). Nuchhungi also published Mizo Naupang Infiamna in 1969. Nuchhungi might be the only woman that appeared before Khawlkungi in the field of literature among Mizo

women. Although Nuchhungi's works and achievements should be highly regarded, it would not be a mistake to rank Khawlkungi higher in the sphere of literature. In 1986 Nuchhungi received the Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian honours in India. Khawlkungi also received the Padma Awards in 1987.

Novel might be the first work of Khawlkungi in literature. According to B. Lalthangliana, “She wrote the story West Wind and East Wind when she was only 19 years old in the year 1946, this story was her first and starting point in her career as a writer,” (463). Khawlkungi wrote many stories from this time forth. B. Lalthangliana pointed out her works saying, “She composed and wrote 66 stories in all, out of which 42 stories were published in cyclostyle and the other 24 stories were printed in a printing press and published,” (463) pointing out the number of works by Khawlkungi. But in Laltluangliana Khiangte’s *Khawlkungi leh A Kutchhuak* he mentioned only 24 stories from her works.

He must have mentioned only the published ones that were printed in a press. Apart from these mentioned stories, she also published a long novel named *Palai Bawngte*. Khawlkungi’s novels had already been discussed in Chapter-1. And those discussed in Chapter-1 are complete stories which can all be considered as novels. The stories written and published by Khawlkungi are as follows:

1. West Wind and East Wind (1946)
2. Zawlpala Thlan Tlang (1977)
3. Sangi Rinawmna (1978)
4. Thawnthu 2 (1978)
5. A Tlai Lutuk Ta (1979)
6. Thawnthu Min Hrilh Rawh (1979)
7. Fahrah Nun (1979)
8. Krista Thihna (1980)
9. Thawnthu 3 (1981)
10. Thawnthu 5 (1982)
11. Pasal Duhthlan (1982)



12. Thawnthu Tawi (1983)
13. Kan Kut Chak lo Puih Nan ((1984)
14. Hmanlai Hian Maw (1987)
15. Thawnthu 7 (1988)
16. Thawnthu 8 (1989)
17. Thawnthu Za (1989)
18. Hmanlai Mi Thianghlimte (1990)
19. Kan Chhehvel Ram (1992)
20. Duhtak Sangpuui (1998)
21. Thawnthu Sawmsarih (1998)
22. Lemchan Thawnthu (1998)
23. Chantawka Khuarel (2003)
24. Hmangaihna Khua a Var Hmain (2007)
25. Palai Bawngte (2012)

Khawlkungi did not only write novels, she also wrote many Dramas. She wrote about 37 dramas in all. Among the Mizo women she is the leading writer and have the most number of works in drama writing till today. She also contributed a lot in translation of books from English to Mizo, she translated 38 English stories and writings into Mizo language.

Although Khawlkungi studied only up to class-vi it can be tell that she was fluent and knows English very well and that she read lots of books. According to Laltluangliana Khiangte, “More than hundred of her works such as prose and biography of others were printed in the form of articles in many magazines and newspapers,” (35). It can be assumed that Khawlkungi spends many hours of her time reading and writing. She left us many of her works such as Novels, Dramas, Translations and Articles. All of her works are valuable but as this thesis is about Novels, priority is given to novels and as such her other works such as dramas, translations and articles will not be studied thoroughly.

As mentioned above Khawlkungi wrote 25 novels which is quite a number. But every of her works are not exceptionally good. In Sangliana's review of Khawlkungi's novel called *Sangi Rinawmna* he quoted, "According to my judgement a good story should be really realistic, a good story depends on whether or not it makes the reader believe in the story itself. Even though this still is a good story, there are many times when I have a feeling that this is just a make belief story while going through the pages", (85). Through the lens of Sangliana, it can be seen that Khawlkungi makes the plot in her novels too much to her likings. She shows too much favoritism to some of her characters.

In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* she did not allow Sangpuii to face difficulties and hardships therefore rescuing her before she face real troubles while she let her friend Hmingi face many difficulties. As this is the plot of her novel it is criticized by many readers. And as Khawlkungi's story is written by a woman it can be seen that most of the main characters in her novels are women. In this chapter will study three novels of Khawlkungi which are *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, *Duhtak Sangpuii* and *Pasal Duhthlan*. From these selected three novels will study about the voice of women in Khawlkungi's novels.

The novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* is the second novel written by Khawlkungi. But it can be also considered as her first as it is her first complete novel. This novel was published in 1977. But the plot in the time setting of this novel started back in the 1940's. In the first line of the first chapter of this novel, it is written, "It is the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 1940. And the Harvest season is over, even though the blossom of the flower of the Thlado tree is beautiful..." (Khawlkungi 1).

This clearly shows the time setting of the novel. In chapter-27 of the novel, "Although there was a war going on, there could be no wedding greater than Malsawma and Vanlalremi's wedding, there can be no other wedding which is more glorious and well attended by people of different races," (Khawlkungi 181). The war mentioned here is the Second World War which lasted for six years. According to Britannica, "World War II, also called Second World War, conflict that involved

virtually every part of the World during the years 1939-45,” depicting how long World War II lasted. It can be noticed that this novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* was based during the period of World War II. And as such readers should be considered that everything that shows in the story is during the period of World War II.

Vanlalremi played the most important role among all the women characters in this novel. She is also the leading character in the whole novel. Other than her, Lalkhawthangi also played an important role. The author makes Lalkhawthangi's role more pitiful and let her suffer more hardships than Vanlalremi. Beside the two mentioned character Vanlalremi's paternal aunt Thuami and her daughter Tluangi also played an important role in the novel. Other than them it can also be notice voices and opinions of other women in the story. In the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* will observe the voices and opinions of women regarding their status, and the topics they choose to gossip about will also be studied. And as mentioned above Vanlalremi is the leading character in this novel.

In this novel Vanlalremi's father passed away a short while after her mother's death. Thuami who was her father's sister and the wife of Rochhinga is the only kin she have in their village and so she had to live with them. Tluangi on the other hand is the daughter of Thuami and Rochhinga. Lalkhawthangi is a girl who fell in love with Vanlalremi's boyfriend Malsawma, and she also bear the child of Vanthanga. She is the trouble maker between the relationship of Malsawma and Remi. As Remi was a beautiful girl, the son of an elder in the village who was a drunkard also fell madly in love with her.

In this novel Tluangi said, “Don't be scared, he is drunk and he is just talking nonsense. They will not even leave the door of our house. It's a pity my father cannot quit drinking...,” (Khawlkungi 3) talking to Remi about her father's drinking habit and how he could not quit. “I don't think my mother will have the guts to confront him. She gets beaten even when she uttered just a single word against him, she will not have the courage to confront him,” (Khawlkungi 3) talking about the problems between her mother and father. From the words of Tluangi it can clearly be seen that

her mother did not have the courage to utter a word about her father ill behavior as he misuse his power as the head of the family.

Remi's aunt Thuami told her, "Even if I wanted a divorce we have children who will be the ones to suffer the consequences. And considering my age as I'm already aged what will I do with my life and where will I go, no one might take me in. So, even if I had to suffer more than this I will have to bear it unwillingly as I have no other choice," (Khawlkungi 19) talking about her situation to Remi. It is clear that Thuami suffered domestic violence. In the definition of Deborah Lockton and Richard Ward, "The behavior that is commonly called domestic violence can take on a variety of different aspects. It can be physical assault, sexual abuse, treats of either, or psychological abuse," (7). Any emotional grievances, physical violence and sexual harassment caused to any person is domestic violence. Here are a few examples of domestic violence by Hilary Abraham, they are:

Under Mental abuse- threats, fear, threats to harm children, isolation from family and friends, loss of social contact, persistent criticism, denial of privacy, verbal abuse, deprived of sleep, money, clothes, going out, use of telephone, terror and intimidation. Under Physical violence- throwing things, kicking, slapping, hitting, pushing, shoving, grabbing, choking, strangling, suffocating, using weapon, bruising, broken bones, cuts, scratches, bitten, burnt, scalded, knocking unconscious, miscarriage due to violence, chemical in face and death. Under Sexual violence- rape, sexual assault, degrading and humiliating sexual acts. (18)

It is clear from the words of Tluangi that her mother suffered physical violence from her father, it is clear and it can be seen that she suffered domestic violence. Due to her sufferings she feared her husband; she did not have a voice in her own home as she was afraid to anger her husband further more and so she suffered tremendously in their own house. Although Remi's aunt faced many hardships and difficulties in her own home doing all the hard works, she did nothing to improve her status; she did not fight back for her rights. The thought of having nowhere to go to even if she

leave him gave her a feeling to bear everything and suffer silently as she feels that she did not have any other choice.

‘The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005’ was drafted in 2005. According to Julie Lalrinzami, “This Act will be put into action in the whole country from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006. It is an act against domestic violence practiced by men whether the victim is his wife or any other female member of the family. It is and will be practiced and put into action in Mizoram as well,” (46) explaining about the Act to protect women from domestic violence which will be used throughout the whole of India. Acts and laws against domestic violence came in really late. From *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* which depicts the period between 1940-45 it can be seen that Thuami did nothing to fight back against the domestic violence she suffered from her husband and this shows the hardships faced by women during those times.

Vanlalremi too suffered domestic violence from Rochhinga her aunt’s husband. As Rochhinga wished to have a double barreled gun he tried to marry Remi to Lalmuana which was against her will. Remi explained her situation to Malsawma and said, “Just as he heard me say that I did not wish to marry Lalmuana he pushed me down to the ground and started kicking me. I did not have the courage to say anything anymore, if I uttered another word he would have surely broken my arm as there is no one to stand by my side to protect me. And yet I am deemed guilty for running away from him,” (Khawlkungi 41). Remi bravely and openly talked about what happened to her, it can be known that she suffered domestic violence from Rochhinga, the husband of her aunt. He tried to force her into marriage against her will and even beat her up in the purpose, he threatened her by using physical violence.

According to Janet C. Lalhmingliani and Vijanti Namchoom, “In traditional Mizo society, women were generally discriminated simply on the ground of sex. The Mizo society is a patriarchal and patrilineal society...Women do not have any say in any decision making whether at home or outside,” (32) talking about the status of Mizo women in the Mizo society. Although Rochhinga was a drunkard he believe

himself to be the decision maker having ultimate power in the family and if any of the female member in the family raised a voice against him or talked about their opinion he threatened them violently using brutal force. “Christianity and its entailing benefit of education have been observed to be main conduit for the inclusion of modern ideas to such an extent that it opened doors for women outside the domestic sphere,” (Janet and Namchoom 32) this show that Christianity brought changes and paved a brighter way for women in the Mizo society.

Christianity sure did pave a way for the reformation of the status of women in the Mizo society. The period depicted in the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* shows that it was after the arrival of Christianity in Mizoram. Even the name of the Welsh missionary Pi Zaii (Kattie Huges) is mentioned in this novel. Further Kattie Hughes the Welsh missionary played an important role in the life of Vanlalremi. But still, going through their grievances it can be clearly seen that the status of women cannot be considered that good during those times. Even if women raised their voices for what they believe is right they were suppressed by means of brutal force and the reasons why they suffered domestic violence so much during those times is that they had no one to run to. There was no proper law and order against domestic violence during those times and they had nobody to protect them. They just had to suffer silently without complaining as they are forced to believe it to be the fate of women.

Vanlalremi stood against her aunt’s husband Rochhinga verbally and shows it by her behavior as well, she argued with him many times saying that she did not want to be married to Lalmuana. She said, “Uncle Ro forgive me if I said anything to insult you. I will only turn 17 this year, I am too young to marry and have a husband,” (Khawlkungi 24) showing that Remi fought her best for her rights against her uncle Roa. She not only did not wish to marry Lalmuana just because he was an alcoholic, she was still too young and not at the proper age for marriage. She also confronted her aunt and said,

Aunty I am not going to get married to Lalmuana. You yourself are married to a drunkard and you clearly know the hardships of marrying an alcoholic, even

my father never permits this kind of marriage. You must try and understand me at least for the sake of respecting the spirit of my father. Not so long ago Lalmuana impregnated Vani a girl from Maubuang village and they said that he refused to marry her. I do not want to marry such a person. If I am to marry, I will fulfill my father's wishes. I will only marry a God fearing person who never drinks alcohol, I will always try to keep and obey the words of my father (Khawlkungi 25).

Remi did not have anyone to go to in her despair, she did not have anyone to help her out of her worst situation. The only person she can tell her troubles is her aunt who herself is under the control of her husband, she did not have the courage to speak against her husband as she always get beaten up if she did so. Remi's aunt Thuami told her desperately and said, "You clearly know and sees that there is nothing we can do. You know the behavior and nature of your uncle Roa, we will only be okay if we all just heed and do as he says," (Khawlkungi 25). In this regards, James Dokhuma has said by explaining how women were treated in the Mizo society.

The way they treated women, the way they looked down upon women was far too much, the voice of women was considered void in the society. There is a saying, "Crab meat is no meat at all, a woman's voice is no voice at all", and it is often brought up when there are women trying to have a voice. Even if a woman tried to open her mouth in serious discussions "Shut up woman, you are a woman", was all they get, they were considered unfit to discuss serious matters. Whenever a discussion is brought up against someone's family and if they said that 'the head of that family is a woman', it means that they looked down upon that family as the head of the family is a woman. (269)

This could be among the many reasons that women never had the courage to raise their voice in the Mizo society even if they truly believe that they are right. James Dokhuma also said, "They believed all women to be narrow minded, they thought that if women were treated passionately they tend to forget how to behave, as

they believed women to be dominating if treated with kindness and passion, they feared that women will dominate men and as such there is an old Mizo saying, “Women and crop fields unattended gets worse day by day,” (268).

In Chapter 9 Section 128 of the Mizo Customary Law, “If a women who is beaten up by her husband ran to their neighbouring house for protection and if the owner of that house tried their best to protect her and if the husband still tried to beat up the wife in the house of their neighbour the neighbours can do anything to save the victim, anything done to the husband in such case is not considered an offence by the law,” (54). It can be seen that unless a woman ran to them for help and protection they hardly interfere in the household problems of others. Women association called Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) was formed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1974. This association was formed to upgrade and lift up the status of women in the Mizo society on various grounds. ‘The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005’ came into practice only in 2006. The Mizoram State Social Welfare Board also formed the All Mizoram Women Federation (AMWF) on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011. The federation did a great job for the uplifting and protection of women.

In the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* can see that women did not have protection, rules or acts against the domestic violence and threats caused by men during those times, there was no way for them even to fight back legally. Equality of men and women was out of the question, they could not raise a voice regarding their troubles and sufferings. But it can be seen that Vanlalremi tried her best to fight back for what she belief is her rights, she did not keep quiet like other girls. According to Lalzarzovi and Zoramdinthara, “Khawlkungi did not generally express her thoughts on the equality of men and women in her novel. But through Vanlalremi expresses how women needed freedom, freedom to marry for love and that they have a right to choose just as men do,” (404). They are explaining how the author did not naturally talked about equality but how she wanted girls to have the freedom to whose when it comes to marriage. She really wanted girls to have that right and freedom. The thoughts and opinion of the author is shown in the novel from time to time so this makes it a necessity for Khawlkungi’s opinion to be shown.



In this story there is another female character named Lalkhawthangi who was just the opposite of Vanlalremi in nature and behaviour, she is flirty and shameless. Lalkhawthangi's sisters wanted her to marry Malsawma who was Vanlalremi's boyfriend as he was employed and makes good money. Lalkhawthangi even goes to Malsawma's place without getting his approval first. But to the surprise of her sisters Lalkhawthangi was impregnated by Vanthanga before their marriage. But still they put their faith in her. Lalkhawthangi's sister Lianthangi said,

Good guys like Malsawma will never judge a girl by her looks. He will fall for a good natured and well behaved girl. You should never fall for soldiers who passed by while they are on leave. They just boasted because they serve under the government, they are talkative and likes to boast. Look at the condition of Chalmawii, she have a child without a father, even her biological mother and father cannot put up with her. An worst, the family of her child's father did nothing to support her. (Khawlkungi 78)

The above words points out many things during those times and also depicts the thoughts and status of women during those times. If they favour a girl they want to marry them off to good natured and employed bachelors having a stable job. This also shows that during those times women believed that it is a must that they should wholly depend on men. There was neither an encouragement nor an attempt for women to be independent, they were not expected to have stable jobs so they could take care of themselves. It also shows how employed bachelors tend to flirt around with girls. It also shows how the society expect all the girls to be good natured and well mannered. Below is how C. Lianthanga wrote about how girls who gets pregnant before marriage were treated and their status in the society-

If an unmarried girl have sex with a boy and if she is pregnant, she gets beaten up by her parents as soon as they knew about it. Her brothers or her father usually beats her up, the only pity she gets is from her mother who has no voice in the family, their status is really pitiful. If a girl has a bad tempered

brother she will get beaten just because of gossips about her in the society even if the gossips are false and fake. They believe it to be manly to beat up their sisters. A pregnant girl will be forced to work in the farms even if she is sick and weak, she will remain timid the whole time. (127)

This was prevalent before the arrival of Christianity in Mizoram, it became lesser and lesser after the arrival of Christianity. Nowadays the status of girls who are pregnant without marriage is really good compared to those times, they still are looked down upon in the society but it can be said that they are not harassed at home anymore. But still there might be a few who suffered harassment due to this. But during those times, during the times this novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* was based, harassment of girls pregnant without marriage was prevalent. The talk about Chalmawii's pregnancy by Lianthangi made it clear that the status of girls who were pregnant without marriage is really horrible during those times.

The novel also shows how Lalkhawthangi's condition became bad as she was pregnant before marriage. Her siblings did not mind her pregnancy if the child in her womb was Malsawma's child as they want her to marry him. Though Lalingura tried his best to persuade Malsawma to take responsibilities, Malsawma denied to be the father of the child as the child was not his. Lalingura angrily said, "You sex craving whore! I faced the angry face of others for your sake. Why haven't you confess anything till now? Tell me who the father of your child is," (Khawlkungi 104) urging his sister to tell him who impregnated her. In the novel, "He throws her down to the ground again and again," (Khawlkungi 104). It can be known that Lali got beaten up by her brother Lalingura. But Lalkhawthangi did not complain anything with regards to her sufferings, she did not say any bad words about her brother Lalingura or even tried anything to show her rights. She also refused to talk about who the father of her child is, but her elder siblings accused Malsawma to be the father of her child.

According to Siamkima, "Unlike Remi, Biakkungi and Lalchhungi, Lali was not given the opportunity to speak up," (112) blaming the author Khawlkungi for reasons why Lali stayed quiet. But in this novel Lali was scared of her brother

Lalngura. As she is under the authority of her brother she tried to make him happy and was very obedient to him. She is afraid to confess about her pregnancy and the man who impregnated her because if she did so and if her elder sibling finds that the father of the child is Vanthanga her condition could be worse than before. Lalkhawthangi did not have the courage to tell the truth. As she was afraid to tell the truth Malsawma became the victim and took much false blame. Vanthanga also married Lalchhungi who lives in the neighbour of Lali just to make her feel bad.

In the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* the women and girls inside the story did not talk much or complain about unwanted incidents that happened to them just because they are feminine, they neither talk about their grievance on the society and how the society treated them nor tried to fight for their rights in the society. Among the girls in this novel Vanlalremi tried her best to have a voice. But that also is only when she confronted her uncle Roa, her aunt Ṭhuami and Malsawma regarding her opinion and what she believes is her rights. According to Lalthansangi Ralte, “In Mizo family and society, the word submission is very important criterion for a women to become good wife. Traditionally a wife is expected to recognize the supremacy of her husband,” (2). This shows that women are expected to be loyal and good subjects of men in the Mizo family and society as a whole. These statements can be verified if we carefully examine the words and talks of women in this novel.

The sufferings of Vanlalremi from her aunts husband Rova’s violence was too much, her aunt too suffered a great deal. They suffered suppression and much domestic violence. But Vanlalremi’s aunt did nothing or raises a voice for her rights against her sufferings from her husband. She just bears it quietly as she believes it was the best she could do. The reasons behind this might be because every family and the society expect a woman to be loyally subjected to the authority of her husband and so she dare not raise her voice against her husband. Even if they did tried to raise their voice or fight for what they believe is right the people in the society will only consider them rebellious, they will be considered as a women who did not know how to respect their husbands.

It can be seen that Vanlalremi tried harder than her aunt to raise her voice and fight back for her rights. But by the end of the story it seems that the author twisted her character and makes her a submissive woman who tried her best to meet the expectation of the society and her family. In the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* although Vanlalremi rebelled against her aunt's husband Rova's wishes to marry her off to Lalmuana as she did not want to marry him, she even ran away from their house, but deep down she still have that nature of a girl that fulfills the expectation of the society and family, going through her words it can be seen that her nature is not really different from the other girls in the novel. "Uncle please don't feel bad about it. This might be the path God chooses for me. I do not have any grudge against you," (142) this is what Remi told her uncle Roa, her uncle who had done her many wrongs. This shows that Remi is kind, emotional and really caring. Rova was down with an illness and almost died when Remi told him this. This is another thing Remi thought up in her mind, "are boys really trust worthy? If I am lied to, there will be nothing worst than how I will end up!" (100). This shows that Remi is a panicking type who is easily scared, this shows how weak she is at heart.

It shows that women never have the courage to bravely speak up for their beliefs and their birth rights. In their conversation Remi's aunt Thuami said, "You clearly see that there is nothing we can really do. You know how are uncle Roa is, lets just obey his every commands, it is the only way we can all get along," (Khawlkungi 24) this was the words she said to Remi. From this that Thuami is weak and did not have the courage to speak up to defend what is right. Although she is the mother of the family, she still lives under the mercy of her husband. She did not have much authority in her own home. And in this novel it can't be seen much activity of women in the field of education, politics and religious affairs. Even though Vanlalremi did learn tailoring in this novel, there is nothing in the story that showed how she use it to secure a livelihood and look after herself. The only bright future they could hope for a girl is that they are married off to good natured boys who are government servants having a stable job.

According to Lalkima and Jasmine Lalremmawii, “As the population grows and as development began through the years distinction between boys and girls and the development of education for all started around the year 1950-1960,” (22). But as mentioned earlier the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* was during the Second World War and as such it is not strange thing that the novel did not mention about the development of education for women, the time period of the novel goes well with it. There was not any mention about any of the girls in the novel going to school, the girls such as the daughter of Remi’s aunt, Lalkhawthangi and her sisters and Vanlalremi did not go to school. But it can be seen that there already was a school at that time as the main male character of the novel Malsawma was a teacher. This also shows that boys had already advanced before girls in the field of education during those times.

During the times portrayed in this novel it can be seen that women are suppressed in the society and at home in the family as well. From the life of Remi’s aunt it can be seen that women did not much of a voice in the family as they are under the rules and authorities of men. And from Thuami (Remi’s aunt) and Lalkhawthangi it can be seen that they did not have the courage to speak the truth and to even speak for their rights. But it is also seen that Remi tried her best and argue against her uncle Rova when he tried to marry her to Lalmuana as she never wanted to get married to him. It is also seen that all the mentioned three girls got beaten up by men. They also did not have much educational backgrounds. It seems that all the women characters in the story were made to meet the expectations for the identity of women that family and society expects them to be.

Though Vanlalremi was brave in the beginning of the novel, there is nothing that shows how she stood up for other girls or how she raised her voice for other women. And by the end of the novel she humbly forgives her uncle Roa who had many times do many wrong things to her and her aunt Thuami saying that she believes everything that happened to her was for her own good. This novel showed many status of women during those times. Carefully studying the conversation of women in the novel it can be seen that they were humble, kind, emotional and weak.

They did not do much to in raising their voice to improve their status and their worst condition in the society and family affairs, there was no bold movement like a feminists movement to raise their voices during those times. And talks about equality of men and women were somewhat out of the question, it was never discussed.

Khawlkungi's book *Pasal Duhthlan* was published in 1982. *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* was published in 1977 but the time setting of the novel is during the time of World War II. The time setting of *Pasal Duhthlan* might be around the 1980's. "The Mizoram curfew have been withdrawn for quite a long time, even at night young men and women are at liberty to go out. As the curfew was withdrawn after 10 long years many people find it hard to adapt to the sudden freedom after many years of restriction," (Khawlkung 1) this is the first line that appeared in the novel. The insurgency of Mizoram was between 1966 and 1986. So the time setting of the novel can be considered as the time when the insurgency was about to end.

In the novel *Pasal Duhthlan*, as Mizoram was influenced by the developed world, new trends and development can be seen in the youths. But still girls are expected to meet the expectations of the society and family. Not much change can be seen in the status of women. As Hliri was about to go out her grandmother told her, "Dear, watching a cinema is not a good thing, people nowadays are addicted to watching cinemas and I don't think it is a good thing. If your mother was still alive she might better understand the youths today better than me. I am now too old to cope with it. You should know that is very easy to have a bad name and get disgraced for girls of your age," (Khawlkungi 4). This was the advice she gave her as she was about to go. According to Lalsangpuui, "In early Mizo society, women had been expected to be gentle, loving, caring, disciplined and hard working. So, they spend most of their time for fear that the community would look down upon them their mistakes or misconduct," (45). The Mizo society has unwritten expectations, more like a law or guidelines for the behavior and nature of a girl. If they could not meet that expectation than they will be looked down upon and disgraced in the society. In this novel Hliri's grandmother feared that her grand-daughter will carry a bad name, she wanted her to live a life that meets the expectation of the society.

Many girls have crossed the boundary of the expectations of the characters and behaviour of girls by the society and family such as girls should be good, kind, hardworking, well mannered and stay at home most of their lives. The thirst for liberty and freedom from suppression began to take place. Malsawmi's mother said, "Why should you be late for such reasons? It will be really regretful if your father hears about it. He is a religious leader in the church and he never approves such things as watching cinemas," (Khawlkungi 10). But Malsawmi talked back and answered, "Even daughters of pastors are the ones who are addicted to cinemas," (Khawlkungi 10).

In the past there is an unwritten law on how young men and women should mingle with each other. In the words of James Dokhuma, "In the Mizo society boys go to the house of girls to woo them. But a girl never goes to the house of a boy unless the matter is gravely important. Girls tried their very best to stay away from boys, it is even difficult to tell if she falls in love with a boy as they tried their best to hide it. Even if a guy tried really hard to have sex with a girl, he might have a chance to touch the tip of her cloth after three long years," (155-156). Other than working in the fields and fetching for the house girls did not have much of a spare time to go out. They only had a chance to meet boys inside their house or while they are at work like fetching firewood together and working fields together. They did not have much freedom to mingle with boys or even to have relationship with boys.

Every parents wish for their daughter to have a good husband, when a girl is at a ripe age for marriage the parents choose a suitable boy of their liking for their daughter. The choice of theirs mattered more than the choice of their daughters. According to Lalsangpuii, "The married life of a woman was another aspect which clearly revealed the position and status of women in the Mizo society. The parents were very careful in selecting a partner for their daughters," (45). This shows that the mother and father of girls carefully choose husbands for their daughters. Also in the words of Janet. C. Lalhmingpuii and Vijanta Namchoom, "Monogamy is generally practiced but a Mizo women in the traditional society had no freedom to choose her

partner in marriage which was entirely in the hands of her parents,” (33). This explains how Mizo girls are not at a liberty of choice when it comes to marriage and how it depends on the choices of their parents.

The novel *Pasal Duhthlan* Malsawmi's father and mother wishes her to marry their pastor, they tried their best to make it happen. But Malsawmi said, “I'll never be able to cope with it. Anyway he is not of my likings. I will sometimes want to watch cinemas, there will be times I want to enjoy myself, just going to church again and again is not a life for me, we will be born only once in this world and this kind of life does not suits me at all,” (Khawlkungi 22). She feared that if she married the choice of her parents she will not be able to lead a happy life as she won't be able to live freely. Malsawmi believes that if she marries a pastor her world would be narrower than before because of pressure from the society. She will have to lead a straight life, the life of a church woman looked upon by everyone. And such things as going out just for enjoying herself will not be possible anymore. But from the view of her parents marrying a pastor to their daughter is the best thing for her.

In this novel Malsawmi's views and opinions opposed the opinion of the society. Her parents wanted her to leave education so that they could marry her off to a suitable boy. Instead of motivating a girl to be successful in life they believe that a girl should marry a successful man and solely depend on him. Malsawmi said to her mother, “I am still young, I am not at the right age for marriage, let me go to college in another state,” (Khawlkungi 25) urging them to send her to college. When they discussed it with her father, he said, “It is best that you get married and have a husband. Even educated girls came home looking for a husband, I don't think it is a good idea to go away when there is a suitable man in waiting for your hand in marriage,” (Khawlkungi 25) telling her his straight opinion. In the words of Betty Freidan, “They thought they did not have to choose, to look into future and plan what they wanted to do with their lives. They had only to wait to be chosen, marking time passively until the husband, the babies, the new house decided what the rest of their lives would be,” (91). It seemed that in the Mizo society too, the future of girls is to get married and live in the shadows of their husbands.



Grace Kim Khaute stated that, “Women had no right either in the family or in the society. In body, mind and spirit, she belonged from birth till death to her father, brother, or her husband,” (35) explaining how women did not have a voice in the Mizo society, everything a girl had, body and mind is under the control of either her father, brother or her husband. In this novel *Pasal Duhthlan* it can be seen that there is a belief that the fate of girls depends on the hands of men and that it is not a necessity for girls to pursue higher education and that it is best for them to get married as soon as they find a suitable boy. This also shows that there is no equality of boys and girls in the Mizo society. Malsawmi’s mother and father also wanted her to get married instead of letting her pursue higher education.

In the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* the author Khawlkungi made two leading female characters. One character is Malsawmi and the other one is Hliri. As mentioned before Malsawmi wanted to be free from the ties of family and social obligations, she wants to be free. There is a big difference between how Remi from Khawlkungi’s novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* ran away from home because of the pressure from her aunt’s husband Rova trying to get her married to someone she did not want and how Malsawmi from the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* tried to win her freedom. Remi did not want to marry an alcoholic but she wanted to marry a God fearing man. On the other hand Malsawmi did not want to marry a pastor who was a man of God. The main reason behind Malsawmi’s refusal is that she feared that marriage to a pastor will take away her freedom. In the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* it can be seen that Vanlalremi intended and tried to live up to the norms and expectation of the society. She only fought back because her aunt’s husband beat her up and tried to let her marry an alcoholic, the way her aunt’s husband treated her was domestic violence and suppression of her rights and so she ran away so she could attain freedom from that place. But she hardly raises her voice.

Malsawmi on the other hand find it hard to live with how families and the Mizo society treated girls. She wishes to cross the boundary of social ties and to live her life freely abandoning social obligations. When she talked about her opinion and intentions to her parents she said she wanted to pursue higher education without

having a husband and the place where she wanted to pursue higher education was outside of Mizoram, a place where her parents will not see her every activities, a place where the Mizo society will not affect her. Malsawmi said to her parents, “I don’t want to get married any time soon. You all are crying pastor, pastor, but to me he is nothing. I don’t want to marry a man who is always serious. I hate going to church all the time,” (Khawlkungi 26) frankly telling them how she wanted freedom. In the novel, “Malsawmi is the daughter of a Church Elder, a daughter who is looked after with care and affection, she grow up under a strict discipline... but she grew tired of discipline, she wanted to live freely and do as she pleases, she fought for her freedom and attained her freedom,” (Khawlkungi 32).

Since Malsawmi stayed away from the watchful eyes of her parents and since she stayed in a place where Mizo society means nothing she live in any way her heart chooses, she started a relationship with Liansanga and live together as husband and wife. When Malsawmi’s mother went to visit her she saw that her daughter was living with a man, this was beyond her expectations and she was really heartbroken. But still, Malsawmi said, “Mom, there is nothing more to say. We just get married without informing anyone,” (Khawlkungi 49). According to Janet C. Lalhmingpuii and Vijanti Namchoom, “They follow the patriarchal rule of residence after marriage. Inheritance is always on the paternal line. Women do not have any say in any decision making whether at home or outside,” (31). There is an old Mizo proverb which says, “A women’s voice is no voice at all, as such, crab meat is no meat at all.” In a society such as the Mizo society where women are lowly considered girls are allowed to get married only by their parents approval, if a girl had sex before marriage and if words spread out about her sexual affairs, it might not be wrong to say that her life will never be the same again.

Malsawmi felt that all this was just a nuisance and she wanted to live her life freely. She refused to marry the pastor who was betrothed to her by her parents and continued her education out of Mizoram. And there she married a guy without the consent and approval of her parents. The character of a girl like this is wrong in the eyes of the Mizo society, a society where strict lines are drawn for girls. Still

Malsawmi did not feel ashamed by her conduct as she tell her mother, “Mother you are ignorant about many things, you don’t understand the life of the new generation, we are not the only ones that live like this,” (Khawlkungi 51). But her mother answered her, “Even if we had suitors we did everything under the watch of our parents, and if they did really wanted to marry us then they have to ask our parents for our hand. We were never anything like you all,” (Khawlkungi 51).

Hliri, the other girl character in the novel is just the opposite of Malsawmi. At the beginning of the story she was a bit like Malsawmi as she loves to watch cinema and have a habit of going out at night. But she stopped after her grandmother told her that it was not a clever thing for a girl to do such things. Just like Malsawmi’s parents did Hliri’s grandmother also gave her an advice on what she believe is good her and told her,

I am not going to be soft on you when it comes to work, but when it comes to food we will try our best to fill your appetite. One day you will be all grown, and one day you will get married, good or bad husband no one knows. You will have to settle in the house of someone else, your fate will be decided by the kind of husband you have. If you don’t learn to work now and by bad luck if you have a poor husband, who will take the blame? But if you are lucky and find a wealthy husband then you will be the one who is happy. You should always be cautious about boys, we can be brought to shame by the very ones who we thought loved us, if disgraced publicly due to sexual intercourse the disgrace can never be mended no matter how regretful you are. (Khawlkungi 23-24)

Carefully studying the advice and guidance that Thanhiri’s grandmother gave to her it can be seen that she felt that women should live in the shadow of men, that they should be subjected to the rules of men just as mentioned in the above discussions. So they should choose wisely as their future greatly depends on their husbands. It can also be observed from the words of Hliri’s grandmother that if a woman have a job her condition might be better but if she did not have a job and is

married to a poor family, her condition might not be far from worst. From the conversations mentioned it can be seen that there is a huge inequality between boys and girls, men and women. Boys are favoured over girls almost in every aspects and grounds, women are presumed to be behind men in everything. Even if they studied and are highly educated, the only future they have is to get married. And the advice and guidance they get is always about boys, to be careful from them and not to get disgraced.

Malsawmi boldly live in the way she wanted to live, she even had a husband without the consent of her parents. She live in any way she wants, even the tone of her voice is different from Hliri's tone of voice. In the words of J. Malsawma about the status of women in the old times, "The strange thing about a Mizo girl is that she always shows a happy face even after working so hard, she talks politely to everyone, it is even hard to tell who her boyfriend is as she is polite to every lads. Even though we said that she doesn't have much privacy, she takes good care of herself, it is even difficult for guys to see her calf. And to conclude, Mizo girls during those times were like slaves, they were humbled like slaves," (66). The reasons why Mizo girls behaved in such a way during the old days might be because they were suppressed by the society. The way family and society treated them could be the cause as they were not given enough freedom and there were expectations on how a girl should behave.

This too is the attitude of Thanhliiri's grandmother and Malsawmi's mother and father. This point of view is still practiced to a great extent. Even in the words of Thanhliiri, "Yes, my grandparents are really happy. For poor people like us, who are known by non this is beyond expectations. We are not only poor, we are ignorant as well, and we don't know how to do anything correctly. I feel really insignificant," (Khawlkungi 59) showing how she humbled herself. It can be seen that she felt inferior and unimportant. But the best thing to do for a girl to fit in the Mizo society was to live like Hliri and to have a point of view like her. According to the Mizo Aspirant, "As they are more weak and delicate than men and as there is a wrong moral on how the society treated them, the feeling of inferiority is implanted in them

so much that they could not shout out and raise their voices even if their rights are suppressed,” [“Women Empowerment (Hmeichhe Humhalh leh Tihhmansawn)”]. It can be seen from the tone of voices from many women in Khawlkungi’s novel that they had a feeling of insignificance, they lowly humble themselves. The motive and objectives of Feminist according to Betty Freidan are as follows-

The feminists had only one model, one image, one vision, of a full and free human being: man. For until very recently, only men (through not all men) had the freedom and the education necessary to realize their full abilities, to pioneer and create and discover, and map new trails for future generations. Only men had the vote: the freedom to shape the major decisions of society. Only men had the freedom to love, and enjoy love, and decide for themselves in the eyes of their God the problems of right and wrong. Did women want these freedoms because they wanted to be men? Or did they want them because they also were human? (96)

One of the biggest goals of the feminist is to shout for the equality of men and women in different grounds and aspects of life. But the problems women faced can differ in accordance with the society they live in. Say, women in America had to fight for a right to vote freely as men but in India women need not fight for that right. There might be inequality on grounds of education, inequality in pay scale of men and women in workplaces and some reasons maybe excessive conservative society laws imposed on women or other problems. It is a movement of women for the equality of men and women in various grounds and causes.

As mentioned above, Mizo women suffered suppression in many ways. But things are getting better and better as time goes on. In the novel Malsawmi boldly took a step for freedom, she even married the person of her choice other than the one her parents choose for her, she even continued her studies even though her parents were not okay about it. She married without the approval and consent of her families. Malsawmi did not try to stay humbled all her life, it can be seen that she could not tolerate discipline. Here, there might be a conflict in society, the will of a society

versus the urge for freedom of individuals. The novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* was based on the times of World War II, but the time setting of the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* was around the 1980's and so it is clear that the Mizo's were more civilized than before. There are women who want to live their own lives on their own accord and the thirst for freedom to live freely starts to prevail.

Malsawmi did not verbally talk about equality of men and woman or shout out against the treatment given to women by the society. But looking at how she behaves, her behavior goes along with the feminist view that a woman should have the freedom to choose whom she will marry just as men have a freedom to choose a girl they will marry. As she have been living under a strict discipline and restrictions all her life in and outside the house she must have misused her freedom the moment she was out of restrictions and discipline. In some ways it can be assumed that Khawlkungi the author of this novel is a feminist but on the other hand it can also be seen that she too is bounded by the Mizo society.

Hliri who married a pastor according to her parents will was showered with many good things, she has many inferiority complexes as compared to Malsawmi, she humbled herself lowly. She lives her life to please her family and to meet the expectations of the society. But the author favoured Hliri over Malsawmi and let her prosper. She twisted the story of Malsawmi as it turned out her husband was already married; she married another woman's husband. "She ate the medicine before going to bed, but the baby in her womb had grown too big that it could not be aborted by pills.... Malsawmi struggled in her bed for a while and then she died," (Khawlkungi 61). Malsawmi lost her life in her attempt to abort her baby. But she made Hliri lucky and blessed.

Khawlkungi also made an unfortunate character called Mawii (Nunmawii) in the novel *Pasal Duhthlan*. Mawii is the wife of Liansanga who committed adultery with Malsawmi. From the words of Nunmawii her husband Liansanga was what he was only because of her family, he was able to pursue education because of Mawii's family, "I will say whatever I want to say. You don't have the power to make me

stop. Frankly speaking it is because of us that...,” (Khawlkungi 67) was what Mawii said. And, “You achieved success only because of us, you are not entitled to treat me like this. You will surely pay for this”, (Khawlkungi 66) is what Mawii said. She also said, “I can’t live a life like this anymore. I thought that I had a husband who never drinks, I used to thought myself lucky. My mother and father tried their best and used lots and lots of money so he could study higher for higher jobs, and this is how he ended up,” (Khawlkungi 69). The words of Mawii do not seem to be humble at all. She can talk back to her husband in any manner she wants and even told her husband Liansanga that he is what he is only because of the support of her family.

Thanpuii Pa (J. Malsawma) said, “The Mizo women, released from slavery from the old days, are now too free that they now almost put men under their control,” (67). In the novel too the nature of being humble at all times started to disappear from some girls, they started to grow bold. Mawii appeared to be more capable and powerful than men. But on the other hand, Mawii’s father and mother find a job for her husband. Mawii depends on the income of her husband. And as her husband Liansanga started having another girlfriend and started to behave badly, it can be seen that she was the one who suffers the most when there is a disturbance in their marriage as her husband was the bread earner who she depended upon even though he secured his job only with the help of her parents.

Vanlalhruii said, “Education uplift and improve a human being. It is the best weapon to secure our rights and improve our status in a society. Be it money making, for food and other necessities, politics, social life and personal life, education builds up a person, it is the best means to secure a life and to save anyone from poverty,” (65). It can be seen in the novel that Mawii felt regretful for not pursuing higher education after there was turmoil in their marriage. It was written in the story, “She felt a deep regret for not pursuing higher education,” (Khawlkungi 80).

The novel showed many status and positions of women in the Mizo society. Malsawmi goes by her own will and fell in love with a man, she married a man named Liansanga soon after she was out of the reach of her parents discipline and the

eyes of the society. But her husband turned out to be in a current marriage, even though she was pregnant with a baby there was no hope for her. “Is she really impregnated by a married man? What will people think of her? This will be a disgrace for her mother and father who are both religious leaders. So Malsawmi had no other choice but to abort the baby,” (Khawlkungi 59). In any incidents like this in a Mizo society women are always the ones to suffer the most, it was not only Malsawmi who suffered due to this illicit relation, Nunmawii the wife of Liansanga also suffered a lot. In Section 494 of the Indian Penal Code, “If any person who is in a current marriage married another person without divorcing his/her former wife/husband. He/she is liable for an imprisonment up to the period of 7 years,” (“India Dan Hnuaia Hmeichhiate Hamthatna”). What Liansanga committed is a grave crime.

He not only tricked his wife, he also tricked Malsawmi as well and left them in despair. But women during those times did nothing to claim their rights, it might also be because of ignorance. It can be seen that they are always the ones who suffer the consequences. Malsawmi and Nunmawii were more extreme and go further than Hliri, it is also clear that they were bold and brave by the tone of their voice. But their positions were really bad at the end of the novel. It can also be seen that even though women had not raise their voices to uplift their status, it was still not really good during those times.

In Khawlkungi’s novel *Pasal Duhthlan* the author let a man narrate about the character of girls instead of letting a woman narrate it. There is an old Mizo proverb which says, “Never mind talks of a woman, let women and bitches growl until they are satisfied,” “A wisdom of women never cross the boundary of a pond,” this was the way they want to talk. In the words of James Dokhuma, “The way they treated and looked down upon girls was way too much, they never seriously consider the voice of a woman... if a woman speaks up during a serious discussion, ‘Keep your mouth shut, you are a woman,’ was all they get, they are not considered fit to discuss serious matters,” (269) talking about how lowly considered women were in the Mizo society.



Even though the status of women changes through time it can be assumed that the feeling of the author of the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* is still constrained by this view. Mawia said, “Girls are not created only for the amusement of boys. Think of how valuable and precious a mother is. I understand the status and condition of women just for the sake of my mother. And for this reason I respect women, but still there are many who are not worth respecting as they have lowly disgraced themselves,” (Khawlkungi 9). Mawia again said, “My mother’s love made me respect and admire women. There is no love in this world that can compare to a mother’s love,” (Khawlkungi 71). The author of this novel does not boldly and directly show the image and status of women.

Whenever there is a girl to girl conversation in the novel the main topic is to be careful from boys and not to bring disgrace upon themselves. Some parts of the novel shows the humbleness of girls who regard themselves lowly, and those girls are considered good and worthy, the story also shows how such girls are worthy to be a bride from the life of Hliri. But Mawii and Malsawmi are nothing like Hliri when it comes to humbleness and obedience. The novel also show how they became heart broken as one man played a dirty trick on both of them. But in reality it can be assumed that the author tried to instill in the story about the necessities of men to change their point of view on women and the lowliness of the status of women. Also from the life of Hliri who humbly subjects herself to the will of her husband, the author placed her as the better creation.

Khawlkungi published the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* in the year 1998. She published the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* after 16 years from the published of the novel *Pasal Duhthlan*. So it can be seen in this novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* that the status and condition of women is so much better than that of *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* and *Pasal Duhthlan*. Even in terms of education girls have equal opportunities as that of boys to pursue higher studies, they even went out of Mizoram to pursue education. In the words of Lalsangpuui, “After several decades of hardships, numerous difficulties and social stigma, women in Mizoram have come a long way. From the homebound

housewife, the Mizo women have made use of her education in becoming the women she has become today. She can be seen everywhere working her way in offices, business houses, restaurants, schools, colleges, universities, and market places,” (37). Mizo women gradually advance and develop little by little. Sangpuii’s uncle encouraged her and said, “You should study with all your efforts, tell me whenever you needed money, I will try my best and send it to you. Your mother is our eldest sibling, your father passed away too soon... your younger siblings are still very little, always remember that you will be the bread earner of your family,” (Khawlkungi 42).

It can be seen from the words of Sangpuii’s uncle that he wanted a girl to be educated and successful. From this novel it can also be seen that a woman is good enough to look after a family and the novel also shows how girls played an important role in different jobs such as office works, school, colleges and other business activities just as Lalsangpuii had said. Apart from Sangpuii, Hmingi who took in Sangpuii was also a student who lives in Delhi to pursue higher education. The author of the novel portrayed girls of different characters in this novel just as she did in her other novels. The nature and character of Sangpuii was really different from Hmingi’s nature and character. And another girl character in this novel named Thangi is also a self reliant girl who knows how to make money. In the novel it can be seen that Hmingi and Thangi are carefree and live anyway they want.

Thangi is not only a business woman she was also involved in drug trafficking. Tluanga said, “Thangi, you are a girl, it is unbelievable that you are involved in such things as drug trafficking. Do you know that you are not different from a killer? As you already know we are heading to Delhi, we’ve got all our tickets,” (Khawlkungi 51). But Thangi replied, “First help me solve my case, I will pay for all your tickets tomorrow. By the way you live in my neighbour and as a neighbour it is your duty to help me out,” (Khawlkungi 51). From the words of Thangi it can be seen that she is not hesitant at all. It can also be seen that she was not at all moved or shamed by the remarks of Tluanga. According to Anurag Paul, “However, the advent of Christianity and the expansion of education brought about tremendous changes in the status of the

Mizo women. Women are no longer considered inferior to their male counterparts. Women, today, are self-confident and self-reliant,” (“An Insight Into An Indian State You Know Too Little About”) saying that Christianity has changed the status of Mizo women in the society and that it gives them self-confidence to a great extent.

In the meanwhile it can also be seen from the novel of *Duhtak Sangpuii* that some girls misused their freedom. Thangi also tricked Tluanga and another friend of his and caused them to suffer for a crime they have not committed from her drug trafficking partner. Thangi’s behavior and character was mentioned like this-

She had ran a drug business for a long time with this guy named Paul. Thangi was somewhat lucky that she did not get caught earlier. She made a huge amount of money due to her drug business. But this time she was caught red handed. She did not go to prison as Tluanga and Vala tries their best to help her out, she was let go after they paid a huge amount of bail money. She did not want her father and mother to know about this incident but they will not mind even if they were told about it as she earns lots and lots of money, complaining about their daughter might be like talking to a log, they will surely turn a deaf ear. (Khawlkungi 76)

The novel shows that this is now the condition of women in some families. Some girls who knows how to make money are now the bread earner in the household of some families, Khawlkungi the author of the novel also shows that such girls have a voice and authority in their families. The author also showed that there are many girls who misused their freedom and independence, girls who are carefree and did not mind to make money illegally.

From the behavior of Hmingi from the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii*, it can be seen that women are more liberated than from the olden days. According to Lalsangpuii, “Parents are giving equal attention to the education of girl in both technical and general education. Mizo women’s position as a whole is better and promising now,” (49). Hmingi said, “I won’t come home as soon as I finish my exams because I am

planning to learn shorthand. Please inform my parents about my plan if you happen to meet them though I've already sent them a letter," (Khawlkungi 96). From her words and behavior it can be seen that girls can live in any way they want and do whatever they wish to do. From the tone of her voice it can be considered that Hmingi had a lot of self-confidence and can take care of herself. In other words of Hmingi she said, "You were seen together a lot. He regularly comes to our place, anyone who sees you together will surely be suspicious. Besides the boys from our states easily gets jealous for no reasons," (Khawlkungi 97). From her words it is seen that Hmingi criticize Mizo boys.

Hmingi was also impregnated by Hussain, a man from another race. In the meantime Hussain refused to marry her. Hmingi cried, "How am I supposed to live without you? Even if I go home people from my tribe will never take care of me. Please don't leave me," (Khawlkungi 106) as she pleaded Hussain. Chhingi also said, "Some of the students who went to other states for education came home pregnant, this arouse a feeling of suspicion. Lucky for us we are not wealthy enough to send Mami to other states for education, and even if we are wealthy enough to do so, I will not allow her to go," (Khawlkungi 110).

Women are now really liberated in the fields of education, work, business and many other fields. On the other hand there is a Mizo tradition on how girls should behave, "In the Mizo society there are certain things that is considered normal when the doer/performer is a boy, but if a girl did the same thing it is considered unusual and disgraceful. There is a huge difference and inequity on how people see and treat a drunk boy and girl, or say a boy and girl who commit theft," (Lalhmingchhuanga Zongte, 253) and it can be seen that this point of view still exist in the Mizo society.

In the Mizo tradition during the old days, "If a boy and a girl have sex before marriage and if the girl gets pregnant, the family of the girl will beat her up as soon as they knew her pregnancy," (C. Lianthanga, 127) this is the condition of a girl in the Mizo society if she gets pregnant before marriage. Their status will deteriorate and they will be mistreated by their families and the society as a whole. But these

problems and conditions became better and better as time goes by. But Mizo society's view on girls who are pregnant before marriage, girls who gets impregnated by boys from another race and girls who married boys from another race is somewhat still the same as the old days.

V. Vanlalruati said, "Education is very important for the development of girls. Money for education allotted to boys should not be denied to girls just because they will be married off to settle in someone else's family. Girls should be guided with education to enable them to stand on their own and to help them start a good family," (54). According to Lalsangpuui, "In Mizo society, both boys and girls take their identity from the father. While a son is a permanent member of this unit, a daughter is viewed as a transient or not permanent member," (44). In the families of a Mizo society boys are favoured over girls and they are denied of many things given to boys as there is an opinion that they will be married off to someone else's family, they are not considered as a permanent member of family. And as mentioned earlier there is a notion for the unnecessary of higher education for girls. This notion and belief is practiced by other societies as well. In the suffrage movement of the first wave feminism they tried their best for the education of girls and for the opportunity of girls to pursue higher education.

This was the problems girls faced in the old days but now there is no discrimination between boys and girls. In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui*, "Hmingi who bears the child of a boy from another race had to live with her brother and his wife as she has no where else to go. Vana and his wife could not put up with Hmingi and her child, a quarrel often broke out between them," (Khawlkungi 122). Khawlkungi also portrayed the worse condition of girls who were pregnant before marriage. In the meantime Hmingi who was highly educated and capable of doing many things soon find a job. "Hmingi was really happy now that she can earn money as she has a job, she was healthier than before and as the climate was a favourable one, she was even prettier than before. She now has money to send for her son's education as money was not a problem for the time being," (Khawlkungi 125). It can be seen that it is much easier for an educated person to overcome troubles. But this might not be same

for all women taken as a whole. But still, considering the time setting of this novel it can be seen that the condition of women have so much improved even in those times.

It can be seen that there is a desire for women to have a good status both in and outside household activities in the mind of the author. In the words of Janet C. Lalhmingpuii and Vijanti Namchoom, “Women did not have any legal claim on the family property except a small share at the time of marriage which they carried with them as a form of dowry. Even in these absence of a male child, a daughter could not claim, as a matter of right, the family property, but would normally go to the nearest male relative,” (32-33). James Dokhuma said, “Women do not have a chance when it comes to heirship, inheritance and guardianship,” (267). J. Zorema also said, “In fact, women did not inherit any property. The property of a deceased person was divided among the sons; the youngest son will look after his parents in their old age when the elder brothers established themselves on their own separately. Failing a son, the nearest male member of the deceased relative would inherit the property,” (14). From the above words it can clearly be seen that girls did not have a chance when it comes to heirship and inheritance in a Mizo society.

This is the explanation of Lalnghakthuami on the status of Mizo women when it comes to work, heirship and possessions.

In Mizoram women worked really hard in the household and in earning bread for the family. We can be considered as a pillar for the family. But in the meantime, how much authority and control do we have over the things we earned and obtained? We may build a house from our hard earned money. But how much authority do we have over these things? There is a big question behind this. Therefore there is a question on whether or not to put the family's belongings such as estates in the name of both husband and wife as joint holders and bank accounts etc. as joint account holders in the name of husband and wife. We might not have used much thoughts and considerations on matters relating to this. (8)

It seems that Khawlkungi already had the notion that girls should have a voice in the family and that they should have authority over the things they bought with their hard earned money. Khawlkungi did not use the voices of her characters in the novel to shout out how women should have the rights for possessions and the necessity to improve the status of women like feminist do. But in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui*, when Hmingi's father wrote his will on who will inherit his wealth, he wrote his will in such a way that not only his son but both his daughters Hmingi and her younger sibling Zuitei will have a fair share. Hmingi said to her father, "Father, I can look after and take care of myself, don't worry about me," (Khawlkungi 153) meaning that she did not expect her father to include her in his will. But her father told her,

You do not have a house of your own yet. I will leave our house at Aizawl in your name, it believes it will need lots of refurbishment and I believe you will be the most capable one to do it so. Your younger sister Zuitei will inherit our house in Kolasib, if she have a husband in the future they can live together in the house if they wish to, its all up to them. You brother Vana have a stable job, he spends most of his time out of Mizoram and as he is more settled and comfortable out there he might not wish to come back just to settle in Mizoram. I have a vast area of cultivating land in Chemphai, I hired non-Mizo workers to look after it. I think your brother will be the best to look after it. (Khawlkungi 153-154)

he made his will and divided his properties among his son and daughters without any exceptions due to gender difference. His daughters never pleaded him to make them his heirs, even Hmingi tried to refuse his offer in making her on of his heirs. But her father wisely divided his will among all three of his children without any exceptions between boys and girls, even if they have husbands in the future and if any bad luck befalls them in the future he made sure that his daughters will not be left destitute.

Although only boys are qualified for heirship and inheritance in the Mizo society and though there are no chances for girls to inherit the family's property in the Mizo Customary Law, it can be seen that it is very important for the head of the family to make his will wisely and divide his properties equally among boys and girls without any discrimination. The author points out the necessity of men to change their point of view. According to Julie Lalrinzami, "Even though there is no law for girls in the Mizo Customary Law for the right to inherit, but there is a way for girls like other tribes/races do. A Father/husband can make wills for his wife/daughters while he is still alive even if he did not divide his properties among them," (47). The author of the story also seems to agree with this. Khawlkungi might also have a viewpoint to enable girls for the right to inheritance of properties.

In the novel Khawlkungi made two characters Thangi and Hmingi who can take care of themselves and really confident, they can take care of themselves in education, securing jobs and doing business. But the way she portrayed them in the novel is very undesirable. Thangi was involved in illegal drug trafficking and Hmingi was pregnant with the child of a boy hailing from another race/tribe. The author made another character named Sangpuii who was just the opposite of them. Sangpuii was meek and humble in her every word, "It is right, uncle, I solely depend on you," (Khawlkungi 43) this is the words of Sangpuii, it can be seen how humble she is from the tone of her voice. In the words of Lalnghakthuami, "As we all know that women/girls in Mizoram live under the authority of men as the Mizo society is a patriarchal society. Our way of living and modes of thoughts is influenced by this patriarchy," (9). Even the author of this novel is influenced by this patriarchy in many ways.

Khawlkungi always portrayed girls who lived and behaved according to the norms of the Mizo society as the main character in her novels. But on the other hand she favoured girls over boys to have opportunities in many ways like education, securing jobs and for the rights of inheritance. It can be seen that Khawlkungi was a feminist in many ways. But still, it is necessary to be humble towards men, and to live and behave in the way society expects a girl to live and behave.



Thanpuii Pa (J. Malsawma) said, “Though we said they did not have much time for privacy, they really take good care of themselves, it is not an easy thing to have a glance at their calf. And so, in the old days the Mizo women were like slaves, they were always lowly humbled,” (66) and it can be assumed that Mizo women were just as he said. C. Lianthanga also said, “The Mizo girls were really careful about their live and behavior,” (37). The word they were really careful about their live and behavior says a lot. It can mean that they are careful in how they perform their daily household chores, how they talk to boys and how they are careful from boys and not to have sex before marriage and how they are careful not to be a topic of gossip in the society.

In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii*, Sangpuii was really careful in her behavior, she live and behaved in such a way as to meet the expectation of her family and the society as a whole. She never tried to overpower men and she did not live in any way she wants. Sangpuii said to Hmingi, “I am not comfortable to be close to boys. Besides he is a boy from another race. I have never had a boy for a close friend in my life. I don’t like mingling with anyone from other races and apart from that I don’t like to befriend someone I know nothing about,” (Khawlkungi 77). Sangpuii tried her best to be careful with her life, although their teacher Hussain fell for her and wanted her desperately she did not want to built a relationship with him as he was from another race. She tried her best to keep her distance from him.

Sangpuii cared about her family, she was very obedient to her uncle. It can be seen from her words that she is a caring person who puts the necessities of others before her. “Mother I think it is best for you to go back to our old home in our village. It will be less noisy in there than here, you will be much healthier in the village. If it concerns your health I will never be against going back to the village,” (Khawlkungi 112) said Sangpuii to her mother. She was not like Hmingi who live in any way she wants, who did not hesitate to be in a relationship with boys from other races and who did not really care about her families. Sangpuii was always humble whenever she speaks, it can be guessed that she had a lot of inferiority complex.

“Can I teach in the primary school where my father used to teach and take the place of my late father? I don’t think I will qualify to teach High School,” (Khawlkungi 113) implying how she wants to teach the lower class. In her novels the author Khawlkungi portrayed a good girl as a girl who is not proud, she always portrayed a good girl as a humble, well mannered and behaved girl.

Although Khawlkungi portrayed humble, obedient and well mannered girl in the novel, when it comes to marriage she allowed them to have their own ways. She wanted girls to marry their choice and their love. According to Irene Colbert, “Girls were sometimes compelled to marry against their will by greedy fathers for the sake of a handsome bride price. Lovers could not marry because the boy was too poor to satisfy the high demand of the girl’s family,” (5-6). In a Mizo society girls might have boys they fell in love with but when it comes to marriage their fathers have full authority over them. There can be a lot of troubles when it comes to the discussion of payment for the bride if they are not satisfied with the suitor of their daughters. C. Lianthanga also said, “If the suitor’s family agreed to pay a hefty amount for their daughter some men married their daughters to those suitors even if their daughters are not willing to get married, they were married off crying,” (133). It can be seen that Khawlkungi really wish for girls to have a freedom to marry only the ones they love and the desire of their heart.

In Khawlkungi’s novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, Vanlalremi moved out of her aunt’s place as she did not want to marry the man her aunt’s husband have chosen for her. And from the title of the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* which literally means *Choosing Bridegroom* it is about girls choosing their bridegroom. In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* even though Sangpuui was an obedient girl, who take good care of herself and who was very humble she resisted when her mother talked about marrying her to a boy she did not wish to marry. “Mami I think Liana is really in love with you. He is the son of a king, even though they cannot exercise their powers anymore, they are still looked upon and respected by everyone. Besides he has a stable job in Aizawl. And to think that he fell in love with you despite our status and condition, it will be really

beneficiating for our family as well,” (Khawlkungi 127) said her mother in their discussions.

It can be seen that status in the society played an important role when it comes to marriage. But Sangpuii replied, “Mother how you can exchange words without my conscience? You know that I have a stable job too. I can take care of the necessities to send my younger siblings to school,” (Khawlkungi 128). This moment is the only time in the novel that Sangpuii raised her voice in a sharp tone. It can be surmised that Khawlkungi the author of this novel believed that girls should marry freely and that they have a right to choose a husband. The author made a humble and obedient girl character in this novel to suddenly become disobedient when it comes to marriage without her consent.

According to Nagarajan, “From the feminist perspective, on the other hand, modernism can be interpreted as an outward expression of women’s movements fighting for suffrage and equal rights; and reflecting the changes in the relationship between men and women in growing, permissive society,” (211). And according to R.S Malik and Jagdish Batra, “‘Feminism’ takes a hard look at the real position of women in society which discriminates against women mainly due to sexual difference,” (76).

According to the definition of Reflection of Passion, “Some feminist nowadays are sometimes going too far. Some Feminist study group declared that, ‘When the world began, women were more powerful than men, men took overthrow them a gained authority by brutal force,’ (“Feminism leh Hmeichhiate”). In the beginning women in the feminist movement were fighting for the right to vote, the right to education, the right to equal salary and to abolish discrimination in the field of work. They fight for the rights of women in religious and political affairs. But as the difficulties and troubles faced by women/girls are not the same in every country and places, the precept and voices of feminism is different in many palaces and countries. But as the feminist movement goes on there are many feminist who are too extreme and went too far.

In her novels Khawlkungi did not literally mentioned about equality of men and women through the voices of her female characters in the novel or through her words. But it cannot be said that Khawlkungi is not a feminist, it can be seen that she portrayed the status of women in the society as a lesson, a chance of inheritance for girls and she also wished that girls should have the freedom to choose whom they will marry as she was a woman herself. But in the mean time it might not be wrong to say that she believed girls to be weaker than boys and that girls/women should humbly live under the control of men. She is not an extremist of feminism like many other feminist. According to the words of Mizo aspirants, “As women/girls are physically weaker in strength than boys/men and as their build and physique differs from that of boys/men, their behaviors and thoughts are not the same as men/boys. Their mode of behavior is greatly different from that of boys, as they have a weaker build than boys their nature is more delicate than boys, and this is the reason that they need boys/men to protect and lift them up when needed,” [“Women Empowerment (Hmeichhe Humhalh leh Tihhmansawn)”] and it can be seen that Khawlkungi considered this to be acceptable.

The status of women is much better in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* compared to the status of women in the previous novels. But still, men are the ones who lift up women. It is still seen that girls are dependent on men and that they only rise higher with the help and support they get from men. Sangpuii also did not have a father and she was with her mother but her uncle Lalliana provided everything for her. He paid all the necessities for her educations. “If you do not want to change your mind, than that means you will not be able to continue your studies. If there is a job for a teacher in your village it is best to arrange for your departure as soon as possible. Nowadays there are many unemployed graduates, so it might be hard to find a job for you. Anyway I will talk to my superiors and see what I can do about it,” (Khawlkungi 112) said Sangpuii’s uncle who arranged a job for her as well.

And it is written, “Then after one year had passed Sangpuii became the Head Teacher of Lungdar (E) Primary School in the place of her late father,” (Khawlkungi 113). Sangpuii and her mother were looked after and lifted up by Lalliana, the

younger brother of Sangpuii's mother. Even though Hmingi was a woman who can take care of herself Hussain left her lots of money when he was about to leave her, it was written, "He left her a huge amount of money, for her money is not a problem," (Khawlkungi 107). Even though Hmingi was pregnant with the child of Hussain she did not face many problems as he had left a huge amount of money for her. Besides her father include her in his will and she will inherit an estate from her father, so she will not be too unfortunate and destitute. Also Tluangi was rescued and bailed by Tluanga and his friend when she gets caught by the police because of drugs. So Khawlkungi showed in her novel that even if a girl/woman is very capable or anything, still they are weaker than boys/men in many things and as such they need to depend on men and need to be uplifted by men.

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### Chapter-3

#### **Analytical Study of Empowerment of Women in Romuanpuii Zadeng's Selected Novels**

Romuanpuii Zadeng, born on 12 January 1979 in Chawngtlai village, is a prominent contemporary Mizo writer. Her parents are Rothangpuia (father) and Hrangliani (mother). As the second eldest of five siblings (two brothers, two sisters), her education progressed through Khawzawl Primary School IV (primary), Modern Middle School Khawzawl (middle school), and Government Khawzawl High School (Matriculation, Class X). She completed Higher Secondary (Class XII) at Government Dinthar Higher Secondary School, earned a B.A. from T. Romana College, and obtained an M.A. in Political Science from IGNOU. While her permanent residence remains Khawzawl, she currently lives in Dinthar Veng, Aizawl.

Widely recognized as a leading female author, Zadeng demonstrated literary aptitude from an early age. She reflects: "Before I knew how to read and write I used to narrate stories. I began telling stories shortly after I learned to talk," (Interview with Romuanpuii Zadeng). Her literary career commenced with the novel *Puk Dangdai* (2000), followed by consecutive publications: *Parfungchawi* (2004), *Tainamfa* (2007), *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* (2008), *Tawksir* (2010), and *Sihlipui* (2012) was acclaimed as the 2012 Book of the Year by the Mizo Academy of Letters. Her latest work *Inleh* (2018).

Beyond novel writing, Zadeng has composed recitations and approximately five hundred songs and poems, maintaining continuous creative output to the present day. Consequently, her total corpus remains uncatalogued. She preserves most lyrics and poetry in manuscript form while regularly posting selections for public access on social media platforms like Facebook. Her artistic practice extends to painting, which constitutes a significant avocational pursuit. In 1999, she founded the drama group Mamawhtute Thian (Friend of the People in Need). This ensemble predominantly stages her original dramatic works.

Zadeng has additionally authored plays for external theater troupes, though these dramatic works remain unpublished manuscripts rather than publicly released texts. She has further produced articles and essays, sharing select pieces on social media platforms like Facebook for public engagement. Her multidisciplinary literary practice spans numerous genres, a scope she contextualizes through economic pragmatism: “Even if I wanted to publish books, I am still afraid I will not get enough sales. Novels on the other hand are selling as people love reading novels. This is why I published only novels” (Zadeng).

A pioneering achievement includes her publication of Mizoram's first photoromance, “Ih e...” While Zadeng's contributions to Mizo literature are substantial, the non-publication of her songs, poetry, articles, essays, and plays constitutes a significant lacuna in her complete oeuvre.

Zadeng's complete novelistic oeuvre falls beyond the scope of this chapter. Three works, *Puk Dangdai* (2000), *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* (2008), and *Sihlipui* (2012), are selected for focused analysis. This study will examine representations of: women's status in political spheres, experiences of domestic violence, socio-familial marginalization, gender-based disparities, female agency and resistance. As a writer born in 1979, Zadeng is classifiable as a contemporary novelist whose works engage with immediate socio-cultural contexts. Notably, *Puk Dangdai* (her debut novel) eschews historical settings in favour of depicting its own temporal reality mirroring the author's lived present during composition.

Women's experiences of hardship and suppression manifest disparately across geographical and cultural contexts, precluding universal homogeneity in feminist discourse. As established in Chapter 1, feminism's historical development is categorized into distinct waves: First-Wave, Second-Wave, and Third-Wave Feminism. Emmaline Soken-Huberty delineates the foundational objective: “First-wave feminism had a fairly simple goal: have society recognize that women are humans, not property. While the leaders of 1st-wave feminism were abolitionists, their focus was on white women's rights” (Types of Feminism: The Four Wave.). A paramount achievement of this movement was suffrage advocacy, particularly in

America where disenfranchisement constituted a fundamental rights violation. Margaret Walters historicizes this struggle, “In the course of the 19th century, the vote gradually became central of feminist demand...But winning the vote proved a complicated struggle, and one that lasted for decades,” (68).

In the words of Tara Anand, “The Second Wave of feminism is usually demarcated from the 1960s to the late 1980s. It was a reaction to women returning to their roles as housewives and mothers after the end of the Second World War...Issues of rape, reproductive rights, domestic violence and workplace safety were brought to the forefront of the movement and there was widespread effort to reform the negative and inferior image of women in popular culture to a more positive and realistic one,” (“A Brief Summary of The Third Wave of Feminism”).

Women raised their voices in many different ways, the voices of women in the field of literature is also put into a lot of studies. Closely looking into the story of the novel *Puk Dangdai* by Romuanpuui Zadeng it can be seen that she placed women above men in many aspects. She pointed out the power and strength of women and their bravery through the voices and deeds of women in her novel. In the words of Kathleen Iannello, “A third wave of feminism is thought to have begun in the 1990s and continues to the present day. This wave has the potential to empower women by helping them shatter the “glass ceiling” in politics, business, and other fields to which women have limited access, whether it be the presidency of the United States or chief executive officer of major corporation,” (71). Tara Anand also said, “Girl bands such as Riot Grrrl spread messages of female empowerment through punk rock and started discussions of patriarchy and body image amongst teenagers listening of their music...Strong female feminist characters became more common when adolescent girls became a powerful demographic in media and a generation of girls grew up in a completely different feminist environment and their mothers”. It can be seen that women in the Third Wave Feminism fiercely raise their voices for women empowerment and development.

There were three women casted in Zadeng's novel *Puk Dangdai*, they are Lalbeli, Ramngaizeli and Bawihtei. These three women all have a deep relation. Lalbeli is the mother of Ramngaizeli and Ramngaizeli is the mother of Bawihtei. When Lalbeli the mother of Ramngaizeli was dating Rama, Lalbeli was impregnated by Rama. But her father still tried to marry her to the man of his choice. Lalsangpuui said, "Traditionally, the father was the head of the family and he was all-in-all over all his family affairs. His power and authority over his families was almost infinite," (43). This patriarchal rule is depicted in the story of this novel, the story showed how Lalbeli is not allowed to marry the man of her choice and how her father tried to get her married to the man of his choice.

But it can be seen in this novel how Lalbeli rebelled against this, she said to her father, "You valued wealth and riches over your daughter's happiness, you choose to make me weep than to see me happy, as for me I choose my child over any wealth and riches. Don't bother about my well being, you can search for me anywhere you think I would be, but you will never find me anymore," (Zadeng 16) and saying this she left her family. Ramngaihzuai did her best to take care of herself after she left home. But still she advised her daughter saying, "I have never really forgotten your father, I still miss him dearly. But I did not heed the words of my father and live my life any way I wanted to live and this is going to lead me to an untimely death. I will not be this sorry if the consequence of my choice effects only me and me alone... try your best to approve the choice of your family and try your best not to end up like me," (Zadeng 17). And this was the words she told her daughter despite her past sufferings due to her family.

According to N. Asharudeen, "Most of the women writers in English literature try to struggle with male and they accuse the patriarchal society which interrupts their growth. 'Feminism' is a term which is actually to extend hand for women to attain equality in private and public context. Instead of the raising voice for suppressed women in society, there are some women writers who have the obsession of being against male intentionally," ("Voice of Women Writers in English Literature"). This literally means that women writers wrote about the struggles of

women to be free from the power and control of men, about the upliftment and empowerment of women from suppression in the society. In this novel *Zadeng*, Lalbeli go against her father's wishes and struggled by herself in taking care of her daughter. From this can see the suppression of women in the Mizo society and how hard they struggled to make ends meet. But in the end it can be seen that her choices had bad impacts on her life as she could not bear the struggle anymore. She also changed her mind in the end and this can be seen in the words she told her daughter on her dying bed.

Lalbeli's daughter Ramngaizeli also faces many hardships in life. Lalbeli faces troubles because of her father and the story depicts the hardships she faced in life due to this. Ramngaizuali on the other hand faces many difficulties because of her husband. But Ramngaizuali is a brave women. She tells her husband,

You should know this. You are the one who brought us to this place, and yet you forsake us in this place of other tribes and society where we are far away from relatives and families, you clearly know how blind and ignorant I am, if by any chance your daughter and I got into trouble in the hands of other tribes...you are the only one to blame for the mishaps, you should always keep in mind that you are the one who defamed the Mizo society as a whole in front of other tribes. By grace if luck favors Bawihte and if she grew up to be a successful person, know that you will never have a say in anything or claim to her, she is and will be mine and mine alone. (*Zadeng* 24)

The narrative meticulously delineates the protagonist's experience of marital oppression. James Dokhuma's juridical analysis provides critical context: "Women did not stand a chance when it comes to heirship of properties and guardianship of children. No matter what the reason for the divorce is, guardianship of children always go to the husband," (267). This testimony reflects the Mizo Customary Law's institutionalized disenfranchisement of women regarding property inheritance and filial custody rights, constituting a core mechanism of patriarchal hegemony that structurally subordinates female agency.

Within this normative framework, the character Ramngaizeli enacts discursive resistance through her declaration that she has full claim over our daughter and will claim her no matter what. While not constituting direct jurisprudence on customary inequalities, the novel's interrogation of gendered power dynamics embodies significant sociolegal critique.

The writer of the novel *Puk Dangdai* portrays and characterizes women in the story. The life of women working in brothels, their status and their voices can be seen in the story of this novel. In the words of Sarah Sherman,

Second wave feminists have a lot of issues with prostitution. A lot of their issues with prostitution mainly stem from the issues they were fighting the most against, which is the oppression and /or subordination of women...Since second wave feminists were fighting so much against the oppression of women and the patriarchy in general, it is not surprising that the biggest issue that they take with prostitution is that they feel it reinforces the power of men and their place in society. ("On Feminism and Sex Work")

Prostitution, the commercial exchange of sexual services, constitutes a global phenomenon. Where legally prohibited and socially stigmatized, women in sex work experience profound marginalization. Second-Wave Feminism explicitly opposed prostitution, characterizing it as a mechanism to subjugate and exploit women and mounting sustained activism against the practice. Conversely, Third-Wave Feminism adopts a more nuanced position, as Sarah Sherman observes: "It would be incorrect to say that third wave feminists proponents of prostitution, but they are definitely not opponents of prostitution. As was stated before, third wave feminists are the most concerned with threats to women's rights and issues that affect women. Third wave feminists believe that being a prostitute can be a voluntary choice, and you can be proud of that choice, and proud that you have the rights to enable you to be a prostitute" ("On Feminism and Sex Work").

Feminist did not approve prostitution. The talk about Third Wave Feminist supporting prostitution is also not true. But in the meanwhile they did not disapprove

all of it. Sarah said, “third wave feminists believe that prostitution is not an inherently dirty act, that prostitution can be empowering for women, and can help overthrow the patriarchal system,” (“On Feminism and Sex Work”) talking about the views of Third Wave Feminists. Anyone can choose prostitution to make a living, the reason could be poverty or any other reasons. Their choice should be respected, they believe this as a way for women securing their rights if it is done by their choice alone.

The prostitutes in the novel *Puk Dangdai* narrated their stories themselves. Puii said, “My parents talked about his wealth and treated him nicely as he was a rich man. They know that he was a married man but they did not care. He divorced his wife a kept coming to our house. Then one day he raped me and this happened before I hit puberty,” (Zadeng 62) talking about her situation. “But that’s not the end of it. Terror-struck I told my mother and father about the incident, I believed that they will be furious about it and that they will file a lawsuit against this man. But to my surprise they asked me to marry the man who raped me. As I’ve grown up beyond my age we got married although I was still underaged. Not before long after our marriage I used to have a feeling he was cheating on me. And at last we separated and divorced,” (Zadeng 62) talking about how she took up to prostitution and the troubles she faced behind it. She did not literally talk about the wrong doings of men and blames them for the misfortune that happened to her and for the denial of the justice she deserved. But it can be assumed from her words that it started when she was a victim of rape and this happened before she even hits puberty. Moreover her mother and father failed to give her the justice she deserved and even marry her off to the man who raped her. And later her husband cheated on her. Prostitutes are looked down upon in societies, their status is considered very low but looking deep into their situation they are often a victim of rape who were denied justice and victims of inequalities of men and women.

It can be assumed that there is always a drive that leads women to take up prostitution to make a living, there is often a dark reason behind it. As prostitution is considered a shameful profession in the society it is not normal for a women to take

up this profession unless there is an abnormal reason behind it. According to *Legal Literacy/Legal Rights*, “Prostitution is said to be the oldest profession on earth. We can also even see the profession of prostitution written in the Bible. The law does not restrict women to take up prostitution as a living if they do it on their own will. But the law strictly prohibits forced prostitution, it is illegal to drive women/girls into prostitution in the method for running a business and the law is against it and it is considered as a grave sin,” (13). Eventhough it is considered as a shameful profession in the society the law is not against it if the prostitutes took up the profession willingly.

From the words of the prostitutes in this Novel it can be seen that they took up prostitution as a profession by their own will. Chhingpuii said, “I married against the will of my mother and father... I was really in love with my husband in the beginning of our marriage, but my husband was a heavy drinker and we were very poor that we had to illegally sell liquor... my mother and father pity our children so much that they had to take them away from us for their care and safety. I continued to live recklessly...” (Zadeng 64) and talked about her life and how she became a prostitute. Chhingpuii blamed herself for her fate, she felt that she was at fault from the start. She said that she followed the path of a prostitute because she was a naughty woman and because of the choice she had taken in her own will.

Kimi said, “The reason for me is due to poverty. My father died when I was only a child, my mother had to take care of me and my elder brother who was also very young. Eventhough we were poor my mother worked hard so that she can send us to school. When my brother was a youth my mother fell seriously ill...,” (Zadeng 67) talking about the hardships her family had faced. Kimi continued to talk about her past and said that after her mother’s death she had to do prostitution in order to pay for her elder brother’s education who was studying to be a doctor. She also mentioned that she was the one who faced difficulties and suffered the consequences saying, “When my brother finds out what I was doing I was yelled and shouted at, and finally I was casted out of my own home,” (Zadeng 70). Kimi took up the profession of prostitution so that she can pay for her brother’s fees while he was



studying to be a doctor, when her brother finished his studies he married a good girl. But Kimi ends up poor with a very low status and full of remorse.

Also in this novel, Ramngaizeli later known as Lucy was forced into the world of prostitution against her will. In the beginning she started as a cook at Ramu's place, but later her employer dragged her to a prostitution cave hotel to work as a prostitute. "The boss made her swallow one of his pills, after a shortwhile the pill began to have its effects on her, she felt really light, she also began to loose her conscience and began to do things which she would never do on a right mind. She began to entertain her customers with her body, she willingly submitted to their pleasures as she was high on the drugs they gave her..." (Zadeng 39). Lucy was drugged and she was made to sell her body while she was high on drugs which was against her free will and she would never do this on a right mind. What happened to her is really unacceptable, as mentioned above the person that did this to Ramngaizeli had committed a serious crime and had done a wrong thing to Ramngaizeli. This incident later on had a bad impact on the life of Ramngaizeli.

It can be seen in the novel *Puk Dangdai* that men can be blamed in many ways for the reasons of girls becoming prostitutes. Puii was raped before puberty by a rich and wealthy man who was a close friend of their family and also a frequent visitor of their house. Her parents did not only not treat him like a criminal but they later marry her off to the man who raped her. They soon divorced after she found that he cheated on her with other women. She fell into the lair of prostitution after all this bad luck. From the views of many people Puii may be considered disgusting. But the main reason behind this is that she was raped before she even hits puberty and her mother and father did nothing to defend her. They even marry her off to the very man who raped her. Chhingpuii also blamed herself for the reason she took prostitution to make a living. But her husband was a heavy drinker and they had to sell liquor illegally to make a living. Kimi also had to be a prostitute in order to pay the fees of her elder brother who was studying to be a doctor. Ramngaizeli (Lucy) also was drugged and dragged into prostitution while she was unable to think straight because of the drugs they gave her.

In the views of the society women who have strayed from the righteous paths reap the seeds they sow as they are considered to have a lecherous nature and it seems that the author of this novel tried to prove it wrong. The cause of the reasons for women to be this way could be because of men, it could also be due to family problems. The story showed that it is not always their fault or solely because of lechery that they have chosen a wrong path, the story also showed how women suffered many hardships that the public did not know about. In the words of Ruatfela nu, "There is no punishment for prostitution in the law. But they can be put into correctional facilities for a period of one year so they can mend their ways. But in the Mizo society prostitutes are hated and despised, if caught their heads are shaved and they are put in cages. This is a great violation of the rights of women," (Zonu Epi 29 Vanramchhuangi I). Prostitution is considered a sin in the Mizo society and prostitutes are illtreated in the society as such.

In the research of Ruatfela Nu the reason why Mizo women took up the profession of prostitution is mostly due to poverty. Through the background story of prostitutes in her novel, Romuanpuui also points out the poverty and hardships they faced before they choose this path. But looking on how she portrayed them and listening to their words in the story they did not justify themselves for the reasons of what they do, they did not complain on how the society treated them, they did not blame others for what happened to them and they did not even try to fight for their rights. In the meanwhile the character named Margaret in this novel frankly shared her opinion saying,

You all looked down on us prostitutes, you put all the blame on us, some of you are understandable, but you will all only understand us if you stand in our shoes. Your husband did something he should not have done. Men, our superiors who were supposed to guide us so we don't misbehave in front of other tribes happened to be not only the carefree youths, officers who were suppose to look after our state did not hesitate to defile girls by seizing any chance they have, they disable us in certain ways and after they shamed us

deeply they looked down upon us. Even if I accepted it as what I deserve, it still hurts a lot. (Zadeng 65)

In Mizoram all the prostitutes are known as K.S meaning Khawpui (Urban) Service. This is the reason why Margaret used the abbreviation K.S in her words. In this novel, although other prostitutes like Kimi, Chhingpuii, Puii and Lucy talked about what happened in their lives, they did not speak up like Margaret does, it seems like they blamed themselves for their misfortune. But Margaret said that women are not supposed to take all the blame, she said that men have many responsibilities for their unfortunate lives and also frankly said that men are responsible in leading girls to an unwanted path, making them have remorseful thoughts. In the words of Lalsangpuii, “Men are considered superior to women in all spheres of life,” (43-44). As men have power over women in many ways in the Mizo society women may not have the courage to openly talk about their status or to raise a voice. According to J. Zorema and Dr. B Lalrinchhani,

This was followed by the founding of Mizo women’s association called *Hmeichhe Tangrual Pawl* (MTP) in 1946 and then Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) in 1964. They raised their voice against gender discrimination and injustice in the society. Presently, their activities includes establishment of Orphanages Home, Drugs De-addiction Centre, protest against rape, domestic violence, reformation of customary laws in connection with bride’s price, dowry and inheritance and so on.(164-165)

Numerous women refrained from denouncing injustices against them due to fears of compounded shame and social humiliation. This reticence stems from entrenched societal tendencies within Mizo culture to assign blame to women regardless of dispute context. Counteracting this paradigm, the Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) initiated multiple reform movements, bolstered by activists like Ruatfela Nu (Vanramchhuangi) and the All Mizoram Women Federation, which collectively amplified feminist advocacy. Romuanpuii Zadeng’s novels similarly function as sociocultural interventions, cultivating awareness about:

Societal stigmatization of women deemed morally transgressive, systemic mistreatment of marginalized groups, precarious livelihoods of sex workers. Her narratives vividly render the psychological burden of shame, profound remorse, and structural vulnerability experienced by these women. Critically, Zadeng's gynocentric perspective assigns patriarchal systems primary accountability for these conditions.

Zadeng's 2009 novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* depicts Zorinpuii, a woman navigating socially condemned choices. The narrative opens with Zorinpuii suffering physical assault by the Village Defence Party (VDP), followed by further violence from her uncle. Critically, the text explores vulnerabilities to stepfather exploitation, the trauma of sexual violence, and life-altering consequences of rape. Susan Brownmiller's conceptual framework contextualizes this: "A female definition of rape can be contained in a single sentence. If a woman chooses not to have intercourse with a specific man and the man chooses to proceed against her will, that is a criminal act of rape" (18).

Empirical context emerges from Zozam Weekly: "Rape is the most common crime against women in Mizoram. The CID (Crime Branch) recorded 40 child rape case that happened this year, and 21 women have also been recorded as a victim of rape," ("Mizoramah Hmeichhia an Him EM?"). The report further indicates: "Amongst the women that suffered domestic violence from their husbands only about 11% of them tried to put a stop to it, about 42% of them kept silent and said nothing about it to anyone. Women mostly inform and call their parents to help them out when they suffered domestic violence, they rarely inform the police with matters relating to this" ("Mizoramah Hmeichhiate An Him Em?").

These patterns reveal systemic issues: widespread underreporting due to internalized stigma, a preference for familial mediation over legal recourse, and normalized gender-based violence reflecting women's adverse societal standing in Mizoram.

In Zadeng's novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, Zorinpuii transgresses societal and familial expectations. Falsely accused of alcohol consumption, she endures physical assault by the Village Defence Party (V.D.P)—volunteers tasked with

eradicating narcotics and vice, now often operating as J.A.C. (Joint Action Committee). Deemed a social pariah, her compounded shame and physical trauma become narratively palpable. Zorinpuii's ironic dialogue underscores this victim-blaming dynamic: "Look at your daughter... she sure is your daughter! Mother. Look, do you believe this hurts? Take a look at my hair, it sure needs to get a better haircut. Hmn...it doesn't really matter much, the V.D.P took care of my hairstyle" (Zadeng 3).

The narrative traces Zorinpuii's descent to socially condemned behaviors to patriarchal violence within her home. Her testimony reveals systemic familial betrayal: "After I finished High School, my step-father used to tease me in a very unusual way which is the same way as what happened to you, my mother never understand his intentions, I too thought that it was his way of showing his affection to me. But as time passes by, one day while my mother was at work in her office he took hold of me, he teases me and started to rape me" (Zadeng 19-20). Her mother's unquestioning trust in her husband enables the abuse, forcing Zorinpuii into lifelong trauma. Despite being the victim, society systematically assigns her culpability for resulting adversities.

Zorinpuii's victimization intensifies when her boyfriend Chhuana, witnessing her stepfather's assault, attempts to rape her. Her testimony captures this compounded trauma: "I used to think that he used to show his utmost respect to me, but when he sees what my stepfather did to me he began to think of me as a piece of piss, I was suddenly aroused with anger as I was already petrified with what my stepfather had done to me a few moments ago, filled with shock and anger I began to shake and tremble, as we were both using all our might we began to wrestle on the floor" (Zadeng 21). Subsequent predatory behavior occurs at her hostel, where she reports: "I have a big body, and not to exaggerate, I might have a beautiful face. The warden in our hostel started to fall for me. He always tried to come and give me private tutons in the middle of the night, as time goes on, he started to act like my step-father. I climed over the gates and ran away from the hostel" (Zadeng 27).

Zorinpuii endures multiple severe violations: paternal rape, attempted rape by her partner, and institutional sexual harassment. She additionally suffers false accusations and physical violence while remaining institutionally silenced. Her inability to disclose the abuse stems from her stepfather's performative paternalism, which she describes: "In the presence of my mother he treated me with care and affection as if I'm his only daughter...but...Aunty...my heart aches..!" (Zadeng 12). Recognizing her mother's uncritical trust in her husband, Zorinpuii internalizes her trauma without seeking legal intervention or familial support.

Lalmawia's wife (Zorinpuii's maternal aunt) similarly endured stepfather exploitation, extending the novel's examination of intergenerational patriarchal abuse. As they both faced the same problem Zorinpuii was able to convey her troubles to her. This is how Lalmawia's wife explained the things that happened to her,

I used to live with my mother only, then my stepfather came to live with us, he treated me really well in the beginning, I too began to like him as a father; but as a year passed, while my mother was away, while she was travelling, you know we used to own a shop and my mother was travelling to get supplies for the shop, my step-father often tempted me again and again to have sex with him and after I've refused him time and time again he started to rape me, I was in no condition to defeat him... from that day onwards I disgusts my stepfather!...

The rumours about the two of us spread like wildfire after the incident. News like, 'Chalthangpuii and her stepfather fell in love, so her mother and stepfather had to split', 'Chalthangi goes through an abortion', 'Chalthangi is pregnant with another child again'. News of us that are partly through keeps spreading. I don't even have any friends to talk to anymore. (Zadeng 15-17)

These accounts indicate that girls endured concealed domestic adversities unknown to their communities. Society, oblivious to their struggles, compounded their suffering through pejorative judgments. Even when compelled to assert their rights or voice truths, victims refrained due to pervasive societal distrust. The novel

demonstrates how communities intensify marginalization through vilification, inducing such profound shame that women avoid public forums—including religious institutions.

Regarding rape, Radical Feminist theory posits: “Radical Feminist Theory finds that patriarchy is the key cause of gender inequality and sexual violence. Broadly defined, patriarchy is a social system that values traditional masculine social norms (e.g., strong, powerful, stoic, sexually aggressive, protective) and where men disproportionately occupy positions of power,” (Canan and Levand 7). Conversely, Marxist Feminist theory asserts: “Marxist Feminist Theory finds that the primary basis of sexual violence is class inequality; gender is a secondary concern,” (Canan and Levand 7). Feminist scholarship identifies patriarchy as a fundamental etiology of sexual violence against girls, contending that male hegemony and assumed superiority enable coercive violation through physical domination.

Zadeng’s *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* substantiates radical feminist theory through its systematic depiction of patriarchal violence, illustrating how presumed masculine supremacy facilitates sexual aggression across multiple narrative strands: Zorinpuii’s stepfather’s incestuous predation, her boyfriend’s opportunistic assault attempt, the hostel warden’s institutional exploitation, and the stepfather rape of Lalmawia’s wife (Khangmawii). This constellation of violence reflects patriarchal dominion—specifically male entitlement to female bodies—as the primary catalyst for both sexual violence and institutional silencing. The stepfather’s explicit threat to Khangmawii epitomizes this power dynamic: “I am not going to divorce you. Do whatever you want with me, I still will not divorce you. Even if you get out of the house, you will be the one who gets humiliated. Know that I am not afraid of anything....” (Zadeng 112). Through such characterization, Zadeng aligns with feminist critiques that trace rape culture to hegemonic masculinity.

Lalhmingpuii and Namchoom define the traditional Mizo social structure as “a patriarchal and patrilineal society where women had no authoritative power in the family. The father was the head and in charge of all the family affairs” (32). This historical male hegemony permeates Zadeng’s narrative, exemplified through

Thanzuala's domination—both in spousal interactions and the sexual predation of his stepdaughter Zorinpuii. His assertion of authority demonstrates how divorce repercussions disproportionately target women: despite male culpability, social condemnation and humiliation burden female victims like Zorinpuii and Chalthangi.

Khiangmawii's attempt to seek divorce approval from her brother reveals institutionalized misogyny when he responds: "You should never divorce him, you have been married for a long time... Khiangmawi, you of all people should know this, through hard times and hard days, he is the one that stood beside you in times of shame and he is your husband who have helped you look after your maniac of a daughter lovingly, you should never leave him" (Zadeng 118). This dismissal exemplifies familial complicity in silencing women, prioritizing patriarchal preservation over female welfare. Rama Ralte Joy's research corroborates this dynamic: "Women are supposed to look after and take care of the house. The status of women became a little better since there are many who started earning money. But when it comes to family discussion and proceedings the voice of women often falls on a deaf ear. There are many families in which the husband acts like a ruler but the wife does all the management" ("Hmeichhe Humhalh leh Hmasawwna"). Zadeng's novel thus illuminates how systemic disregard for women's voices exacerbates gendered suffering.

These are some of the things that Chalthangi said, "U (big brother/sister) Lalmawi you should know this, whenever I tried to open my mouth to speak up, you always stopped me just because I am a woman! You have kept me silent and unable to speak of what I know, you don't really know what kind of a human your brother-in-law really is," (Zadeng 122). "Yes, it is all upto you, it is all upto you that your niece ended up this way. The reason for this is that you never care about my feelings and opinions. And now if anything bad happened to your sister again, know that I will not be the one responsible for it," (Zadeng 122). She also said, "U Lalmawi, you can hate it if you want to, but I have got something to say! What I wanted to say is that you always tried to control every member in the family to live according to your will and desires, no one ever had a chance to talk about our opinions and point of view in your presence. It is like you ruled over us, anyone who rebelled against your



rules had to pave their way out of it in some other ways.....” (Zadeng 127). According to James Dokhuma,

Whenever there are serious discussions and if a woman happened to share her opinion in that discussion, she will be silenced by the word, ‘Do not utter a word, you are a girl’. Women are not considered eligible to speak when there is a serious discussion. Whenever they talk about a certain family and if they feel that it is a family dominated by women, they will say ‘It is a family ruled by women’ presumably meaning that they have lots of disrespect for that family. (269)

The voices and status of women in this novel have become sharper compared to the previous novel *Puk Dangdai*. Taking a closer look at the words of Chalthangi it can be seen that subjugation of women in the Mizo society due to the patriarchal rule and power of men. It can be seen that whenever a woman tried to raise her voice to speak up the truth she is either threatened or disregarded and not taken into account and how this leads to other bad things. Zorinpuii told Chalthangi about everything that happened to her, all the things that her step-father did to her. When Chalthangi tried to tell Zorinpuii’s uncle Lalmawii about this heinous crime committed by Zalrinpuii’s step-father, he did not want to hear about it just because it was a complaint from a girl. He beat up Zorinpuii because of this, he did not allow his sister to utter a word of divorce because he felt that it would give a bad name and humiliation to his family. He silenced his wife even when she talked about the dirty deeds of his brother-in-law. In the words of Julie Lalrinzami, “The status of women is almost similar all around the world, even in developed countries women are still considered inferior to men and not equal to men.....” (39).

Chalthangi bravely told her husband that looking down on women and considering them as nothing is a really bad and a wrong thing. The story showed that men’s domination over women results in social evil such as sexual harassment and domestic violence. Like the beliefs of Radical feminist and Marxist feminist, the story in this novel also showed sexual harassment as a result of patriarchy and subjugation

of women. From this novel it can be seen that the inequality between men and women and the subjugation of women could lead to an unfortunate and horrifying result.

The lowly status of women is showed in this novel, the way society treats women and the way men considered all women to be inferior to them had its adverse effects on women which lead to the ruination of the life of many girls. Zorinpuii's boyfriend Lalhmaa said, "This is strange and unacceptable, due to the wrong decision of the society and in the family, due to wrong administrations in the household we can unknowingly spoil the life of a person who can turn out to be an excellent person," (Zadeng 141) as they were discussing about the life of Zorinpuii with Ramdina.

In the definition of Lalthansangi, "He could have sexual intercourse with a girl and the act would not be regarded as shameful or degradatory for him. It was rather believed to be manly or something to be proud of. But for a woman, if any man should have a sexual relationship with her, she was spoken of badly and other man would shun her," (53). From the old days in the Mizo society it is never considered shameful or dishonourable for a male to have sexual intercourse before marriage, but if news spread about a female having sexual intercourse before marriage it is a disgrace not only for her but for her family as a whole. According to K. Zawla, "If a guy had sex with two sisters he will wear two feathers of a fowl as a trophy, if a guy managed to have sex with both mother and daughter he will wear a torn tail of a black hen as a trophy for his achievement, if a guy succeeded in having sex with the chief's daughter he will wear a single feather of a hornbill as a sign of achievement, and if a guy happened to sleep with a married woman he will wear the tail feather of a dark hen to show his achievement," (55). This is the dress code of Thangchhuahpa (the most respectable achievement of males in the Mizo society in the old days), to succeed in having sex out of marriage is considered respectable and honourable. In their beliefs if a guy already had sex before he died he will not be shot at by Paula (the caretaker in the afterlife who shoots at unmarried guys who died before having sex with his big catapult) even if he died before marriage in Pialral (the after life).

This is said to be the belief of the Mizo's in the old days, but this is a disgrace and shame for girls in the Mizo society.

Christianity was introduced in the year 1894 in Mizoram, this changed the faith and belief of the Mizo people, the status and situation of women also developed tremendously with the coming of Christianity. Although it is considered a sin to have sexual intercourse before marriage, in the views of men having sexual intercourse before marriage is a thing they can boast about, they still have a feeling that it doesn't have any bad effects on them. As for girls they are humiliated to a great extent as compared to boys, people began to think lowly of them, they can never secure the good status they have had before.

Ramdina interrogated the guys who claimed that they have slept with Zorinpuii and asked them, "Tell me the truth, I am not the only one who ask you this question, the whole community awaits your answer, do you really have sex with Zorinpuii? Or do you really have proved that she is really a whore who slept with almost every guy in the community?" (Zadeng 162). Lianbuanga answered, "I don't really know, it is all because I have spreaded the lies, it is all a lie, I myself have not even laid a finger on her; I swear it in the name of the Lord, it is all a lie," (Zadeng 162). Lalhranga also denied it saying, "I haven't slept with her, I haven't even touched her with the tips of my finger," (Zadeng 160). It can be seen from this statement that it is not considered shameful for a guy to have sex with a girl as much as it is considered shameful for a girl and so they did not hesitate to lie about having sex with a pretty and beautiful girl just to boast about it. They even boast in the community about having sex anytime they want with a certain girl. But for a girl this lie can change her whole career in a bad way, it can cause humiliation and shame in her whole life. From this novel it can be seen that the inequality of men and women in the society and at home can cause hardships and troubles for women in social and household affairs. And it can be assumed that this is what the writer is trying to point out in this novel.

While Zadeng's *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* refrains from explicit advocacy for gender equality across familial, social, occupational, educational, or political domains, it critically demonstrates how systemic female subordination enables pervasive victimization. The narrative illustrates how patriarchal domination—manifesting both domestically and societally—precipitates domestic violence, sexual assault, and multifaceted hardships for women. This oppression culminates in protagonist Zorinpuii's radical survival strategy: fleeing her maternal uncle's household without disclosure and adopting male performativity. She conceals her femininity through deliberate disguise, assuming the masculine identity 'Z-Chhantu' to evade recognition—a metamorphosis constituting a thematic indictment of Mizo patriarchy wherein performative masculinity emerges as the sole recourse against unrelenting victimization.

Zorinpuii's lived female identity exposed her to paternal betrayal, maternal distrust, and physical violence from her uncle Lalmawia, who consistently privileged patriarchal authority over kinship duty. Furthermore, she endured societal slut-shaming through malicious labeling as a 'whore who can sleep with everyone,' compounded by spatial vulnerability rendering her unsafe at home, in institutional settings like her hostel, and throughout the public sphere. Though her aunt Chalthangi alone recognized this victimhood, she remained structurally powerless to intervene. Consequently, Zorinpuii's erasure of female identity functions as both literal escape mechanism and symbolic critique of a society where womanhood itself constitutes existential jeopardy, compelling the surrender of gender identity as the price of survival.

Thangtei developed romantic feelings for Zorinpuii under the misconception of her male persona. Zorinpuii's existential disclosure reveals profound psychological distress: "Thangte, there is nothing worthy of talking about in my life, my mind is filled with deceit and madness, hope is the only thing that keeps me alive....!" (Zadeng 40). Her extreme marginalization precluded normative existence, culminating in a crisis of reintegration contemplatively expressed: "How will she start over again? She thought about the situation of women if she rejected her, she felt that it is a world full of pain and sufferings, they are either cornered badly or

rejected, their status and rights seemed like it is play thing that made up, that their happiness depends on the nature of the one who made it up, how will she solve this in the midst of Zofate (the Mizo Society)” (Zadeng 51).

Zorinpuii’s cumulative trauma renders her female identity a perceived existential burden, necessitating concealment through sustained masculine performance. J. Malsawma (Thanpuii Pa) observes this historical gender subjugation: “The strange thing about this is that although she worked really hard and tired she always seemed happy; she talks politely to everyone, no one can know who her lover really is. Although it is said that she did not have private moments of her own, she is always neat and tidy, it is not even an easy thing to see her calf. And so, Mizo girls in the old days were like slaves, they were always meek and humble” (66). This analysis documents the circumscribed existence of Mizo women. Malsawma concludes with a temporal juxtaposition: “Nowadays the Mizo women who were like a slave in the old days have been set free, they have been liberated too much that they almost dominate men under their power” (67).

Despite measurable advancements in women's status, persistent sociocultural taboos constrain discourse on specific issues deemed embarrassing for individuals and families. These topics remain systematically silenced to prevent collective shame and preserve social standing. Such reticence inevitably generates conflicting perspectives and contentious debates regarding gender-related matters. According to Lalnghakthuami,

We all know that women in Mizoram live under the power and control (patriarchy) of men. The mindset and feelings of both men and women is also dominated by patriarchy. And so our culture and ways of living, its value and the way it should go is all bounded by this system. So we should all have a thorough knowledge on the ideology of patriarchy, it should be clearly known how our opinion on women is ruled by this ideology and how our actions towards women is the result of this ideology. (9)

Despite evolutionary advancements in women’s status, persistent clandestine issues remain unaddressed within familial and societal discourse due to perceived

stigmatization. Zadeng's novel illuminates these covert challenges through female characterization, simultaneously demonstrating how patriarchal ideology—identified by Lalnghakthuami as fundamental to female suffering, aligns with radical feminist critiques of systemic subjugation.

M. S. Nagarajan delineates feminism's dual foundational premises: "1. gender difference is the foundation for structural inequality between men and women by which women suffer sympathetic social injustice, and 2. the inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity, but is produced by cultural construction of gender differences" (206). This conceptual framework expands in R. S. Malik and Jagdish Batra's analysis: "The basic view is that the Western society is patriarchal, that is, it is male-centred and controlled by men. It is organized and conducted in such a way that women are subordinated to man in all cultural fields- familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal, artistic, etc" (77). Global patriarchal hegemony thus reinforces the feminist contention that gender hierarchy constitutes cultural fabrication rather than biological imperative, catalyzing feminism's emergence.

Traditional Mizo axiomatic expressions explicitly codify patriarchal ideology, beginning with 'Weed unattended and women unattended tends to trouble us further more' which sanctions female suppression. This ethos manifests domestically when men invoke silencing dictums like 'Don't utter a word, you are just a woman' to nullify dissent. Further proverbs institutionalize dehumanization: 'Crab meat is no meat at all, a woman's voice is no voice at all'; 'Broken fences and women can be replaced'; 'Crab and women have no religion at all'; 'You need not mind what a woman is saying, let women and bitches growl until they are satisfied'; and 'The wit of a woman does not even cross the boundary of ponds'. Collectively, these axioms reveal engineered male supremacy and systematic gynocentric erasure within historical Mizo society.

In Zadeng's *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, Zorinpui achieves safety from male predation only through sustained masculine disguise. She confronts systemic vulnerabilities domestically, socially, and academically, silenced by pervasive

marginalization that precludes truth-telling. Her sartorial transformation facilitates unprecedented discursive agency, enabling articulation of previously suppressed perspectives. This metamorphosis catalyzes her evolution into a transformative social thinker challenging cultural paradigms.

As Z-Chhantu, she declares: “Seems like I was born to create trouble, but I try to reborn for my tribe and motherland!” (Zadeng 56). Her concealed identity fosters cultural-nationalist consciousness, exemplified by the subversive assertion: “Yes it might be true! But even if a woman’s intelligence can’t match it I have no intention to consult a man” (Zadeng 57). This statement deliberately transgresses the Mizo axiom ‘A woman’s intelligence does not cross the boundary of a pond’, asserting female intellectual parity. Academic validation occurs when Zuala notes: “A.Z, I really wish for you to have a better job! You did not only have a master degree but you are also among the top in class” (Zadeng 205). Ramdinmawia further sanctifies her new identity: “What I mean is, **Z-Chhantu** should not only be **Zorinpuii Chhantu**, as it had shielded and saved your name for all those times, for us to become one we will change it to **Z-Chhantu, Zoram Chhantu, Zohnam Chhantu...**” (Zadeng 278).

Leveraging Ramdinmawia’s political lineage (his father being an MLA), Zorinpuii-as-Z-Chhantu mentors youth leadership and advocates tribal justice. Her civic oration epitomizes this empowered voice: “Oh! yes, beside this there is something else I wanted to say, we the youths have big responsibilities in this crucial time, in this air of rumours. How is our family managed? How is our society and our tribe managed? Which part of the management is wrong and how are we going to manage and correct the wrong? It is not enough to place it in the hands of our leaders and experts, it is not enough to place it in the hands of only our elders...” (Zadeng 81). This discursive liberation starkly contrasts Mizo society’s institutionalized gender hierarchy, which normalizes female subordination and intellectual diminishment.

The novel showed that underestimating and disdaining women, regarding women to be inferior to men is not caused by birth or by the fact that women are the

inferior gender, it is made up by culture which dates back to the olden days. Zorinpuii did not become a man just because she dresses and disguise herself as a man, but she escapes many of the troubles and problems she used to face before she disguise herself as a man. She would have never able to continue her education, she would have been disdained by the society, but after her disguise she was able to study and be among the brightest student in her class. She made good progress and great speeches for her tribe and her motherland. From the achievement of Zorinpuii (Z-Chhantu) it can be seen that the author of this novel meaningfully proved that the inequality between men and women is not biological but made by culture, this is also the opinion accepted by feminists.

One of the novels written by Zadeng called *Sihlipui* was published in 2012. This novel was awarded the Book of the Year Award by M.A.L (Mizo Academy of Letters) that very year. As the author of this novel is a woman, she portrayed women as the main character in the story of this novel. In the meantime there is a lot to be studied on how she portrayed women in this novel. One of the main characters in this novel is a singer named Laltei, Mampuia who was her friend not knowing that he had feelings for Laltei set her up on a date with his friend Mathana, he tried really hard to get them married. But Laltei said, “No Mampui, you are the one who set me up to be with you friend, during those times... when you set us up on a date.... do you even think to consider about my feelings?” (Zadeng 47). The story in this novel showed how Mampuia could not bear the thought of their marriage. How he secretly had sex with the girl his friend was about to wed and how Laltei was pregnant with the child of Mampuia.

Although the girls in the novel *Sihlipui* are of the feminine gender the author did not characterize them as inferiors or subservient. Laltei and Mampuia had done a very wrong thing in the eyes of the Church, the society, their families and Mathana. But even though Mampuia was a man he followed the advice and orders of Laltei, with no disagreement he heeded every of her words without questions. According to James Dokhuma, “The way they treated women, the reasons they looked down on women could be really uncalled for, they think too lowly of women that they did not



consider the voice of a woman to be accountable,” (269). This is the way women in the Mizo society are used to be treated and considered. Laltei said, “Okay, whatever it is, we should not follow wrong doings with another wrong doing. If this is really what you want, just wait a little longer, not you but I will try and find a way to cancel our wedding,” (Zadeng 48). When Mampuia said, “I don’t think I can wait anymore,” (Zadeng 48). Laltei told him, “You should be able to wait. I know a way, take a leave and go on a vacation. I will try and find a way while you are away, and we will get married later on,” (Zadeng 48) giving words to the man telling him to do as she says by showing her authority.

Mampuia followed her instructions and took leave and went on a vacation. But while he was travelling he met with an accident while he tried to rescue Martino who was drowning. He suffered memory loss and began to live his life as Savio the son of Martino the beggar. In this novel, the way Mampuia followed the words and instructions of the woman who was pregnant with his child, the way the man did not go according to his will and how the woman let him go according to her will really differs from the said relation of men and women in the Mizo society. According to J. Malsawma (Thanpuii Pa), “Mizo women from the old days, women treated as slaves are freed, they are liberated too much that, they almost put men under their control,” (67). Although Laltei betrayed Mathana her bethrothed, although she betrayed him and was pregnant with Mampuia’s child after they have planned everything for their wedding, since Mampuia was lost and his where about is not known Mathana who was supposed to despise and hate Mampuia and Laltei proclaimed the child in Laltei’s womb to be his, he was still there for her.

According to Lalthansangi Ralte, “But for a women, if any man should have a sexual relationship with her, she was spoken of badly and other man would shun her,” (53). In the Mizo society if a boy and girl have sexual intercourse and if the public hears about it the embarassement and shame suffered by girls is far greater than boys. Their status in the society gets lower, others boys also started losing respects for them. If a girl is pregnant with a child before marriage she will have to live a very timid life even in her own home, families showed no fondness for such

children born outside of marriage. James Dokhuma stated, “Illegitimate children often suffered ill-treatment and maltreatment. They never receive love from anyone. In the old days it is considered that illegitimate children seldom survive and make it,” (187). These things get a little and a little better after the coming of Christianity in Mizoram. Nowadays it seemed that illegitimate children get too much love and affections.

But taking all of this into consideration, it can be assumed that it is only the wishes and desire of the author of this novel how Mathana was willing to bear humiliation bigger than theirs and how he humbly could take care of and look after their child. “Laltei was amazed on how Mathana could look after and take care of a child, a child who was not of his blood, the child of a woman who is not his wife! A child born by the result of betrayal! How he could clean the pees and poops of that child without showing any disgust or hesitation,” (Zadeng 58). Mathana said, “It’s not disgusting for a man. No that’s not it, when I come to sleep over to take care of you, everyone of the suspicious people loose their suspicion and are at peace, please try to bear it lightly even if it is discomforting for you,” (Zadeng 58) this was what he said to comfort them. This is what Lalthansangi Ralte said about the Mizo society’s opinion of a henpecked husband,

A Mizo women works hard at home, gets up early in the morning and cooks for her husband and children but she is often still taken for granted. A man helping a women in her chores is often seen as unmanly and is given the name ‘thaibawih’ meaning submission to the authority of the wife (henpecked). The husband who have no courage to beat or scold their wives are treated as thaibawi. The term thaibawi is the prominent word on psychology, mentality and socio-cultural life of the Mizo men. Till now, the term thaibawi is relevant and applicable in the Mizo family and society. (53)

This have always been used like rules and regulations in the Mizo society from the old days. In the old days the works and chores for men and women are determined and distinguished very well. At home, if a man do the chores of a woman unless the woman in the house is sick or that there are no women in the house, those

men are called and considered henpecked. This is considered humiliating and shameful in the Mizo society.

But in this novel, Mathana trespassed and breaks the unwritten Mizo rules and regulations and defends the woman who betrayed him, he was able to clean the piss and poops of the baby without showing disparage towards girls and neither tried to show his manness, he was able to do it all. Something like this is not seen in the previous novels. According to L. V. Lalsangkimi, “Like many other societies, traditional Mizo society was governed through the patriarchal domain where men controlled the relationships between family and society. In the realm of the household, it was the father’s rule that had to be followed,” (22). As the Mizo society is a patriarchal society ruled by men, everything in the society and family runs in the will of men. Subjugation of women and the way women are considered inferior can be seen in many ways in the previous paragraphs and explanations. But in this novel a man is controlled by a woman. A man cleaned and took care of all the pees and poops of a baby, not only this, he kept quiet so that the women would not suffer humiliation, so that she would not have a bad name. A man is not held superior over women in this novel and a woman also did not suffer subjugation under the power of men in this novel.

In this novel *Sihlipui* the character Ramparmawii (Shona) is more highlighted than the other female character Laltei. She is also the ex-girlfriend of Laltei’s betrothed Mathana, she is also the wife of Mampuia (Savio) the father of Laltei’s child, who put him under her control. The story in this novel is not solely based on Mizoram and as such, story in this novel is also not only about the Mizo people. The story in this novel is based on Mizoram and Goa which is one of the big cities and one of the most tourists attracting city in India. The story in this novel is a combination of the Mizo people and other races outside Mizoram. Eventhough Shona was sold by her father to human-traffickers due to poverty; she was a headstrong girl with a strong will. In the words of Shona, “My father had sold me there! But I am valuable. I now consider myself of great value, my mother, father and siblings had sold me for the worth of a new house,” (Zadeng 77). The words of

Shona are really brave, as she considers herself a blessing to her family, she still can recognize her values although she was in the worst state a human could possibly be.

The Mizo society operates as a patriarchal system historically governed by male authority, resulting in women's systematic subordination both domestically and communally. This structure manifests pronounced hierarchical disparities between genders, as Zohra's research delineates the institutionalized distinction between male and female status within Mizo cultural frameworks, (Empowerment of Women in NE India, 239-40).

Table 1.2 Comparison of Mizo society's view of men and women

Women	Men
Weak	Strong
Housewives	Breadwinner
Emotional	Rational
Nurturing	Decision-making
Gentle	Assertive
Followers	Leaders
Caring	Forceful
Delicate	Strong
Fearful	Brave
Aggressive	Competitive
Old maids	Bachelors
Hysterical	Calm

This perspective reveals entrenched male supremacy within Mizo societal structures. However, Zadeng's novel *Sihlipui* subverts these conventions through Shona's characterization, a woman exemplifying fortitude, possessing remarkable endurance, and demonstrating decisive leadership even under duress. Acquired through transactional marriage by Fernando's father (who sought to spare her from his son's intended prostitution), Shona maintained platonic relations with her

husband. Upon his death, she mobilized against Fernando's illicit trafficking enterprise.

Shona consistently exhibits assertive agency, rejecting submissive communication norms deemed appropriate for women. When Savio questions her choices, “Why this? Can’t you stay with your family and live peacefully” (Zadeng 87), implying domestic retreat with inherited wealth, Shona retorts: “Ha! Ha! That should be it! But Fernando is a filthy rich man, even in my homeland, he has set up his organization posing himself as a good man, he even has many vast estates there. If I go home he will soon come after me, it will not only be dangerous for me, but it will also be a threat and danger for my whole family as well. So, I will first have to root it all out” (Zadeng 87). Her strategic resolve underscores the narrative’s dismantling of gendered behavioral expectations.

Shona exhibits profound patriotism, demonstrating considerable bravery and embodying the spirit of a patriot who dearly loves her homeland. She articulates her perspective on the state and condition of Mizoram, stating: “Our state (Mizoram), is a Christian state, but the politicians had turned it into the poorest state of all, it is often ransacked by politicians to cause people to thirst for free gifts and sell their votes, it is a state where people can be deceived and misled before every elections as the people have been made poor enough to be buyable and are easily gathered for the distribution of anything that is free,” (Zadeng 87). She further expresses: “Savio... our homeland aching in pain, it is grieving. It is in need of a savior. We need a leader who really understands our sufferings,” (Zadeng 89). Shona also declares: “It is not only whether he fights me or not. I have been sold from my own place, if I am to get back to my place I will need to have something which is worththy to free me, if I don’t have a thing worthy enough to bring home for Mizoram, I am still not going home empty handed,” (Zadeng 91).

As Lalthansangi Ralte defines it, “The Mizo society is no exception to this where man is expected to be brave, selfless, and wise and women to be submissive and pure,” (51). According to Lalsangpuii, “The Mizo society is patriarchal in nature, as such the head of family controls and exercises powers over his family. In the early Mizo society, the fate of women seems to have been determined and divided right

from birth. Women's duties as good daughters, good wives and good mothers are well-defined in the Mizo society," (43). Within this patriarchal structure, women were positioned under male authority, and their primary duties were perceived as being good daughters and good wives. Historically, men held significant roles in managing and administering Mizo society. As warfare frequently occurred between villages, the responsibility for community safety, the protection of girls and children, and the safeguarding of the elderly fell to men. Women were neither involved nor expected to participate in warfare. Instead, women were expected to be diligent and hardworking in their household chores and farm work without complaint, both at home and within the broader society. However, this novel illustrates that women are equally capable of harbouring deep love for their tribe and homeland and can bravely step forward to defend it.

According to Zohmangaihi, "In other countries, their women held important places in legislature, even some women among us have jobs as high-ranking government servants and are worthy of praise because of their achievements, we have to free ourselves from our inferiority complex, from the thoughts of being unable and unworthy. Let us brace ourselves to move forward with freedom," (18). Although numerous Mizo women officers hold high-ranking positions in their professions, their representation within the state's legislative body, the Assembly House, remains limited. Irene Colbert observes that "Women are also the unfortunate ones when it comes to politics. Most of the leaders of different political parties are men. In the Mizo society women who took part in politics and political parties are considered shameless, even other women instead of thinking highly of them use them as a topic of gossip," (135).

It is evident that Mizo societal perspectives on women participating in politics or discussing political matters differ significantly from views on men engaging in the same activities. This disparity likely contributes to women's hesitation to enter and actively participate in the political sphere. Advocates working to elevate the status of Mizo women have raised concerns regarding this issue. However, within the novel *Sihlipui*, the character Shona defies conventional expectations. She bravely undertook necessary actions for her homeland (Mizoram) and refused to return home until she had accomplished her objectives. Shona openly discussed the misconduct of

politicians within her state (Mizoram). Although Shona did not formally enter politics, her profound love for Mizoram is evident through her words and actions. She demonstrated that women possess capabilities equivalent to those of men.

As a victim of human trafficking herself, Shona courageously endeavoured to rescue girls sold into prostitution, persisting in her efforts despite confronting wealthy and powerful adversaries. Her motivation extended beyond personal safety and freedom; she fought to liberate her fellow tribal women. Shona reassured the rescued Mizo girls, victims of trafficking driven by poverty, stating: “My dear sisters, do not be afraid. Please do not fear me, I won’t allow you to feel terrified even for a second anymore. Stand up bravely. The police are continuously working for you, all your fear and distress will soon end. I am sending you all home to your families. You all can go back home if you want to, we will always be there to free and rescue you. You are now under protection, you can all be calm and peaceful now,” (Zadeng 93). Her dialogue demonstrates leadership qualities. While women are conventionally perceived as physically and emotionally fragile and suited to subordinate roles, this novel illustrates that they transcend such limitations.

Feminism emerged from the fundamental premise that numerous unjust distinctions exist between men and women. As Margaret Walter articulates, “...Western feminists have struggled against sexism, and against social and political inequalities, women in the ‘Third World’ have had to confront additional, and even more intractable, problems. They often have to combat sexism in the form of deep-rooted local beliefs and practices, to do with class, caste, religion, and ethnic biases,” (118). Consequently, feminists advocated for equality, asserting that women possess rights and abilities equivalent to those of men. One distinct thematic focus of Third Wave Feminism is ‘Girl Power’, a concept popularized by the punk rock band Riot Girls. In the definition of Angelica L. Setianto leh Maria V. Win,

The concept of girl power was introduced by Riot Grrrls, which is a subset of third-wave feminism, and quickly became popular in the mid-90s. By then, it had been deployed greatly in pop culture by mainstream media. The traits of powerful young women who fought back and claimed their power was not accepted because of their gender, which then initiated the rise of Girl Power as a strategic way that was aimed to promote adolescent female empowerment

and to establish the term through which the ‘Girl Power’ itself had been analysed...Thus, in each different setting, girl power also represented female independence and empowerment in a more playful approach of the traditional femininity and ‘girllishness’ which channeled the voice of the third-wave feminists. (574)

Contemporary feminist discourse increasingly asserts that women possess strength, abilities, expertise, courage, and intelligence equivalent to men in numerous capacities. Feminists consequently advise women to reject marginalization and discard feelings of inferiority, enabling them to recognize their own capabilities and potential to achieve tasks traditionally associated with men. The narrative within Zadeng’s novel *Sihlipui* substantiates this view, demonstrating that women possess abilities, intelligence, strength, and leadership qualities. The author deliberately avoids portraying her female characters as subservient to male authority or as humble and powerless figures; instead, she characterizes them as decisive individuals wielding agency. For instance, Shona marries Savio (Mampuia) strategically to utilize him as an asset in her endeavors, not considering him a husband in any genuine sense. As Shona clarifies: “No you are not. You may also have someone in your heart, but as long as the investigation takes, you will be my husband in the eye of the law. It will be the same as what happened with me and my old man. There is no need to stay together or anything of that sort. We just have to continue our lives as it is, but as you are my husband you should be willing to do any kind of work,” (Zadeng 92).

Shona operates as the primary decision-maker, driven by a complex plan to dismantle the criminal network of Fernando, an illegal human trafficker who forced girls into prostitution and initially purchased Shona herself (and who is also the son of her ex-husband). Her marriage to Savio is a calculated move to secure his labor and use him as an asset in executing this intricate plan. Savio's statement underscores this power dynamic: “The husband will have to marry the wife by heeding the order of the wife,” (Zadeng 92). This inversion of traditional marital roles stands in stark contrast to the patriarchal norms prevalent within Mizo society, where men are customarily the primary decision-makers.



Shona succeeded in her attempt to expose the crimes and actions of Fernando. Savio talked to Fernando's daughter and asked her, "Do you really know your boss, do you really know what he is? Do you really see him as he is? This human being, do you know that he uses these girls for his business, that he did not hesitate to use your lady boss Shona for his business," (Zadeng 99). Juliana turned towards her father Fabiona and shouted, "Can you! You lowly scum, a scum lower than a beggar be my father? I will never leave you in peace!" (Zadeng 100) after knowing the crimes her father had committed she threatened him without fearing him. "Fernando shoots his gun towards Savio, the bullet almost hit Savio but missed. Fernando's daughter caught hold of Savio and turned with him using all her mights, she pushed him to the ground, and instead shot her father in the shoulder," (Zadeng 100). In this novel not only the Mizo women were brave, the other non-Mizo girls that appeared in the story are also very brave when it comes to defending what is right, they are the kind of girls who did not hesitate to kill their father with a gun.

Fernando have an organization in Mizoram, he bought Mizo girls in the promise of finding them a good profession. But these girls were unexpectedly pulled in and forced into the world of prostitution. This human trafficking is a grievous offense against morality and it is considered a heinous crime by the law. Shona bravely fought in order to stop this crime. "As of now that the one who have vast lands and big organization in her homeland (Mizoram), the person who have used her for his business, the one who have taken away many girls for his illegal business have been killed and put down by his own daughter after she learned of his crimes, she now wanted to set up tent in her own home (Mizoram)," (Zadeng 101). This novel shows that girls are the ones that suffered the most due to the poverty caused by the failure and corruption in the government, but this novel also showed that girls can be strong, brave, intelligent, patriotic, endurant and that they can also have great leadership qualities. The voices and actions of women in this novel depicted the Third Wave Feminism's 'Girl Power' movement and women empowerment. It also discarded the Mizo society's view and expectations on the character and identity of women.

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## Chapter-4

### A Study of Women's Voices in the Works of Rozamliani's Novels

Rozamliani was born in Sairang Vengsang on 12 February 1984 to parents Rinawma (L) and Zoramthangi (L). She possesses a strong academic background. She completed her Class X (matriculation) examinations at Government Sairang High School and passed her Higher Secondary (Class XII) examinations from K.M. Higher Secondary School. Rozamliani earned a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree from Government Aizawl West College and subsequently obtained a Master of Arts (M.A.) degree through Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). She also completed a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in Special Education from North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU). Rozamliani worked in Special Education with the Mamit DPO Samagra Shiksha before transferring to Sairang in 2022, where she resides with her three children (two daughters and one son).

Rozamliani developed a passion for reading from childhood. She began writing articles at a young age, commencing during her primary school years. She contributed pieces to the *Kristian Naupang News Magazine* while attending Sunday school. Friends read her stories written as early as Class VI, although these early works are unavailable for collection, having been lent and not returned. However, she later reconstructed these stories from memory, resulting in her second novel, *Tuarna Phenah*, published in 2007. Rozamliani commenced writing her first novel, *Lawm A Kim Lo*, while in Class IX. She resumed and completed it after a significant hiatus during her Class XII studies, finishing the work amidst her father's demise at the end of that year. This novel was published in 2005. Her third novel, *A Mak A Na*, followed in 2012. These three published novels constitute Rozamliani's currently available literary works. As a relatively young author, she possesses significant potential for future literary contributions.

Apart from novels she also wrote many articles as mentioned above, she also wrote plays. Not only this, Rozamliani also wrote many poems and poetry. Although she has works on various genre of literature the thing she is well known and recognized for is her works in writing novels. This chapter will be a study of the

status of women through her novels, how she portraits women in the story of her novels from her three novels from different angles.

Rozamliani portrayed women in her first novel *Lawm A Kim Lo*. The story in this novel is written as an indirect narration, the main character of the story Zonunmawii (Maria) narrated her own story in this novel and as such a woman is mostly highlighted in the story. One of the important bases of this story is the story of a woman. But clearly going through the story of this novel there is no mention of the voices of women regarding unequal status of men and women, the low status of women, how they wanted to be treated equally with men and vice versa. No direct attempts to mention the status and voices of women can be seen in this novel.

But the women that the writer of this novel portrayed in the story is a strong willed woman with high endurance, a woman who is willing to do anything to achieve her goal. To conclude she portrayed a very strong woman in the story of this novel. Lalsangpuui stated that, “Women duties as good daughters, good wives and good mothers are well-defined in the Mizo patriarchal society,” (43). Mizo society is patriarchal, and as such this authority and rule of men expects and demanded women (girls) to be good daughters, good wife, and good mothers. Such is the expectations and demand of the society that it is difficult for women to freely live the life of their choice. It might really be difficult for women to do anything as they wish.

According to Grace Kim Khaute, “Women had no right either in the family or in the society. In body, mind, and spirit, she belonged from birth till death to her father, brother, or her husband. Her men folk could treat her as they liked and a man who did not beat his wife was scorned by his friend as a *Thaibawi* (coward),” (35). Although these are the status of women, what and how they are expected to be in a Mizo society, the leading woman character portrayed in Rozamliani’s novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* is not good natured, well mannered, soft and loving.

The leading woman character in the story of this novel and her siblings hailed from a very poor family, their parents made their living at the farm. To make matter

worst their parents fell and drowned in a river on their way home from work. They had to live with their aunts as they had nobody else to turn to. But as the husband of their aunt was not a good man Zonunmawii and her elder brother lived an uncomfortable life. Zonunmawii said, “As we had already expected my aunt and her husband told my elder brother to drop out of school. My elder brother never hesitate to do any kind of works, he is a hardworking person who can do lots of work considering his young age. I can clearly say that they wanted to exploit him,” (Rozamliani 24). She also said, “I am a little bit stubborn and I know that they are reluctant about forcing me as they forced my brother. I kept saying to myself, ‘I will not stop studying until I get a job of my choice. I will do anything to continue my studies, ‘anything’,” (Rozamliani 24).

Although Zonunmawii’s brother was a male and elder in age. It is seen from the words of Zonunmawii that his younger sister is better than him in many ways. According to Lalkima and Jasmine Lalremmawii, “There can be many reasons why Mizo girls are not educated, it can be due to poverty and hardships in the family. Girls played an important role at domestic chores from a very young age and parents want to make use of them at home rather than sending them off to school for education,” (21). They continued saying, “Girls are leading over boys in the field of learning and education. In high school, colleges and even in universities there are many high ranking female students now a day,” (22).

It can be seen in the earlier days of the Mizo society that education of girls was not deemed necessary. The reason was also due to hardships in the family and that girls are useful in the household chores from a very young age, reasons for negligence of women education can also be that girls will be married off at a certain age. But in the story of Rozamliani’s novel the boy was made to discontinue school education as their aunt wanted to exploit him in other works. The younger sister Zonunmawii continued going to school. Even if her aunt tried to discontinue her education she would not leave school like her elder brother and she would do anything to continue learning in order to pursue her dreams. It can be concluded from

the story of this novel that women can be stronger willed, determined and tougher than men in their academic and job pursue as a successful career.

In this novel, “I just hugged him not knowing what to think, my elder brother had always wished to continue education and to pass class-X. But our status and situation denied us the priveledge to do so. Although he was happy for me he also felt sorry and pitied himself, and looking into my future he could not see a ray of hope in the days to come,” (Rozamliani 26). According to Lalthansangi Ralte, “The ‘brave’ (only man) of the village were called *Pasaltha* in Mizoram. The term *Pasaltha* is closely with the word *Tlawmngaihna*, which means humble in all respects and at the same time, to be always already to help. A *Pasaltha* is considered to be a man who is selfless and brave and wise and is always ready to sacrifice his life for others,” (51-52).

From the old days as the Mizo society is patriarchal women were considered inferior in every aspects of life. It can be seen that women were expected to be gentle, kind, loving and tolerant while men were expected to be strong, brave, clever and able to endure pain. In the old days of the Mizo society *Pasaltha* were iconized and considered as heroes. According to Rohmingmawii, “The very word ‘*pasaltha*’ a connotation in which we place a Mizo ‘hero’ is always gender biased. Mizo do not have the term ‘*nupuitha*’ which would be the female version of the *pasaltha* or ‘heroine’,” (33). Women were never considered to be able to achieve such a status. Only men were considered able to achieve a status like this.

This is how the Mizo society considered men and women. But it can be said that Rozamliani portrayed women stronger and tolerant than men in this novel. Zonunmawii narrated, “My aunt’s husband is always looking for excuses, it is clear in my mind that they yearn to make me work for them. They have stopped the education of my elder brother and now they are trying to stop mine, I deeply condemn them for this. But I will not live to their expectations,” (Rozamliani 27). This shows how determined and strong willed she is in order to pursue her goal. She did not want to end her dreams by bowing to the demand of her aunt and her husband



like her brother did. She worked and stayed as a maid in Aizawl and went to college at night. This clearly showed that she is a very determined woman.

In her other words, “We attended the same college the next year, if we did well this year we will have our Bachelor of Arts degree in the coming year. We really tried to work hard in order to do so. Even under the pressure of criticism and difficulties I said to myself, “My determination is harder than a bone,” and I braced myself and studied harder,” (Rozamlani 34). In the novel Zonunmawii said, “This might be the reason they nicknamed me Ngaitei behind my back. But I don’t mind or care about it...There is no place for boys in my heart, the only thing in my heart is to do my best in order to succeed. I will work hard and try my level best and God will help me. I have no time to be idle or to think lazily. I am bound to be a college lecturer,” (45). Her words made it clear that she is not just a normal woman, she is willing and determined to pursue her goals through poverty and difficulties. She defies the belief on women by the Mizo society which considered women to be weak, soft, ignorant and showed that she is stronger and determined than most men and the story showed her endurance in bearing all these.

According to James Dokhuma, “Women had no claim when it comes to heirship and guardianship of children. The cause of divorce never mattered when it comes to custody of children as it always comes to man. But as mentioned before if the cause of divorce is ‘*kawngka sula mak* or *sum lai tana inthen*’ and that they shared the same marital bed, then they divided their belongings and food grains among themselves,” (267). In the words of T. Vanlaltlani, “Even if a girl worked hard before she is married off while she still live with her parents, she does not have a share or claim in the over the fruits of her labour in the household. All her works are for her parents and siblings. And if she is married and gets divorced, then everything she earned through her works during the marriage goes to the husband,” (30-31). It can be seen that the status of women in a Mizo society is very poor compared to men. And as everything falls in the hands of men, the status of women is really low and below standard when it comes to inheritance.

The topic of inheritance is also shown in the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo*. Thartei, a friend of Zonunmawii and her families were searching for girl willing to be a surrogate mother to bear a child for Thartei's brother Nunfela who was in a wheelchair due to a motorcycle accident. They wanted Zonunmawii to bear a child for him and it is shown in the story how they tempted her with a huge amount of money to do so.

There is nothing to be angry about. We are rich and have lots of money as you all know. But as the situation of my brother comes to this, my father wished to see a grandson while he still lives. So my father had promised a huge amount of money to the girl who could bear a son for my brother. If she is eligible in my father's eyes and if my brother wanted to marry her, she can be a shareholder of my brother's wealth through marriage. Even if you don't wish to marry my brother atleast bear him a child and you can have lots and lots of money. This way you will be able to smoothly continue your studies. But you can only leave after you bear a son for him. Don't be amazed, think of it as a favour from me. (Rozamlani 56)

It can be seen from the above statement how highly men are placed in the Mizo society and how women are regarded to be incomplete just because she is not a male. All the family's wealth should be inherited by a male heir, if there are no such heirs they are willing to cash out a huge amount of money to produce such an heir. And they expected her to keep producing babies until it was a male baby and the only daughter in the family tried her best in order to accomplish the desire of the family. The inequality of men and women in a patriarchal society can also be clearly seen in this. Eventhough women played an important role in the family, they did not really have a value when it comes to real affairs.

This arrangement might seem to be shocking for Zonunmawii. But she is filled with determination, she is a person who is determined to achieve her goal and eventhough she did not love Nunfela she is willing to bear him a child in order to secure herself money for her future studies. "I encourage myself saying that it was

not going to be a real marriage. I heeded to my friends advice and agreed to bear him a son without marrying him,” (Rozamliani 57).

According to Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini, “In addition to that, their first and most important goal was avoiding putting and classifying women into categories and removing stereotypical images. This new group of feminists was not looking only for political and social rights for women but they wanted her to perform in all the domains and more importantly to have a role in life even if it was simple,” (20). Rozamliani also differently portrayed women in her novels. Zonuni said, “I knew that Nunfela loved me dearly, but I always ignored it. I am only here to bear him a child and I do not have time to busy myself in such things as love. It would be a grave mistake if I considered myself to be the daughter of a wealthy man,” (Rozamliani 60).

The guy she was bearing a child for not only wanted her to bear him a child, he loved and wished to marry her and take her as his wife. Not only Nunfela, both his parents and sister also wished the same thing. Lalsangpuui stated that, “In Mizo society, both boys and girls take their social identity from the father. While a son is a permanent member of this unit, a daughter is viewed as transient or not permanent member,” (44). In the view of the Mizo society a girl is supposed to marry, live and submit to the rule of her husband. And as such they did not have much right in the household as a man does. Their fate depends on their marriage and is lucky if they married a good man and are unlucky if they are married to a bad man. Anyway marriage is considered an important thing for a girl in the Mizo society.

Zonuni might be married to a good man and be the bride of a very wealthy family and depend on them in this story if she live a life and acted according to the views of a life for a girl in the Mizo society. And this may be the dream of many women. But such a thing was never her intentions. She said, “I will have to leave him as soon as I bear a son for him. I brace my thoughts as I still have lots to do in the future, this is only the beginning,” (Rozamliani 60). She did not want to let marriage stand in the way of achieving her goal. She has a different mindset to achieve her

goals. She believed that if she married Nunfela her only future would be to be a mother in the house and she would end up being a housewife and nothing else. And from her words it is clear that she is not willing to let it happen.

T. Vanlaltlani talks about how the Mizo society expects women saying, “The Mizo society expects a mother to be softhearted, kind, compassionate and have all the goodness in looking after the family. She is not expected to complain or be angry about anything. She is not given the right to raise her voice and talk about her opinions in any matter,” (7). Women are expected and required to be on their best self at all times. It can also be seen that the character of Zonunmawii in the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* greatly differs from the character of women expected by the Mizo society. Zonunmawii continued saying,

I agreed to the terms and conditions so that I will be able to continue my studies. If I forsake the agreement midway I will never be able to achieve success. I have to think about my future rather than living a comfortable life today. Should I consider the dreams of my childhood that is becoming a lecturer too high for me to attain? I clearly know that I will never really be able to do anything anymore if I became a wife and a mother. To really know myself I question myself of who I really am? I do not want to live in a smaller world than my friends. I braced my thoughts, made up my mind to go straight and not divert in left or right. (Rozamlani 75)

This clearly shows what is really inside her heart; she is a strong willed woman who tried her level best to achieve her goals. She is the kind of woman who wanted to put aside anything that stands in her way. It can be seen that women unlike men are not free to pursue their dreams if they were married and have children and this can result in failure to achieve the success they could have achieved out of marriage. The words of Zonuni clearly point out the status of many women. This is the reason why she did not want to let husbands and children to stand in her way in achieving her goals. This also showed that all women are not soft and gentle, and that they are not all wrapped with all sorts of good nature.

According to T. Vanlaltlani, “Mizo women are expected to bring joy, content, pleasure in the family, they are expected to bring their relatives, husbands and children together with love and affection,” (29). According to Lalzuia Colney, “There are different chores for men and women in our society. Women are considered to be weak and fragile as compared to men. Preparing land for cultivation, hunting down wild animals, going to war and head hunting is considered to be done only by men. The chores and duty of women are mainly household chores and looking after children and domestic animals,” (“Mizo Hmeichhe Dinhmun Chhungchang”) this is about the status of Mizo women in the old days. From the old days in the Mizo society women were considered to be inferior and weak. And their main duty is to be a good woman who takes good care of the household.

According to Leewne Gelletly, “In 19<sup>th</sup> –century America, it was not considered acceptable for women to lecture men. This was especially true in upper- and middle-class homes. Men and women’s lives were supposed to take place in separate spheres. A man’s place was the public sphere. He engaged in business and politics. A women’s place was in the domestic, or private sphere. She was to care for the home, children, and her husband,” (10). This means that in the American society women were stuck in household chores, their main duty is to care for their husbands and children and to look after the house. This is the reason why women raised their voice demanding for equality of men and women. It can be seen that women had no freedom to choose any kind of jobs of their likings as men did.

In the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* the author Rozamlani did not mention the inequality between men and women, she did not directly mention the status of women in the story of this novel. But the mindset and nature of Zonuni the character who played the leading role in the novel defies all the expectations of women by the Mizo society. At times she made the woman character more stubborn, strong minded and even stronger than men. The Mizo society expects women to be kind hearted, soft and filled with all sorts of goodness but one her way to achieve her dreams of becoming a lecturer Zonuni agreed to be a surrogate mother. Eventhough the man

who hired her for surrogacy loved and wished to marry her, she considered having a husband and children as an obstacle that can lead to the destruction of her future goals and it can be seen in the story that she decided to leave him as soon as she bore him a son.

Not only Nunmawia, even his parents asked her to stay with them as their son's wife. This might be because they worry too much for their son and grandson. But Zonunmawii answered them saying,

I am not that reluctant about staying. But, there is still a but regarding this, I did not come to this house to get married, I came here because I needed the money to continue my studies. I desperately needed money in order to continue studying, and it is necessary for me to continue studying. I cannot get married until I am what I always wanted to be, I am not willing to let go when I am already halfway there. If I made a decision according to the desire of this family there might be hardships and trouble for me in the future to come. What if Nunfela's love for me starts to fade, or if sickness befalls me, will this family still love and pity me the as they did before? (Rozamlani 80-81)

Taking what Zonuni said into consideration, even though she did not directly talked about the status of women, her thoughts, her deep fear about what could happen if a marriage is broken due to divorce or by death the situation of women is really unfortunate and it can be presumed that women are always the less fortunate ones when such things happened. T. Vanlaltlani said, "Even if a girl worked hard before she is married off while she still live with her parents, she does not have a share or claim in the over the fruits of her labour in the household. All her works are for her parents and siblings. And if she is married and gets divorced, then everything she earned through her works during the marriage goes to the husband," (30-31).

If such things mentioned above is really the status of women in the society it is best for a woman to be able to fend for herself, to be able to look after herself and

not depend on others. She should be self dependent in order to gain respects from others. The mindset of Zonunmawii, her willingness to abandon her own child is condemnable and despicable. She can be considered as a mother who does not have love or pity for her own child but taking all her thoughts into consideration she might not deserve all the criticism. If she stayed and became the wife of Nunfela and lived comfortably, her husband might die oneday or she could get a divorce. If she risks her dreams of becoming a lecturer for this and if such things happened in the days to come she will swing back to her past situation and would have to live a life of poverty. She knew in her heart that all their wealth and riches is not hers and that her situation could be worst. It can be said that she left her child and Nunfela's house in order to secure her goal and to stand on her own feet. Situations like this can stir up a debate to a great extent, some might think that it is too much. Zonunmawii's action and mindset in this situation can be said to evolve from a feminist point of view.

Vanlalhruii said, "Getting education is the way to lift up the life of humans. It is the best way to secure our rights and to attain a good life. When it comes to wealth and money, food and stuffs, politics, life in the society and individual lives, education fortifies human beings, it is the thing that elevates them from the life of poverty," (65). This is the feeling that was huge in the mind of Zonuni as she believed that education can save her from poverty. She does not belief marrying a rich person and living a comfortable life to be a real success. In order to be successful she toiled through many difficulties, and even if she is bound to receive criticism and rebuke from others she abandoned her own child in order to pursue higher studies and went away from Mizoram and goes to Madras and continued studying there.

She accomplished her dreams of becoming a lecturer. She felt remorse for leaving her child and Nunfela the man who dearly loved her and often thought of herself to be a bad woman but she convince herself that she was not all bad at heart and said that, "I never had any ill thoughts towards anyone even when I hurt the feelings of the people who hired me to be a surrogate mother, sometimes I think of myself as a wicked person. I envy an integrated Christian family who live a life of

peace and harmony. And there is nothing I long for other than starting such a family,” (Rozamliani 85). It can be seen that she often felt remorse, and that she often considered herself as a wicked person. “I believe that the prayers of my mother and father for us will not be in vain, we were a family that knows God and God knows us too. But I know that I have to work really hard in order to be successful in life, and that I had to keep going even if I faced lots of difficulties. I used all my strength on my way to secure the job of my dreams” (Rozamliani 85) said Zonuni.

Although Zonuni can be considered as a bad and irresponsible person who do not have a sense of love and pity for others, the hardships and difficulties faced by women in the Mizo society can otherwise be known and seen from her actions. Zonuni’s nature and actions were against the expectations of the Mizo society and she herself felt guilty about it. But as she thought about the status of most women she felt an urge to stand on her own and as she had always dream of becoming a lecturer she braced herself to be strong, she cannot afford to be soft hearted, she took a step to make her dream come true and was willing to bear any consequences. Thus she succeeded in the end. The author of this novel not only made a woman as a leading character of the story, she also portrayed her as a strong woman. She characterized her in such a way that she might be hated and criticized by many. But after thinking deeply it can be seen that she portrayed the difficulties and troubles faced by women from a feminist mindset.

Zonunmawii called herself Maria and lived in Madras as a single woman. She was married to a man named Trevor who was from another race, she dearly loved her husband. But she could not bear him a child. Zonuni (Maria) said, “The most handsome man in the whole world, a reliable person for a weak girl, kind hearted and tolerant in nature, nobody can compare to such a person and there never will be,” (Rozamliani 108) talking about how she loves her husband. Zonunmawii studied in Madras, and after she was a successful person she seemed to neglect her brother who was supposed to be one of the reasons why she continued studying. She also married to a different race. Her actions and urges to follow her dreams might have led her not



to long for her birthplace where women are required to live a life that best suit the Mizo society.

The author of this novel let Zonuni (Maria) suffer misfortune in such a manner that it somehow resembles what she had done to others in the past, although she dearly loved her husband, he on the other hand had betrayed her by committing adultery with Mary who was their maid. “What I have witnessed today is really devastating. I really really hate Mary and my husband, they have tricked me really well. The excuses he made when I asked him to visit a friend of mine was a lie, he really betrayed me beyond any doubt,” (Rozamliani 140) said Zonuni as she talked about her husband. Dr. Trevor looked after Mahriata the son of Zonuni (his wife) and Nunfela as he is a patient in their hospital, he also finds out the photos of her son which Zonuni had hidden. As he found out that his wife already had a child in her past life but now she could not conceive a baby for him, so he decided to betray her by committing adultery with Mary their maid. It can be presumed that she sowed the seeds of the evil she planted in the past.

But as the author of this novel is a woman, it can be seen that she is not willing to really be little her woman character as she is also a woman. Zonuni was betrayed by her husband Dr. Trevor and he elope with Mary their maid, they both went away to USA leaving Zonunmawii behind. Zonunmawii also left her child and Nunfela the man who loved her so dearly in order to pursue her dreams. It can be considered that her sins from the past reflect back to her as her husband Trevor left her. Nunfela was also engage to another woman. But in the end it can be seen that the feelings these two men had for Zonunmawii did not change permanently.

Nunfela shouted, “How dare you claimed him as your son all of a sudden, you clearly do not understand the hurt that you have caused to my family all these years. You have wealth and money but you do not have love in your heart, and I don’t think you really love my son,” (Rozamliani 196). But Zonuni said, “No that is not true, I truly love him dearly. I am not as wicked as you thought. I was at a very difficult state at that time, and I made an agreement with you as I wished to be a

successful person. I was only trying my best and struggled to defeat poverty, truth is that I never really had any ill thoughts towards anyone,” (Rozamlani 196). The views and opinions of Nunfela might be the opinion of many people in this case, Nunfela was right to have this kind of opinion taking his situation into consideration. T. Vanlaltlani described the status of Mizo women saying,

It is really difficult for girls to be considered good damsels, so being a damsel is very tough for girls. And if she is married she is expected to abide by her husband. She is expected to abide by the rules of her husband starting from the day of her marriage. She is lucky if she is married to a good man, but if she is married to a bad man and as getting divorce is not an easy thing to do, she will have to suffer hardships the rest of her married life. Even if they worked really hard for the family, they do not have rights over the fruits of their hard works. The husbands on the otherhand have the rights over everything they own. (21)

If this really is the status of women, this means that if a girl is married she did not have the authority to do anything on her own, she needed the permission and consent of her husband for doing anything. But if the husband did not give her approval it will be really difficult for the wife to do anything they wish to do and to work outside and away from the house. This is what came to the thoughts of Zonuni, marriage and looking after a child could prove to be an obstacle on her way to pull herself out of poverty and to become a lecturer as she always dream of. Nunfela did love Zonuni dearly, he took her back at the end eventhough she had badly hurt his feelings and even marry a man from other race. But he does not truly understand the thoughts and urges of Zonuni during all those years. It seems that he just badly needed her to look after him and their son.

Zonuni said, “Nunfela pleaded and asked me to quit my job, he wanted to legalize our marriage. I gave it a good thought and think deeply over everything, I have entered his house a long time ago without love in my heart, I left with lots of money and now I am a wealthy woman. But those wealth and money cannot buy me

happiness,” (261). In here it can be seen that Zonuni was asked to quit on her job as a lecturer, the job she secured over many hardships and troubles, the job she got after suffering many criticisms. It can also be seen that Zonuni was willing to quit her job and get married to Nunfela as she dearly love him also feeling sorry that their child have died.

The author of this novel is a woman from the Mizo society and as such it is clear that she gave thoughts on how people will judge her through this novel. At the beginning of the novel Zonuni was characterized as a strong, stubborn woman who was willing to bear any consequences in order to do what she want to be successful. Her actions really portrayed the status of women in the Mizo society. But at the end she was willing to let go everything she had fought for and then marry the man she had left a long time ago. It shows that there is no real happiness in the things that she was after and how she felt remorse for everything she did. But carefully studying this novel from beginning to end it can be seen that the author gave consideration on what people might think that she gave it a twist at the ending and turn it into a story with a lesson. Rozamlani said, “A single sin of a woman is far more noticeable than hundreds of sins committed by a man. We are scared to show what is really in our hearts, we think of a time when we will have to answer questions from our grandchildren. We need to be cautious about ourselves, we sometimes have to write after summoning all the courage in our hearts,” (Interview with Rozamlani). This statement says a lot.

The novel *Tuarna Phenah* written by Rozamlani was published in the year 2007, like the previous novel the author portrayed a woman as a leading character in this novel. The leading character in this novel is Sangtei. The first character shown in this novel is Sangtei and as such she is the center of attraction from the start. Sangtei is an orphan who lives at her aunt's as her parents have passed away. Rozamlani often portrayed the life of an orphan in her novels, she also portrayed the life of an orphan in her previous novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* which is studied previously. In the preface of the novel *Tuarna Phenah* the author wrote, “... the unbearable life of an orphan which I have also lived is shown in the story...” (Rozamlani 7). As the

author have been through the life of an orphan in real life, it can be said that she took keen interest in portraying the life of an orphan.

Domestic violence was suffered by Sangtei the main character in the story of this novel. According to Julie Lalrinzami, “Domestic violence consists of physical violence, mental and verbal violence, giving insufficient food by deliberately causing malnutrition,” (46). According to Deborah Lockton and Richard Ward, “The behaviour that is commonly called domestic violence can take on a variety of different aspects. It can be physical assault, sexual abuse, threats of either, or psychological abuse,” (7). Domestic violence can consist of physical and mental abuse, unconsented sexual abuse or an attempt of sexual abuse.

In the novel *Tuarna Phenah* the main character Lalrinsangi who is nicknamed Sangtei suffered many tormentation and harassment. She suffered this from her own relatives, her aunt and her husband who she thought would shelter her because her parents have passed away. Her aunt’s husband not only shouted at her but gave her a beating just because of her dirty socks. In the novel, “Sangtei was crying because she was in pain, she was scared that her uncle would slap her again. Mawii looked at her in excitement, mocked and laugh at her,” (Rozamliani 13). Not only her uncle, even her aunt did not show any mercy upon her. Her aunt shouted, “Sang sual, where do you keep my money bag? Tell me right now. You thief, where do you hide it?” (Rozamliani 13) accusing her of stealing her bag. Not only this, “She grabbed Sangtei by the hair and thrashed her to the ground, she dragged her on the floor, she was really scared of her aunt’s temper,” (Rozamliani 13).

They not only do not have any pity or sympathy toward a little girl who have lost both her parents, they falsely blamed her for the things she had not done and not only that, she suffered many beatings and physical abuse. In the novel, “Sangtei cried out as she was in pain, fresh blood starts to ooze from her nose. They refused to believe her even when she said that she did not take anything,” (Rozamliani 14). Her uncle was the one who beat her up and causes her to bleed. The things that she had suffered are really terrible and horrifying. They did all this to a girl, to a helpless

little girl. This will certainly leave a scar and will surely have negative effects on her physically and mentally. Her aunt and husband made Sangtei suffer much domestic violence. In the explanation of Julie Lalrinzami,

Firstly, nowadays we talk about the rights of women and we are really interested in Domestic Violence Act and talked about it a lot, but we must put a check on ourselves whether or not we as women are causing discomforts and difficulties for our daughter in laws, who are also our fellow women. Secondly, when our fellow women suffered shame and difficulties, are we not the ones who spread gossips in the society, the ones who liked to talk about their badluck, are we not the ones who mocks and laugh at them. (51-52)

It is clear from the things she said that when a woman faces domestic trouble in a household, the cause of trouble is not always a man, but it can also be her fellow woman who causes her troubles and the one who mocks and laughs at her. She did not directly says it but she still showed that women can also be on the responsible party of stirring domestic violence. In the novel *Tuarna Phenah* the aunt of Sangtei and her daughter Mawii were responsible for stirring up troubles and creating problems for Sangtei by false accusation, tormentation and beating her up until she bleeds, her aunt also took part in beating her up. It can be seen from this that women can also be merciless towards other women, they can be the ones who mocks other women and they can also be the ones who does not care if the worst happened to other women.

The novel mentioned about Sangtei saying, “She wish to study and go to school, but she did not dare to talk about it. She was busy at the house the whole day and she never even have time to rest. As this is the way she is, she is really good in household activities considering her young age. If her aunt and her family sees anything that is out of order and sees a mistake, they never forgive her and always give her punishment, they always gave her a good beating,” (Rozamliani 15). Not only has this, her uncle often sent her to get liquor eventhough she is only a little girl. In the novel, “She hid three packs of liquor packed in plastic bags inside her skirt,

she trembled a lot as she was scared that people might notice her. This was the time when the whole community was against liquor, there were always duties trying to catch liquor in the locality,” (Rozamliani 19). The tragedy that Sangtei faced is violence towards women, violence against an underaged girl, this is a really serious offence. Her uncle and his friends not only send her to fetch liquor for them, “The three of them held her and poured the liquor in her mouth. Eventhough Sangtei closed her mouth, they forced it open and poured liquor in her mouth,” (Rozamliani 21).

Sangtei bear all these tragedies happening to her alone, she have no one who could help and understand her. “Many of the small boys mocks, laughed and made fun of her, they yelled at her from a distance and called her Sangi the drinker and this is all she gets” (Rozamliani 22). They did not see her status and what she has been through at home, the mocked and laughed at her, and showed how they despise her. The one who was not at fault was victimized and suffered immensely. Not only this her aunt’s husband also tried to rape her. In the novel, “He suddenly grabbed and hugged Sangtei, Sangtei stuggled a lot to free herself. As he was trying to kiss her Sangtei was able to free one of her hand and started slapping her uncle. Her uncle was getting really angry, he shook her violently and slapped her back many times. After that he hugged her tightly and started kissing her again,” (Rozamliani 26) showing how Sangtei’s uncle tried to sexually abuse her.

She fought him back with all her might although she is weaker and powerless. “As he tried to kiss Sangtei again she bit his lips and it started bleeding. Her uncle was so furious that he grabbed her hair and started smashing her head against the wall, Sangtei began to feel dizzy. And then her uncle started kissing her again,” (Rozamliani 27) she suffered lots of harassment while she was trying to safeguard her purity. According to R. Laltlanhlui, “It is shown in some studies that there are 773 cases of rape in Mizoram between 2009 and 2019. This means that about 70 girls are raped in a year,” (“Mizo Hmeichhe Dinmun: Pawngsual hi eng vanga thleng nge?”). It can be said that the number of rape case is huge considering the population of Mizoram. She also said, “Men are hugely responsible for sexually abusing girls

and showing an act of perversion, they are responsible for causing them trouble by showing unnecessary means of domination,” (“Mizo Hmeichhe Dinmun: Pawngsual hi eng vanga thleng nge?”).

Although the author of this novel said that the story is about the rough and difficult life of an orphan, it is also clear that she depicted the hardships and difficulties faced by women and this can be seen deeply looking into the status and hardships faced by the main character in the story of this novel. Julie Lalrinzami states that, “The place where women faced trouble the most is at home. One strange thing is that the place where many Mizo women faced troubles and difficulties is mostly at home, a place where we live. This can be proven by the huge number of cases filed under the ‘The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005’, an act which is really well known now a days,” (49). It can be presumed that many Mizo women suffered at the hands of their own relatives in their own home unknown to others. If this is made known only after the implementation of ‘The Protection Of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005’, the bad situation of many women before the implementation of this act is unimaginable. The difficulties faced by many women in the form of physical assault, sexual abuse and violence which were unknown to others is depicted in the story of this novel.

Although Sangtei’s aunt knew and saw how her husband was trying to touch her niece, she instead of standing up for her fellow woman blamed and accused her of being at fault. Her aunt shouted, “You whore, you only know how to cause trouble for us. You are a flirt and the most shameless girl. You acted like a good and innocent girl in front of others but you secretly flirt with your own uncle, you despicable and shamless girl,” (Rozamliani 27) adding salt to her wound. Their daughter Mawii also said, “She is always a flirt with boys, touch and teach her a lesson until she’s had enough, then she will see through herself,” (Rozamliani 27) giving her the worst remarks. This shows that women can be responsible for the sufferings of other women, they can be the ones who refused to see the wrong doings of their husbands, they can be the one who puts the blame on the victims. From the words of Rozamliani, “I know many girls who were sexually violated by their own

uncles and even their fathers but these incidents are never spoken of outside the house, even their mothers are scared to talk about it to others. Many girls suffered a lot, there are also many girls who are sexually violated by their brothers. As this happened inside the circle of our family we do not wish to put our family to shame. We are scared even to talk about it. Such matters are almost always silenced forever unless it is inevitable and goes out of hand,” (Interview with Rozamlani). It can be seen that many women secretly suffered many hardships unknown to others. Rozamlani also use her novel as an opportunity to portray the sufferings of women.

R. Lalzlanhlui said that the status of women is improving now a days in many different ways but the crimes committed on women through sexual violence is still at large and said,

Now a days woman played an important role and have important positions in the government as well as in religious affairs. There are many new rules and laws made for the protection and upliftment of women. The status of women in the present day is far better than that of the past. But still the defenseless and weak nature of women shows up at times. Violence and sexual abuse cannot cease to happen to many of them. Eventhough there are laws and punishment against violence and sexual crimes committed to women, committing violence and sexual crimes on women cannot come to an end. (“Mizo Hmeichhe Dinhmun: Pawngsual hi eng vanga thleng nge?”)

Although the status of women is said to improve a lot and different kinds of improvements regarding the status of women can also be seen but it can be seen that there are still many women who suffered different kinds of hardships unknown by others. Keeping aside the troubles they faced outside the comfort of their homes, Rozamlani depicted the hardships faced by women in their own homes which were mostly never spoken of and tolerated in silence for fear of public humiliation. Eventhough she did not directly point out the poor status of women in her novel, it can still be seen from the story of the novel.



Human Trafficking is also shown in the story of this novel, the story depicted many different hardships faced by women. According to Lalngaihmaria Zote, “Human Trafficking is the unlawful means of using our fellow human beings for commercial purposes,” (36). He also said, “They were cleverly tricked into this. Then they were forced into prostitution, they were forced to do rigorous works against their will (Forced Labour) and some are forced to beg on the streets. Forcing girls into prostitution, child exploitation i.e. forcing or hiring children under the age of 14 to work and forcing others to beg on the streets are all against the law,” (37).

Human Trafficking is a very fast growing network, and again girls are the ones who suffered the most in human trafficking. Lalngaihmaria Zote said, “There are some who are cleverly tricked into illicit sexual activities. According to UNODC 58% of victims under Human Trafficking are used for Sexual Exploitation. This girl are forced into prostitution, forced to make sex videos, forced into marriage and forced to make illicit photos. The strange thing about human trafficking is that there are always more women involved than men in this criminal activity.” (38). As 58% of victims under Human Trafficking are dragged into prostitution and other sexual business and that the ones involved in the business of Human Trafficking are mostly women, it can be said that women are the most to suffer the consequences.

In the novel *Tuarna Phenah* the main character Sangtei was tricked by her aunt and was sold into prostitution. Her aunt made an excuse saying that she needed to go to other state for the purpose of medical checkup; she cleverly asked Sangtei to go with her saying, “We won’t stay for too long, we will be back home in no time. It could be a type of excursion and sightseeing opportunity for you. You will like it very much,” (Rozamlani 31). Sangtei did not have any clue on what her aunt was scheming and planning. In the novel, “She was lost in her thoughts after her aunt left her. She was glad to get love and affection from her aunt, she was excited because she received good words from her aunt. She felt that her aunt was affectionate towards her from about a week ago, she does not know the reason behind it, her aunt might have been born again,” (Rozamlani 32). Without a doubt Sangtei followed her aunt to Delhi.

But her aunt who was her own flesh and blood, her fellow woman tricked and sold her into prostitution. In the novel, “Sangtei woke up really late, she felt it was weird that she could sleep so soundly. She rubbed her eyes and her head felt heavy as she was about to get up” (Rozamliani 36). Judging from her behaviour it seems that she was drugged with medicine. “Sangtei was really worried. She was hoping that her aunt would come back, the day seemed to be very lengthy for her. Sangtei walked back and forth in despair, she sometimes lie facedown on the bed and cried as loud as she could” (Rozamliani 37). Her aunt left her while she was sleeping, she could not get out as the door was locked from outside. The man who bought Sangtei told her, “Do you think your aunt felt sorry for you? Yes, she felt sorry for you. She felt so sorry for you that she sold you for rupees five thousand,” (Rozamliani 38) mocking and telling her how her aunt had sold her.

Sangtei was cleverly tricked out of her home, she was drugged with medicine and she was sold while she was unconscious. She was forced into prostitution without her consent and approval. In the novel,

There are many girls in this hotel who were sex workers like Sangtei, mostly the reasons why they do this kind of work is because their parents get divorced, some are due to poverty and lack of money and some are the ones who suffered violence from their husbands and had to do this kind of work in order to survive. There are some who chooses this kind of works on their own free will. And there are also some who are alcoholics and drug addicts who had to work as prostitutes in order to earn some money. (Rozamliani 42)

It is seen that even prostitutes have different reasons for working as prostitutes, there are some who willingly chooses prostitution to earn for themselves while some had to do it due to poverty, there are also those who were tricked and forced into prostitution. Among all these sex workers and their reasons for working as sex workers, those who were tricked and forced into prostitution by methods of human trafficking might be the victims that suffered the most.

The incident that Thari a co-worker of Sangtei in the hotel Karol Bagh faced is also very unpleasant. Thari was a woman who stayed in Delhi and married a man who was not from the Mizo Society. Her husband could not get a job. So he schemed an evil plan, drugged his wife and sold her to another man. In the novel, “They first drugged Thari, and then her husband’s friend slept with her in their marital bed. Her husband was waiting in the other room and after his friend is done he received 500 rupees from him as payment. As he often brought others in other days and as he uses his wife for a commercial purpose, Thari had had enough. Out of anger Thari ran away leaving her husband and son behind,” (Rozamliani 44-45). From this time forth she entered the world of prostitution deeper. In the case of Thari, her husband uses her for making money without her consent, this is also human trafficking. Ruth Lalrinliani explained how human trafficking took place in Mizoram and said,

According to the report of the Mizoram C.I.D. (Crime) there were 19 Human Trafficking cases which were filed between the year 2000 and 2012 out of which 12 cases were filed in the district of Aizawl, 4 cases of human trafficking filed in the district of Kolasib, 2 cases filed in the district of Champhai and 1 case was filed in the district of Lunglei. All these 19 cases of Human Trafficking are all related to trafficking for sexual exploitation. Luckily there are no cases of Human Trafficking between 2012 to 2015 in Mizoram. (54)

It can be seen from the above statement that there had been an occurrence of Human Trafficking in Mizoram. Meanwhile it can also be seen that the number of occurrence is not that much by looking at the number of cases filed. But as all the cases filed are related to prostitution and sexual exploitation, it can be assumed that the victims if not all of them will mostly be girls.

As human trafficking had already occurred in Mizoram, it is seen in the novel *Tuarna Phenah* that some of the women characters in the story were also victims of

human trafficking. Although the women characters in the story of this novel do not raise their voices regarding their unfortunate events and for the difficulties and troubles they faced, from their unfortunate experience the story still shows and portrayed the difficulties women faced due to human trafficking and domestic violence. Eventhough Sangtei's aunt, the one who sold her into prostitution was involved in human trafficking and did a very bad thing to her, she was also a victim of Human Trafficking. In the novel, "One day her husband did a very strange thing to her. He called her from his place of work and asked her to dress up very nicely," (Rozamliani 123). "Her husband prepared her drinks; he was really excited judging from his appearance and the way he does everything. After Mrs. Thani had her tea she quickly fell asleep, her husband had added drugs in her tea," (Rozamliani 123). Although Thani is not a righteous and good woman, her husband uses her to make money by means of sex and it can be said that Sangtei too suffered the consequences.

As seen in the novel, "Her cunning husband needed money, he always secretly search for someone who would sleep with his wife, and he is really successful in doing so. He then uses the money his wife gets for buying liquor and on other women," (Rozamliani 124). "After Mrs. Thani had enough money she started doing business. She formed a business alliance with the owner of the hotel Karol Bagh and tricked many Mizo girls and took them to Delhi and sold them for prostitution," (Rozamliani 124) showing how Thani goes deeper into trafficking for sexual exploitation. Eventhough she is a victim of human trafficking she also did the very same thing to others. In the novel, "As she became more greedy and greedy for money, she even had to sell Sangtei who was her own niece," (Rozamliani 125). She was so deep in this flesh trade that she did not hesitate to sell the daughter of her own sister, her own flesh and blood.

Although a woman is shown as the cause of this unfortunate incident and that the victims are also women, but in the very beginning it can be seen in the story how a man is responsible for causing such things. In the explanation of Brain F. Kingshott and Tonisha R. Jones, "The United Nations identifies that women account for 55-60 percent of all human trafficking victims detected globally, while two-thirds of

trafficked children and girls...These factors include, but not limited to, the system of patriarchy, violence against women, the feminization of poverty and migration, globalization and the capitalist market system, as well as the practice of consumerism and commodification,” (3). The things mentioned above are the different causes that led to human trafficking and most of the victims are girls. According to the feminist belief, the reasons that led all these things to happen is the patriarchal rule and authority of men.

Brain F. Kingshott and Tonisha R. Jones also said, “It is acknowledged that in highly patriarchal societies human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation is likely to flourish. In such societies, patriarchal perspective ascribe to the ideology that women’s sole purpose is to please men, especially sexually,” (5). As women are subjected under the rule of men, they are expected to please men, to make an enjoyment for men and this is believed to be one of the causes that led to human trafficking.

Lalngakthuami explained, “As we all know that in Mizoram we women live under the authority of men. And as such the way of thinking and reasoning of both men and women is influenced by the rule of patriarchy. So, we have to know and clearly understand the ideology behind patriarchy, it is important to know that our intention towards women and the way we treat our women all came from this ideology “ (9). The feminist believe that the ideology of patriarchy is the root cause of all the sufferings and hardships faced by women. As men ruled over women by their authority women are considered and expected to please them, it is believed that the thoughts of having the power to do anything over women leads to sexual abuse, domestic violence and human trafficking.

Although the women characters in the novel *Tuarna Phenah* did not talk about this things, and eventhough the author of the novel did not directly blame the ideology of patriarchy as the root cause, taking a closer look at the situations and difficulties faced by the women characters of the story, Thani’s husband was the root cause of all the troubles they have faced. He sold his wife in order to make some

money and this dragged the women deeper into the flesh trade resulting in the sufferings of other women. Thani even sold her own niece, her own flesh and blood. Not only Thani, it is also seen in the story how Sangtei's friend Thari who was first sold to other men by her husband for making some money ended up as a prostitute. As men can be blamed as the root cause of all the problems, the author of this novel might keep the ideology of feminism in her mind. But the women instead of doing anything to get justice, or trying to let the law punish the wrong doers kept quiet about it. And this led them into further troubles.

It can also be seen that the illegal activity of sexually exploiting girls for commercial purposes have many negative consequential impacts. Sangtei was also sold by her aunt to the hotel Karol Bagh without her consent where she was forced into prostitution. Although she was forced to do this kind of work against her will, she was the one who bear all the humiliation and shame. Hluna a Mizo guy she met at the hotel Karol Bagh who she thought might be able to rescue her said, "Why are you doing such a dirty work? Do you really need a man this bad? I befriended you thinking that you are a normal person but I can see that you really are not a normal person. I can sleep with you and do anything I want with you whenever I wanted to. You brought shame to your mother and father, your families and the Mizo society as a whole. You should feel really ashamed if you are still sane and able to feel shame," (63).

T. Vanlaltlani said, "Many men refused to show respect and regards to women because they are women. They did not hesitate to mock them, tease them and make fun of them. It is difficult for women to earn respect and regards in the Mizo society as this is the situation of women in the society," (19) talking about how women are disregarded in the Mizo society. As this is the status of women in the society, it can be presumed that the status of prostitutes will be really low. Hluna also shows no respect towards Sangtei, disregarded her from a man's point of view; showed her that he is stronger and more powerful than her by telling her that he could sleep with her whenever he wishes to.

Julie Lalrinzami said, “Many women suffered emotional pain and torture that can completely destroy us from the ones we loved, the ones we thought would love us back unconditionally even after knowing all our flaws. We receive words that cut deeper than a knife that drown us to a bottomless pit of desperation,” (49). Explaining how women used to get hurtful and embarrassing words from men. In the novel, “Sangtei sat weakly on the bed, Hluna, the one she thought would rescue her looked at her with contempt. She was really hurt that he ridiculed her and called her a whore. Even though she was a whore she was still hurt that she was mocked and laughed at for her profession and she find it really hard to bear the pain. Her hope for an escape is now hopeless and in vain,” (Rozamliani 65) showing how Sangtei’s heart was broken by the words of Hluna and how all her hopes and dreams are taken away. The tone and attitude of Hluna’s word can be considered as a contempt, disrespect and disregard towards women.

In her previous novel Rozamliani portrayed her woman character as a strong and stubborn woman, a woman who is not willing to let anything stand in her way but the character of Lalrinsangi (Sangtei) in this novel is a weak woman compared to the character of Zonunsangi in the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo*. In this novel *Tuarna Phenah* Sangtei felt that she cannot do anything on her own to free herself from the clutch of the hotel Karol Bagh. Hluna was her only hope to free herself from this hotel. As Hluna loved and wished to marry her, he thinks of a way to rescue her from this hotel eventhough he had used spiteful and hateful words on her in the past. In the novel, “That day Hluna spoke with the owner of the hotel as Sangtei had instructed him to do so, he offered him money to buy her freedom. But the owner of the hotel refused to take his offer, they chatted for a very long time. Hluna threatened him telling him that he was going to report it to the police but that does not scare the owner of the hotel,” (Rozamliani 70). “Hluna was dissatisfied and angry, so he decided to take it to the law. He also decided to make it known to the fighters for women rights, and spread it to the news and newspapers,” (Rozamliani 71). The owner of the hotel finally agreed to Hluna’s offer to buy Sangtei as he was afraid of the consequences if he does not agree.

Lalngaihmaria Zote said, “This business is large as there are many rich and wealthy people who are involved in this business, the network is also really good. It is said that there are some high ranked police officers involved in this business in some places. This made it harder to catch the culprits of those who are involved in the business, it also enhanced the growth of human traffickings,” (39). As powerful and wealthy people are involved in the business of human trafficking, rescuing Sangtei was also not an easy thing to do. If Sangtei had tried and struggled and succeeded in freeing herself and others who were stuck like her eventhough it is not an easy thing to do, she will be considered as a strong and powerful woman. But she was not regarded as a strong woman because she could not free herself without the help of Hluna and there was no sign of her trying to free herself on her own.

Julie Lalrinzami said, “The place where we women faced hardships the most is at home, in our own household. When we get married we submitted and gave our all in the marriage, we women are solely dependent on our husbands if we get married having no permanent source of income. Some women faced difficulties from the family of their husbands, there are some fortunate ones and unfortunate ones in a marriage” (49) as she talks about the status of women in the Mizo society. According to T. Vanlaltlani, “At the very beginning of a marriage in the Mizo society the wife is called ‘Mothar’, a term used to refer a new wife literally meaning Fresh Bride. All the difficult task in the household falls in her hand as she was a fresher (Fresh Bride). She is expected to work happily without complaining even if the work proves to be tough and tiring,” (25). Eventhough Sangtei was rescued from prostitution by Hluna, her troubles and problems did not end there. Her situation was not favourable from the very beginning. As she entered Hluna’s house after becoming his wife she tried her best to be a good wife, she tried really hard to excel in their eyes. In the novel, “She respects and take good care of her husband, she respected the family members of her husband as well. She always smiled and approach them with a cheerful face no matter how busy she is and how hard she works” (Rozamliani 80). So it can be seen that Sangtei’s behaviour in the house of her husband meets the expectations of the Mizo society.



But T. Vanlaltlani also said, “There are more hostilities between the wife and mother-in-law, than there are with the father-in-law. And there are more hostilities that arise with the wife and sister-in-law than with the brother-in-law. “ (30). Sangtei also faced the same problem as this. “Eventhough Sangtei talked nicely to her she always replied her bluntly turning her face away from her. Although the other family members of her husband are all good people, her mind was troubled by the way her mother-in-law treats her. She was mistaken when she thought that her mother-in-law was starting to be good to her. The way her mother-in-law treats her worsen as the days passed, she was now beginning to treat her as a servant,” (Rozamlani 80) this was shown in the story. She was also the one who spread lies about Sangtei telling that she was suffering from AIDS. This novel depicted the different status of women in the Mizo society, the different hardships and troubles that women faced, the troubles caused to them by men due to poverty which were not known or noticed by others and how women can be responsible for the sufferings of other women.

The third novel of Rozamlani *A Mak A Na* was published in the year 2012. Rozamlani have not released another novel after this. Like the other first two novels she portrayed a woman as the leading character of the story in this novel. As talked about earlier the author of this novel wrote it with a purpose of giving a life lesson behind the story. The author herself wrote in the preface of the novel, “The main thing I wanted to portray in the story is the need to give teenagers good guidance during the period of adolescence and how to guide and look after them. This is a lesson for parents on how to guide their children who have grown big in size but still a youngster at heart, lessons on how abortion of a baby is murder and is a sin which God does not permit, and why sex education is an important topic which should be learned and discussed in the family,” (Rozamlani 7).

Eventhough this novel is written with teachings of a life lesson in mind but still the status of women is depicted based on the society of which the novel is written. Looking closely in the story the hardships faced by women and how they faced it, how the society viewed women and how they are treated in the household can still be seen in this novel. As the author Rozamlani is from the present generation and still a

young woman, the novels she wrote are also based on the present era. And so the status of women in the present era is portrayed in this novel. This novel shows having sexual affairs before marriage and the conceiving of a baby before marriage. It seems that the author of this novel tried to show the status of such women and what they went through in such situations.

K. Zawla said, “The boys tried to have sex with girls in order to escape ‘Pawla Sai’ and the girls tried to stay intact in order to escape ‘Pawla Sai’ and having sexual affairs before marriage is very rare in the community” (159). James Dokhuma explained ‘Pawla Sai’ like this,

In the afterlife there is a guy called Pawla in the entry of the village of the dead, there is no other route to pass him without going through him. Pawla have a very strong catapult and he knew every dead people and what kind of life they have lived when they were alive. He shoots any bachelors who have not yet have sex with a girl during their lifetime when they pass through him. The parts of their body where he shot them will be wounded for three years and the pain will last for another three years after that. (38)

This is how the Mizo elders thought of the afterlife in the old days. It is a must for bachelors to sleep with as many girls as they can to escape Pawla Sai but it is also a must for damsels to stay intact until the day they get married to escape Paula Sai, so it is against their belief for a girl to have sexual intercourse before marriage.

In this novel *A Mak A Na Puii* the main character of the novel had sexual intercourse with a guy before marriage and she was pregnant with his baby. The difficulties that a girl faced because of this are written in the story of this novel, “Nobody wanted to be friends with her after her pregnancy, she does not have friends anymore. I think no one ever talks to her anymore after she dropped out of school. Living with all the shame, having no friends to talk to will be a very tough thing for her” (Rozamliani 15).

From this it can be seen that many hardships and difficulties can befall a girl if she got pregnant before marriage. Public humiliation, condemnation and inability to attain what they should have attained is what girls get in such cases. Lalthansangi Ralte explained, “A man could clearly show his preference to any girl. He could have sexual intercourse with a girl and the act would not be regarded as shameful or degradatory for him. It was rather believed to be manly or something to be proud of. But for a women, if any man should have a sexual relationship with her, she was spoken of badly and other man would shun her,” (53).

The very thing that does not bring shame or lower the status of men on the other hand brought shame and humiliation to women to a great extent. This clearly shows the inequality of men and women in the Mizo society. In this novel Manuni said, “It will be really shocking! Pregnancy will not be pleasant to go through, besides she gets humiliated for it. It will really be unbearable for her if they take away the baby. Is there no law where the mother can fight for custody of the baby? If it was me, I will never allow this to happen,” (Rozamlani 16) while talking about Puii’s pregnancy. According to James Dokhuma, “Women did not have any claims when it comes to heirship and custody of children. The reason for divorce can be anything, child custody always goes in favour of the men,” (267). In the Mizo society women do not have rights and claims regarding heirships and they do not even have claims over their own children. This novel also shows the undesirable status of women regarding this. The status of women is worst especially in the old days. Now there are many changes and development in the status of women.

The story in this novel also shows the relationship between Rinawma and Manuni. It is shown that Manuni knows all the hardships and humiliation that Puii had faced because of her pregnancy before marriage as Puii was her friend. But Rinawma pleaded her to have sex with him in order to prove the love between them. “My dear, let us do it this way in order to show the love between us,” (50) tempting Manuni to have sex with him. She also find it hard to refuse him so she agreed and they have sex together. Manuni talks about her feeling after she had sex with Rinawma saying,

The excitement I used to have before have all come to an end, the only thing I know is that it hurts so bad. When people talked about having sex I never hear them say that it was hurting, I used to think that it would be really enjoying and that it would bring great happiness. But that is very far from it, there is no enjoyment in it, it only brings pain. I got up with lots of guilty feelings, I felt ashamed as I was all naked. I tried to dress up before Rinawma sees me. (51)

It can be seen that Manuni had many guilty feelings because of this. She have sexual intercourse with the guy she loves before marriage and lose her virginity, but that only brings her sorrow instead of joy and happiness. Manuni said, “He thought of only his happiness, he does not care to think of the pain I felt” (Rozamliani 54). “Whenever I close my eyes the body of Rinawma that torture me flashes in my mind. The way he smiled happily on top of me, the way he hurt both my heart and my body,” (Rozamliani 57). In this case it can be seen that the man instead of showing love during the sexual intercourse only searched for pleasure and wanted to fulfill his thirst for sex and thus hurt the girl in doing so.

R. Laltlanhlui said, “Reasons that led to the cause of sexual abuse and rape is that men often use girls to quench their thirst for sex. Many men have the habit of watching porn videos and other things that can cause arousal and cravings for sex which leads them to quench their thirst on the weaker and delicate teens and little girls,” (“Mizo Hmeichhe Dinhmun: Pawngsual hi eng vanga thleng ge?”). Although the sexual intercourse that happened between Manuni and Rinawma cannot be considered as rape, it can be seen that the man only wants the woman for sex and nothing else. As the story continues it is seen that Rinawma often had sexual intercourse with Manuni whenever he finds an opportunity to do so. Manuni said, “I felt uncomfortable whenever we fell into the sin of sexual intercourse, I am never excited about it and I never thirst for it. Instead of feeling good and enjoying it, it always hurt my feelings and body, it always brings lots of pain to me,” (Rozamliani 58).

It can be seen that Manuni had guilty feelings on her mind, the feelings that she had done a very bad thing. In the Mizo society as mentioned earlier having sex before marriage is not permitted and is considered a sin before and after the dawn of Christianity. And women suffered humiliation and difficulties more than men. As this is the way of the Mizo society Manuni also knows what could happen to her. “I am really bad tempered, I easily get angry over small things. And people said that man look down and despise woman they could have sexual affairs with anytime they want” (Rozamliani 59) said Manuni. She also added, “If Rinawma is also like all other men, I will have a really unfortunate fate. I do not wish to break up with him, I cannot afford to lose him, I love him so much” (Rozamliani 59). Judging from what had happened to others Manuni thought about her fate and what could happen to her, she was not at peace as she believed that her situation could be really bad.

According to Ruth V. L. Rinpui, “The position of women in the Mizo family as well as in the social life was subordinate to man. Before marriage, the women was dominated by her father, brother (s) and mother, and when married, by her in-laws,” (17). Women are subjugated in the Mizo society, they are under the power of men, the authority of men. She also said, “The women were powerless in several aspects of their life and lived under the control of men in the society,” (18). It can be seen that women do not have any power or authority as they are subjected to the authority of men. According to Lalsangpuii, “In early Mizo society, women had been expected to gentle, loving, caring, disciplined and hard-working. So, they spend most of their time for fear that the community would look down upon them for their mistakes or misconduct,” (45). As the Mizo society is a patriarchal society women very less power in the society and in the household, men are considered to have power over everything. Moreover as the society have expectations on the life of women they have to be very careful with their lives. When it comes to indignity women have the higher chance of humiliation and shame than me even if the cause that led to the situation is the same.

This novel also shows the opinion of women when it comes to sexual affairs. It is shown by the words of Hminghlui as she said, “We both love each other very

much, he does not think only of himself even when we slept together. He cared for me and think of what will make both of us satisfied. If not he will be the only one satisfied and if I am not satisfied than our sexual intercourse will be vain” (Rozamliani 67). According to Diana Recharadson, “They prefer to regard the social control of women through sexuality as the outcome of gendered power inequalities, rather than its purpose. What is less agreed upon, then is the extent to which sexuality can be seen as a *site* of male power, a distinct from something patriarchal power acts upon influences,” (152). As women are mostly restricted by the society there is no equality between men and women even when it comes to sexual intercourse. The feminist believe that the authority and power of men over women dominates women even while having sexual intercourse.

When it comes to sexual intercourse if a man only think of his satisfaction and pleasure and have sex with a woman not having regards for the needs and pleasure of the woman, it can be disheartening for the woman rather than enjoying. Hminghlui said to Manuni, “Many men wanted pure women for their bride, but they did not really care about purity themselves. As it is the first time for the woman, it should also be a new thing for the man. If it is a new thing for both of them they will try their best to satisfy each other, and the sex between husband and wife will be more valuable,” (Rozamliani 71). She also said, “Many men are really selfish and think only of enjoying themselves. They think that sleeping together is a must for lovers in a relationship, they said ‘It is a seal that strengthen love’,” (Rozamliani 71)

The Mizo society is a patriarchal society, and as mentioned earlier if there is an arousal of a humiliating situation about having sexual intercourse before marriage the ones who gets humiliated the most and who suffered the consequences the most are always women. Men expects women to be untouched and pure when they are getting married but men are not expected to be virgins or pure eventhough they have high expectations on women. This alone also shows that there is no equality between men and women.

The Radical Feminists believes that the authority of men led many men to ignore the excitement, happiness and pleasures of women and think only of themselves using women as a means of satisfying their sexual urges which is also shown in this novel. It is already shown above that the way Rinawma have sex with Manuni only brings her pain and sorrow instead of bringing her pleasure and happiness. Manuni also bravely spoke out about this saying, "You will never understand. You only think of having sex and nothing else. You only think of yourself, you only cared about your happiness. You don't have time to think whether others are happy or not. You have suffocated my life, you are selfish and live only for yourself," (Rozamliani 76). It can be seen that girls are used as a means of satisfying men's sexual needs. The author of this story shows the need that men and women should share the same joy and pleasures equally in a relationship.

Manuni was pregnant with Rinawma's baby in the story of this novel. What she have always feared about Rinawma's motive in only caring about his pleasures and satisfaction had come to reality. Rinawma said to her, "I used condoms whenever we have sex as a precautionary measure, you are the careless one. It is your problem and not mine. You are the one who is pregnant, you can do whatever you want with it," (Rozamliani 128) and saying this he refused to take responsibility. Not only this, Rinawma continued, "There is only one option, go for an abortion. I will arrange for the money," (Rozamliani 129) asking Manuni to abort the baby.

According to T.Vanlaltlani, "A daughter lives under the protection of her mother and father and brothers when she is just a child. She lives in accordance of the will of her father and brothers until she comes of age. She does not have the liberty to do anything she likes whether good or bad if it is against the will of her father or her brothers. To have a good husband she needs to be well mannered, hard working and kind, she have to wise enough to be able to treat the one she loves and others equally, she have to be soft tempered and able to say 'yes' to the voice of men" (20-21). Considering the expectations of women by the Mizo society the status of women who are shamed and humiliated for having sexual affairs before marriage, the ones which the men responsible refused to take as a wife will worsen and it can

be assumed that their status will be lower than before. She will receive more unfavourable treatments even at home. This will have many negative impacts on her future if she is to be married.

The status of women who were pregnant without a marriage is really bad in the Mizo society, not only them, even their child will be victimized and will have to endure humiliation too. According to James Dokhuma, “If a man and woman have a child out of marriage, the child is called **sawn** (bastard son/daughter). If a woman is pregnant out of marriage and if the man who impregnated her refused to marry her but want the child he will have to pay a fine called *Tlaisial* (20 coins) for defaming the women and another *Tlaisial* (20 coins) for the child which is 40 coins altogether but as coins are rare he will have to pay them a female buffalo which is equivalent to 40 coins,” (187). This is the agreement in the old days regarding the **sawn man** (fine/price) to be paid to the family of women in such case. But the man who impregnated Manuni refused to take responsibilities and asked her to abort the baby. There might be no choice other than abortion for a pregnant woman if the father of the child refuse to take responsibilities.

James Dokhuma also said, “**Sawn** (Bastard child) are often bullied and tormented in the old days. They never get love and affections from anyone. In the older days **sawn** (Bastard child) are not considered to be able to survive. He/she suffers humiliation until he/she grows up and so it is a shame to be **sawn** (bastard child) in a Mizo society in the old days,” (187). In the old days it is dangerous for women to get pregnant out of marriage. But still some girls are impregnated by their lovers. Those girls are really pitiful if the ones who impregnate them refused to take them as their wives. This is how Lalsangpuii explained how the status of Mizo women changes through time,

The Mizo women in the past did a lot of hard work and various responsibilities at home and never had free time at all throughout the day. With changing time, Mizo society is moving towards modernization. There was no formal education in Mizo society before the advent of the British. But



with the advent of Christianity and modern education, the position of Mizo women had undergone tremendous changes...Attitude towards females and their education also witnessed striking differences as time went on. Many women continued their study adding their educational qualifications and achievement. (46-47)

As the status of Mizo women improve and changes through time the situation and difficulties faced by women who are pregnant without a husband also changes in the household. These changes can be seen in this novel as the author of this novel is from the present era and as the story of this novel is also based on the present time. At the beginning Manuni's father was really not good with her pregnancy, "You do not need anyones advice to have a boyfriend and have sexual affairs, I don't think you will need anyones advice in your current situation too. You will have to take care and think for yourself," (Rozamliani 149) showing how annoyed her father was. But when Manuni begged, "Father please forgives me. I will never hurt your feelings again," (149) asking her father for forgiveness. Her father forgave her saying, "My daughter, I love you too much. I will never forsake you," (Rozamliani 149) showing how he changed his mind.

Not only this, although Manuni was pregnant and that the father of the child refused to marry her. Her mother and father did not stop her education but allowed her to continue her studies eventhough she was with child. The need for higher education for women used to be deemed unnecessary in the Mizo society. According to J. Zorema and B. Lalrinchhane, "They also had the notion that sending their daughters to school would just make them lazy and that they would use their knowledge of writing to sent love letters to their boyfriend. Moreover, they were afraid that they would not be able to do any household chores and would not be useful appendages anymore," (163). But they also explained the development of woman in many ways saying, "Mizo women today have actually made significant contribution in all aspects of economy, especially in agriculture and service sectors. Many women are getting out of their home for paid jobs. Their participation in the

formal sector is improved with their access education. Many women are now working in offices, schools, colleges and university,” (165).

As girls in the Mizo society started learning like boys, development of girls can be seen in many ways. This novel also shows how the parents of Manuni helped their daughter in the pursue of higher education as much as they can, “My parents are really understanding. They gave me a good time for studying and also advised me to continue my studies. I deeply respect my parents, I tried my best to study as hard as I can,” (Rozamliani 157).

It can be assumed that she will suffer a lot of heartache as the man who impregnated her not only refused to marry her but asked her to abort her baby and refused to take responsibilities, she will also face difficulties in her body as she was pregnant with child. But her parents stayed on her side and she also tried her best, “I will do my utmost best in my studies and I will let them know what I am capable of” (Rozamliani 199) saying this she is determined and tried her best. Manuni said, “Two years after Zuali had worked as a doctor, I too was able to secure the job I have always wanted and respected the most, I am now a doctor. As this is a dream come true for me, I put great importance and effort in my work, and also really enjoyed it” (Rozamliani 210). The author of this novel shows how unpleasant the situation of women who were pregnant out of marriage could be, but she also shows that if the family is united in helping her, and that if she tried her best with courage and determination she can still succeed and rise to the top. The author of this novel clearly showed how girls are far more unfortunate and victimized than boys when it comes to having sexual intercourse before marriage and getting pregnant and showed the importance of giving them support and encouragement instead of casting them aside and disregarding them in the household.

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## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

As shown in chapter-1 the aims and objectives of feminism is to bring about equality of men and women in various aspects of life. Feminist raise their voices against discrimination and suppression of women when it comes to casting votes, education, employments and suppression of women in the household and society as well. It also emphasized the belief of causes that led to sexual abuse and human trafficking is the result of male domination due to patriarchal ideology. Feminist believe that inequality of men and women does not have any natural cause but that it was made by culture which can be demolished and amended. They believe that women like men can have authorities when it comes to politics, church affairs and many other things, they believe that women have the strength and abilities to lead as men does.

As studied in chapter-1 it can be seen that the Mizo society is a patriarchal society and as such there are certain inequalities between men and women. In the old days eventhough women toiled and worked hard at home and on the farms they did not have claims and authorities in the households. They were also lowly considered and viewed by the society. The Emergence of Christianity have positive impacts on the status of women in the Mizo society especially in the fields of education and employment. But still, when it comes to leadership in state affairs, higher status in church affairs such as pastors and church elders, there are still inequality between men and women in the view of the society.

B. Lalthangliana, K. C. Vannghaka and Zoramdinthara who researched the growth of Mizo literature placed Khawlkungi behind K. C. Lalvunga (Zikpuii Pa) eventhough Khawlkungi did wrote a novel before K. C. Lalvunga. Khawlkungi started writing in the year 1946 while K. C. Lavunga started writing from the 1950's. But Khawlkungi is still placed behind K. C. Lavunga and the reasons for this could be that the works of men is considered superior over the works of women in the field

of Mizo literature. Among the Mizo writers there are fewer female novel writers than male novel writers, and female writers are not well known as compared to male writers.

Khawlkungi, H. Lalngurliani, Romuanpuii Zadeng, Florence L.R. Ralte, Rozamlani are the few Mizo female novel writers who published novels and are well known for their novels. From the interview of Romuanpuii Zadeng, Rozamlani and Florence L. R. Ralte women did not have much leisure time as men does. Many readers did not care to read or think lowly of the works of women which make improvement difficult for women and resulted in the lack of enthusiasm for women writers. Most of the novels written by female writers are based on Christianity and have life lessons and teachings in one way or another. As there is a huge gap and inequality between men and women in the society, women writers are very careful in what they wrote as they have to put in mind of what the society might think about the novels they wrote.

Three novels of Khawlkungi, Romuanpuii Zadeng and Rozamlani had been studied in chapter -2, chapter-3 and chapter-4 where the ‘voices of women’ is studied from various aspects of life. The findings from the studies are as follows.

The novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* (1977) by Khawlkungi shows that the Mizo society is a patriarchal society. It can be seen from the behaviour of Vanlalremi’s aunt’s husband Rochhinga that men subjugate women at home, and tried to control them in every possible ways. Immoral actions and violence towards women also occurred in the novel. This can be seen from the beatings that Vanlaremi’s aunt received from her husband and the beatings that Tluangi (Daughter of Vanlakremi’s aunt) got from her husband. As domestic violence which is protested by feminists is depicted in Khawlkungi’s novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* it can be assumed that some men in the Mizo society let their women suffer domestic violence. The author of this novel illustrates this in the story of her novel.

The status of Vanlalremi shows that the woman is afraid of her husband, she does not have the courage to speak out her mind in her own house. It can be seen from this novel that the status of women is really hard and difficult. Moreover women did not have the mind to think about their rights and claims, it can be seen from the sufferings of Vanlalremi's aunt and her daughter Tluangi that they just blindly bear all the hardships and sufferings. This novel was written a long time ago, and the time stamp depicted in the novel is based on the times of World War II and differs from the time when the story was written. So the status of women during that era should be kept in mind while going through this novel. It can be assumed that the status of women in the Mizo society was very low during that era.

In the old days girls were not given the right to choose when it comes to marriage. The man of the house and the girl's brother have absolute authority when choosing a husband for her. The consent and approval of the girl's parent is really important when it comes to marriage. As this is the situation of a girl when it comes to marriage, Khawlkungi the author of the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* also wrote about it in the novel. As Vanlalremi's aunt's husband Rochhinga badly wanted a double barrel shotgun he tried to marry her to Lalmuana. Remi's aunt and her aunt's daughter Tluangi suffered domestic violence from their husbands; they were suppressed from raising their own opinions and they just suffered all of these in silence. They did not try to get freedom or even fight back. But Remi objected Rochhinga's wishes and refused to get married to Lalmuana. Remi suffered domestic violence and threats just like her aunt and her daughter because she objected Rochhinga.

The author of the novel depicted the low status of women in the novel and also urge women to fight for their own rights. There never was equality of men and women in the Mizo society. Attempt to suppress and subjugate women is what happened in a normal basis in the Mizo society. Keeping aside that Vanlalremi did not want to get married to Lalmuana, she was also underaged and was not ready for marriage. But still an attempt was made to get her married. 'The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005' was enforced all over India from the



year 2006. So, during those periods there were no proper laws for the protection of women even if they wanted to fight for their rights. The women N.G.O called 'Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)' was also easted on the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 1974. The status of women in the field of education might also be really backward and low during those times. Khawlkungi did not mention anything about women education in this novel.

Remi did not have an alibi to help her against Rochhinga, all she could do was to leave her aunt's place. She chooses to leave eventhough she did not know where to go and have her freedom instead of getting married by force. Khawlkungi did not directly mention about the need for equality of men and women in the novel, but it can be seen that she kept in mind that girls should have the freedom to choose when it comes to marriage. After Remi left her aunt's place she was sheltered by English Missionaries where she studied tailoring. And then she met Malsawma who was a government servant and they fell in love. The man she met was of higher status and considered an eligible bachelor by many families. Although Remi and Malsawma were in love, Lalkhawthangi and her family were trying their best to have him. It was considered a blessing if a girl is married off to a man who can feed and look after her. Instead of finding ways for women to take care of themselves, priority is given in looking for a husband for them that will take care of them and look after them.

In this novel Lalkhawthangi had sexual relations with Vanthanga and she was seeded by him. The situation also shows how unfortunate the status of women in the Mizo society can be if she gets pregnant out of marriage. When Lali's elder brother Lalingura found out that she was with child, she was questioned and beaten by him. Lali knew how her brothers wanted her to get married to Malsawma, but now that she was impregnated by a man other than Malsawma, it can be presumed that her fate could be worst in such a situation. In the Mizo society a bastard child is mocked and ridiculed, they did not receive love and affection even in their own homes. When her brothers questioned her of about the father of her child, she could not say anything. If she told them who the father of her child is, she knew that her status and situation could get worst. As she was silence about the father of her child, her

brothers blamed Malsawma saying that he was the father of the child their sister was carrying. Although Lalkhawthangi was not right to keep silent, the condition and situation she was in was so bad that it can be considered best for her if she did not talk about the father of her child.

Many worst conditions and status of women is portrayed in this novel. Cruelty towards women in the form of domestic violence, as men are considered superior in the Mizo society, women are suppressed and subjugated in the household so much that they did not dare to speak of their opinion; they just keep quiet and suffered in silence. Instead of finding a way for women to stand on their feet, uplifting and giving them proper education, securing a job and means of livelihood for them all they want for a girl is for her to have a good husband and to depend on her husband in everyways. Families would choose a man of their choice for the husbands of their daughters rather than the love or choice of the girls. This can be seen from the fate of Vanlalremi and Lalkhawthangi. A girl is humiliated and blamed if she gets pregnant out of marriage. She is considered as the source of disgrace to herself and her family as a whole. A bastard child is never given a good status in the family. They are ill treated and looked down by their own family. So carrying a bastard child is considered a disgrace in the Mizo society.

Khawlkungi pointed out various poor status of women in the Mizo society through the female characters in the story. Women convey their problems and their status of subjugation and powerlessness only to another women. But it can be seen from the character of Vanlalremi that she fought against the authority of men, the unlawful attempt to marry a girl against her will. Remi raised her voice saying that she did not wanted to marry him. She did not say much after this, nothing of the sort of her stepping up and fighting for the rights of her fellow women can be seen in this story. In this novel the two women Vanlalremi and Lalkhawthangi have a very different nature. Lalkhawthangi is portrayed as a shameless woman, a woman who is likely to approach a guy first, the one who had sex before marriage and with child, the one who refused to reveal the father of her child. The nature of Lalkhawthangi is regarded and considered to be despicable for the nature of a girl in the Mizo society.

In the Mizo society women are considered to be weak, attached to their homes, emotional, caring toward others, good follower, kind hearted, easily terrified and panick easily. Remi in Khawlkungi's novel is also a strong willed and a brave girl when she decided to go against the will of her aunt's husband and leave the house. Meanwhile it is difficult for women to raise their voices regarding their poor status because of the view of the whole society. Nevertheless the author let Vanlalremi have the nature of a woman accepted by the Mizo society. The authors have in mind the nature of women that is accepted by the Mizo society. The author wanted Remi to marry Malsawma who was a good man, and so Remi was married to Malsawma who was her lover and her choice. She subjected herself to her husband as a good wife should. Moreover in the end she even forgive Rochhinga, the man who beat her up and tried to force her into marrying against her will. She seemed to be emotional, kind hearted and caring towards him. Remi was also portrayed as a woman who panicks easily. Although Khawlkungi wanted woman to marry the man of her choice, she still depicted the status of women and their timidness due to the view and expectations of the society.

Khawlkungi's novel *Pasal Duhthlan* was published in 1982. The novel was based on the 1980's. Women were strictly controlled in the story of this novel, it can be seen that manners and etiquettes were also made seperately for girls. In this novel when Hliri the main character tried to go to watch a cinema her grandmother advised her not to go as she feared that she might be shamed and that she might get a bad reputation. There is a difference in the lifestyle of women as compared to her previous novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. The time based on this novel is a bit modern and the youngsters in this era are starting to copy western cultures in their habits and lifestyles.

A girl is expected to have a good nature under the guidance of her family. Then she will have a good husband, and she will try to be a perfect wife for her husband. But it can be seen in this novel that many girls did not want to live that way. In the old days girls were free to work in the farms but they never visit the places of boys at

home. It is considered shameful for a girl to visit a boy in his house. The only way they can get together with boys is by helping each others at their farms, collecting firewoods and when the boys came over to their house. They cannot show their affections towards their lovers and their families chose a husband for them when they come to the age for marriage. Women did not have much of a freedom.

The choice of families vary from time to time when it comes to choosing a bachelor, but still most families chose a bachelor from a wealthy family to be the husband of their daughter. In the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* pastor are considered a good choice as future son-in-laws. This clearly portrayed what the Mizo people admire during those times. Malsawmi's parents also wanted her to get married to a pastor. It can be assumed that this have everything to do with Christianity. But Malsawmi did not wish to live up the expectations of the society and live like a good mannered and obedient girl. She chose to live a free life instead of marrying a good man following the decision of her mother and father. She told her mother and father that she did not want a pastor for a husband.

In this novel the opinion of Malsawmi opposed the opinions and expectations of the Mizo society. Malsawmi wanted to leave her mother and father and the Mizo society to study abroad. But her parents wanted her to get married and discontinue her studies. They believed that getting married was the most important thing for a woman. Mizo girls are entirely submitted to the authorities of their father, brothers and husbands if they are married. And this is considered the best thing for women. This shows the inequality between men and women in the Mizo society. And Khawlkungi portrayed this through the women characters in her novel.

In the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* the author Khawlkungi portrayed two women Malsawmi and Hliri as the main characters of the novel. Although Hliri wants to live like Malsawmi and doing anything she wants, she chose to live by the expectation of the society. She was portrayed as a good natured and eligible woman. On the other hand Malsawmi was opposed to the expectations of her family and the society. From the words of Malsawmi's mother the character of a girl in the Mizo society and the

attitude of a girl pursuing her development could not go along. Remi from the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* left home as her aunt's husband was trying to force her to marry Lalmuana and Malsawmi from this novel also left her home, although both left their homes in order to have their own freedom, their reasons and motives were not the same. Their conditions were also not the same, Malsawmi's parents tried to get her married to a pastor while Remi's parents tried to get her married to a drunkard. Malsawmi just wanted to have her own freedom, she wants to live freely without anyone to discipline or control her. Malsawmi lived freely beyond the boundaries of the Mizo society in the place she studied and even get married without the consent of her parents.

The status of women have been improved and uplifted in many ways in the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* compared to the status of women in the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. The era of the novel is also more modern than the other. It can be seen that the status of women have greatly improved in the field of education. They are allowed by their parents to pursue higher education not only within the state of Mizoram but in other states as well if they wanted to. They are not forced into marriage anymore and they can even reject the choice of their mother and father when it comes to marriage. On the other hand there are lots of force and violence towards women in the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. Even if a girl does not want to marry a certain man her voice is not taken into consideration. Education for girls is also not seen in the novel. It can be seen that the situation of girls will be really bad when it comes to education. The status of women/girls have been uplifted in the novel *Pasal Duhthlan*, in the meanwhile there is an urge for freedom from the Mizo society where they felt suppression.

Moreover it can be seen that there are women who have the courage to stand against their husbands. Liansanga, the man Malsawmi married without her parents consent was dependent upon his wife's parents for his education and so Malsawmi did not have much of a respect for him. She proudly said that the only reason he could pursue higher education was because of them and that they even secured him a job. In her previous novel the words of women were humble and respectful but in

this novel a woman who disrespectfully talks to her husband is portrayed. This shows that there are many changes in the society as a whole.

But it can still be seen that women can be in trouble if they are not well educated. Mawii's parents discontinued her education and financed her husband for his education. They even secured him a good job. But misunderstandings arouse between the married couple and Liansanga betrayed his wife and took Malsawmi as his wife. Mawii regret not continuing her studies when she faced that kind of trouble. Malsawmi also faced trouble as she was pregnant with Liansanga's child. As both her parents were religious leaders, abortion of the child she was carrying was the only way to prevent further humiliation. The situation for a girl is really bad if she gets pregnant out of marriage, further it can be seen that being educated is an important thing for a woman to achieve respect and to stand on her own.

Improvements on the status of women in the Mizo society can be seen in this novel, the novel also made better the status of Hliri a woman who lived up to the expectations of the society. Hliri is a shy and timid woman, and she does not have much of a life outside the house. But it can be seen that many of the girls and women do not have that kind of nature anymore. The author of the novel made worst the fate of Malsawmi, a woman cannot live up the expectations of the society; a woman who longs for freedom and who does not even bother to take her parents consent for marriage, the one who lived together with her lover in another state. She was pregnant before marriage and paid with her life for her misdeeds. Nunmawii is not well educated but she was proud because her parents paid for the education of her husband. It can be seen that she does not have much of a respect for her husband, but her condition was made worst as her husband being the educated one with a good job cheated on her with another woman. It can be seen from the above that the status of women is not yet good enough. When it comes to marriage or pregnancy before marriage women are the ones who suffer the bad consequences. It can also be noticed that good natured and obedient women who does not fight for their own freedom are given good status while the ones who struggled for their freedom and does not have

much of a respect for their husbands are given an unhappy ending and this clearly shows the mindset of people in the society.

The novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* was published in the year 1998. It can be seen that the status of women in this novel is in some ways better than that of *Zawlpal Thlan Tlang* and *Pasal Duhthlan*. In this novel boy and girls are treated equally when it comes to educating them and best efforts are made in order to educate them. It can also be seen that they have freedom to do the things that they wanted to do. Eventhough Sangpuui's father had passed away she can still persuade her studies in Delhi because of her uncle Lalliana. Her uncle funded her studies so that she will be able to look after and take care of her siblings in the future. It can be seen that women also have the same importance in taking care of their families as men does. Khawlkungi always give leading roles to the women characters in her novels. Sangpuui, Hmingi and Thangi also played an important role in this novel.

Khawlkungi portrayed three well mannered and good natured women who lived up the expectations of the Mizo society in three of her novels. Vanlalremi in *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, Hliri in *Pasal Duhthlan* and Sangpuui in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui*. The status and situations of all these women were bad at the beginning of the story but at the end they all lived a happy life. Another women character named Lalkhawthangi a bad charactered woman who had illicit relationship with a man and was pregnant without marriage was shown beside Vanlalremi. She does not have the courage to point out the man who impregnated her and kept silent about it. There is also Malsawmi who is the opposite of Hliri. She is also a self centered woman who does not want to marry the man her family chose to be her husband. She secretly live together with a man in another state making her studies as an excuse. The man she lived with was a married man and further she was pregnant with his child which complicated her life. There were Hmingi and Thangi who were the opposite of Sangpuui in this novel. This is a distinguished plot from most of Khawlkungi's novels.

As shown in the previous discussions the scope of women have been widened in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui*. In the fields of education, business and they even work as government servants. Women are not solely dependent upon men anymore. Christianity brought education with it, the education of girls/women also developed with this and gave them a sense of self confidence. Meanwhile there are some women who went too extreme. There are women who stayed in other states and are involved in illegal drug business. But their parents did not dare to confront them as they are the food bringer and provider for the family, the parents just let them as they are as shown in the character of Thangi. Although the story in the novel is fictional it still shows many details of the people in the era of the novel. So it is seen that the time era on which the story is based shows the development of women as well as how many women are involved in illegal business.

It can also be seen from the character of Hmingi that women have the freedom to study and do anything they want, that they have the courage to pursue the things they want to do. As the status of women developed it can be seen from the words of Hmingi on how women are not satisfied by Mizo men on many grounds. Many women have relationships with men from other casts and tribes, and lived as married couples. In this novel of Khawlkungi, Sangpuui did not want a relationship with men from other tribes/casts whereas Hmingi had no problem with it. She had a relationship with Hussain and live as a married couple, she even carried his child. But Hussain left her and went back to his place, it can be seen that Hmingi made a bad choice and a big mistake. The Mizo society's view on marrying into another cast/tribe is still the same as before.

The status of women was really bad in the times where they were made to work instead of giving them proper education and when marriage was considered the most important achievement for them. Women raised their voice regarding education and the right to vote for women in the first wave of feminism. The importance of education can be seen from the status of Hmingi. Eventhough Hussain left her she was very well educated, she also have many talents, it can be seen from her words that she have great confidence in herself. She easily got herself a job and she can lead



a stable life without much difficulties. Further there is no law in the Mizo society where a girl/women can inherit her father's properties. Even if a woman worked hard to make a living, if she have a husband the fruit of her work goes to her husband. If she does not have a husband the fruit of her work goes to her family and siblings. Eventhough Khawlkungi does not mention it directly in her novel, it can be seen that she wants women to have the right of inheritance by the way she wrote on how Hmingi's father divided his properties among his children without inequalities between men and women. The plot behind Khawlkungi's novel is always about the importance of equality between men and women.

Eventhough Khawlkungi have great interest in women education, employment, inheritance etc she also find it important for women to be modest, well mannered, kind and humble. This can be seen as she always have good mannered women in her novels and how she gave sad endings to the bad natured women in her novels. Sangpuii from the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* is not a woman who looked down on men and she is not a self centered person. She is an obedient woman who cares about feelings of others. Sangpuii is also a very humble woman. She prefers to teach in primary school than to teach in high school, it can be seen that she does not see herself highly. The way Khawlkungi portrayed humble and obedient women as good women in her novels shows that they are still oppressed in the society.

What is seen and the thing Khawlkungi wanted the most in her novels regarding equality of men and women is the ability for women to choose a husband of their likings. In the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* Vanlalremi fled from her aunt's place as she did not wish to marry the man her aunt choose for her to be her husband. and she married Malsawma whom she loved and wanted to marry. In the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* which literally means *Chosing a Husband*. Malsawmi lived together with the man of her choice without her parent's approval. In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* too, Sangpuii's mother asked her to marry a man called Lianphunga, eventhough she was a good girl, obedient and caring towards others, she go against her mother's wishes when it comes to marriage, and she was stubborn about it.

She showed how it is the rights of women to choose a husband of their likings, and upliftment of women can also be seen on the grounds of education, employment and matters relating to heirships. Khawlkungi is not an extremist like other feminist. She believed that woman should gracefully abide by the side of men, and they should be kind, loving and well mannered, she agreed to the view of Mizo society on how it expects girls and women to behave. It can also be seen that the upliftment of women gradually takes place depending upon the time era in which her novels are based. But it can be seen in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* that men played an important role in the upliftment of women. The one who helped Sangpuui and her mother a lot, the one who payed for her education and got her a job was the brother of Sangpuui's mother. Eventhough Hmingi was a strong and confident woman Hussain gave her lots of money before he left her. She even inherited wealths from her father which made her life a lot easier. And even though Thangi was a brave woman who was dealing with illegal business, the one who rescued her from the clutches of the police were Tluanga and his friend. She showed the importance of men for women and how they are the weaker gender, she had an opinion that men are important for the upliftment of women.

There is a huge difference between the status of women from Khawlkungi's novels and Zadeng's novels as they are written in different eras and time. The difficulties faced by women, the suppression they faced differ in many societies and so the voices of women are not similar everywhere. As it is different depending upon the society they belong, every process used in other countries cannot be adapted in every society. Unlike the novels of Khawlkungi, Romuanpuui gave higher status to women in her novels. Women played an important role in the stories of her novels.

One of the important demands of women in the First Wave of Feminism is the Right to Vote like men does. The second wave of feminism is about the right to employment, sexuality discrimination, amendment of inequality of men and women in the customary law, movement against domestic violence and sexual violence, guaranteed safety for women in their work places and other rights of women. Second wave started from the year 1960. And third wave started from the 90's. In this wave

women raised their voices regarding the boundary and limitations set for women in the fields of business, politics and many others stating that women also have the abilities to thrive as men does given the freedom. The movement is about the upliftment of women and paving a way for them. The punk rock band Riot Grrrl shouted out demanding women authority in this movement, there is also a discussion on the authority of men. Novelist also started portraying strong and powerful women in their novels, and movies are also made about such women.

The use of force in attempting to let a girl get married is seen in Romuanpuii's novel *Puk Dangdai* and the same is seen in the novels of Khawlkungi too. The main female characters in her novels are Ramngaizeli, the daughter of Lalbeli. Ramngaizeli had a daughter named Bawihte who is the leading character in the novel. Ramngaizeli's mother was impregnated by a man who was not the choice of her father and she carried Ramngaizeli. But still her father refused to marry her to the man who got her pregnant. Ramngaizeli's mother Lalbeli goes against her father's decision and left home. It can be seen that Lalbeli was a stubborn woman by the way she raised her voice, even though fathers have full authority in a Mizo household and that their word is final, she still has the guts to go against her father. The authority of men is not all that bad but if the thoughts and opinion of women are not taken into consideration it can cause troubles and difficulties for women. The suppression of women made life difficult for them, they have to fight for their survival with difficulties as they are physically the weaker gender. But other than that it proves the Mizo society wrong on how it considered woman to be too weak, soft hearted and ignorant compared to man.

Lalbeli faced difficulties from her father whereas Ramngaizeli faced difficulties from her husband. She accompanied her husband at the place where he works, but her husband cheated on her. Ramngaizeli told her husband not to avail custody of their child. But women did not have custodial rights over children in the Mizo society. The status of woman is really bad regarding this. But Ramngaizeli is very brave as she tried to have custody over her child. It can be seen from this that women faced many difficulties from men. They both have been with children, and

they faced many difficulties without the support of a husband. Women have the strength and abilities to bear burdens and face troubles even though they did not have the physical strength that equals men.

Prostitution can be seen all around the world, and as it is considered a dirty business the status of prostitutes is low everywhere. There are prostitutes who took the trade on their own will, but there are also girls who are tricked into prostitution, those who did it out of poverty, and others who did it because of alcohol and drug addiction. The second wave feminism is against prostitution, but the third wave respects the trade if it is one's own will to be a prostitute even though it does not necessarily promote it. Prostitution is also seen in the novel *Puk Dangdai*.

Puii was sexually assaulted by their family friend before she comes of age, but her parents instead of standing up for her got her married to the man who raped her as he was a rich man. But later they got divorced as the man cheated on her. She started prostitution after she got divorced. Here we can see that justice has not been done to a woman, but she is ridiculed that she made a living by prostitution. But thinking deeply it can be known that the source of such an outcome is a man. It is also due to the inequality of men and women in the society. Chingpuii's husband was a drunkard, they were really poor, and they have to make a living by selling liquors. She went deeper from that and became a prostitute eventually. Kimi on the other hand was from a poor family and she was raised by her single mother. As her mother died before they were mature, she had to sell herself as a prostitute to pay for her brother's education. She was ridiculed for this and her own brother despised and looked down on her. The law has no objection if a girl became a prostitute on her own free will. But forcing others into prostitution is against the law. In this novel the girls who became prostitutes willingly are Puii, Chhingpuii and Kimi. But still they blamed men for the misfortunes that led them into prostitution though they did it on their own will. This clearly portrayed the inequality of the status of men and women in the society and how bad the status of women is in the society.

This novel also showed how Ramngaizeli (Lucy) was forced into prostitution. Ramu her employer forced her into prostitution in Cave Hotel. Ramngaizeli's consent and approval was not taken as she was tricked and forced into prostitution. She was also drugged in the process. Zadeng's novel portrayed flesh trading by means of prostitution and forcing others into prostitution by human trafficking which was not seen in the novels of Khawlkungi. But these women blamed themselves instead of blaming others for their misfortunes, it can be seen in their words how they blamed themselves. This is a proof that women in the Mizo society were suppressed so much that they dare not openly speak of their opinions, that they did not have the courage to speak of their rights.

Zadeng the author of the novel discreetly concealed in the novel how women were looked down upon and condemned and how the reasons they became the victim was because of men who were leaders in the household and the society as a whole. When the Mizo women prostitutes in this novel talked about themselves, when talking about reasons they became prostitutes the causes that let them into such profession are men, as women are the weaker gender, as such they have a lower status in the society which led them to this things. Poverty is also an important factor behind this. One of the characters in her novel named Margaret unlike other did not blame herself; she boldly said that the ones with authority and strength, the ones who they expected to protect them were the ones who destroyed them. She even told her friends not to blame only themselves as men are the real culprit behind it. It also showed how men have great responsibilities, and how they can be the reasons behind the misfortunes and difficulties faced by women. The opinion of the author of the novel is that women faced many difficulties under the rule and authority of men. But many women have inferiority complex in their nature so much that they did not dare to speak about it.

Zadeng also portrayed the hardships faced by women at home and in the society in her other novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* which was published in 2009. In this novel she used women as the main characters just as she did in her other novels. She pointed out the unlawful acts towards women who strayed from the right

paths by the NGO (VDP) which stood for the welfare of the society. She believes that women are found guilty without looking for reasons and causes that caused them to be found guilty. They were violently beaten and even got their head shaved like men who can be seen in the fate of Zorinpuii. The plot in the story in this novel is that the reasons women strayed from the right paths is due to the hardships they faced at home, ways and means of rescuing them from troubles should be kept in mind.

Zorinpuii had a stepfather in this novel and her mother trusted her stepfather more than she trusts her daughter. Meanwhile her stepfather teases Zorinpuii in a dirty way and forcefully slept with her. The thing that happened to Zorinpuii is sexual harassment. But her own mother stood by the side of her stepfather. The sufferings of Zorinpuii a really difficult situation, but they blamed her of being wrong not knowing of the sufferings she's been through. The author of this novel cleverly portrayed how women/girls can suffer hardships without the knowledge of others. As already shown from chapter-3 women seldom talked about the hardships they faced at home. They only talk about it to their close relatives even when they talked about it.

Besides, this novel mentioned how women are easily looked down upon, and how men who were expected to protect them are the ones who did wrong things to them and have dirty thoughts about them which is also mentioned in the previous novel. Zorinpuii was sexually assaulted by her stepfather, her boyfriend Chhuana saw what her stepfather did to her. Instead of standing up for her and listening to her he also tried to rape her on the first chance he gets. Not only this, Zorinpuii is also sexually assaulted by the warden in the hostel she stayed in. She could not even tell her own mother about this, she had to bear it in silence. This had a serious negative impact in her life. It can be assumed that women/girls silently suffered many things as they did not have anyone to go to for assistance and help. Zadeng portrayed such statuses of women through the story in her novel.

Zorinpuii is not the only victim in the story of this novel. Even her uncle Lalmawia's wife suffered the same thing from her stepfather. So she can talk about it with her aunt as she had also been a victim of sexual abuse. It can clearly be seen that women can suffer at their own homes without others knowing about it. Even if they were right they could not prove it as they were not trusted. They were mocked and ridiculed in the society and the church as well and examples of this can be seen from the words of Lalmawia's wife.

It can be seen that women can face many difficulties in the Mizo society. In the second wave of feminism women raise their voices against sexual abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking and about claiming their rights. And as such Zadeng also portrayed the status of women in the Mizo society. Radical feminist blamed that the authority of men and gender inequality led men to behave as a superior and powerful being over women which causes them to look down on women which further leads to sexual violence and assault. It seems that Romuanpuii Zadeng also shared this opinion. She always blamed men as the cause of evil that befalls women.

Thanzuala wrongfully beat up his wife showing domestic violence, he also raped his stepdaughter Zorinpuii. But still it can be seen in the novel that Khiangmawii's brother Lalmawia stood beside Thanzuala instead of defending his sister. Thanzuala firmly believed that his wife would never divorce him, even if they get a divorce he boldly told her that she would be the one who gets all the humiliation. The author of this novel also showed that men used their authority to suppress women, sexually violating women, beating up women and shaming them by using insulting words towards them. Chalthangi (Lalmawia's wife) could not bear it anymore and so she bravely confronted her husband telling him how self centered he is in trying to control his family, that he suppresses them and never considered their voices and opinions.

Looking back to the novels written by Khawlkungi and *Puk Dangdai* the previous novel of Zadeng, the way the status of women is depicted in the novel

*Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* is different as the voice of a woman on how they did not have freedom due to suppression by men can be seen from the words of Chalthangi. It was not similar to the opinion of Khawlkungi in her novels as she wrote that woman should abide by the rules of their husband, that they should depend on men and should be respectful and humble towards men, but Zadeng point out in her novels that the reason why women are denied their rights and why they faced many hardships in life is due to the extreme authority of men over women and how there is no equality between men and women. She agreed with the opinions of Radical Feminist and Marxist Feminist on how the suppression of women have many negative outcome.

The novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* shows how women are suppressed both at home and in the society. Zorinpuii also faced a very big trouble, her stepfather slept with her against her will. The society did not know about this and criticize her, she was publicly shamed for this. Lianbuanga exaggerated the gossip saying that anyone could sleep with her thus humiliating her furthermore. From the olden days in the Mizo society having sex out of marriage is not considered a disgrace for boys while it is considered a disgrace and shameful act for girls. From this view it can be assumed that many boys did not hesitate to humiliate girls instead of defending them. This story also showed how girls can be humiliated by wrongly blaming them with lies. This may be the result of inequality of the status of men and women in the society.

Zorinpuii the main character of this novel dressed and disguised herself as a man. It seems that there is a big reason as to why she disguised her identity. She was sexually violated by her stepfather at home at the times she was her normal self before she disguised herself as a man. As her mother did not believe her words, she always took the blame. Even her boyfriend on seeing how her stepfather acted upon her also tried to force her into sex instead of defending and standing up for her. She was also sexually assaulted by the warden in the hostel she stayed in. Beside all these hardships and difficulties she faced, she was also falsely accused by Lianbuanga as he told others that she can sleep with any boys. She does not have many listeners she



could tell the truth, only Chalthangi the wife of her uncle Lalmawia knows the truth about her sufferings. But even her voice was not taken seriously.

As the voices of women were not even taken into consideration, Zorinpuii hid her identity as a woman and disguised herself as a man. It can be noticed that this might be an attempt to portray the suppression of women in the society by the author of this novel. The author of this novel wrote how women are suppressed, how they are rejected, how temporary their status is and how their happiness depends upon the nature of men who took care of them. It can be assumed that Zadeng agreed with the views of feminist on how culture is the culprit behind the inequality of men and women in society and that it is not biological.

Now that she disguised her identity and acted like a man Zorinpuii could avoid the difficulties she faced from men such as false accusations and sexual violation. She could also talk about things she could not talk about as a woman. The author of this novel tried to show that women can also contribute their wisdom, ability and that they have deep love for their homeland as patriots, that men are not the only one with love for their homeland and ability to rule.

Zorinpuii a woman disguised as a man who called herself Z-Chhantu is an intelligent woman who stepped out for the good of her homeland, she had wisdom in her speeches, she is the one who motivated Ramdina the son of an MLA to set things right and stand up for their homeland. Zorinpuii is not a man even though she disguised herself as a man. But she is able to avoid many difficulties she faced as a woman, she was even able to pursue higher education. She is free to raise her voice and share her opinion and enable herself to step out for the good of her homeland. The novel showed how she was publicly shamed in the past but later how she is intelligent and full of wisdom. It can be assumed that the opinion of Zadeng on the inequality between men and women is made by culture. As she could avoid all the difficulties she faced as a woman just because she disguised herself as a man, this means that the status of women is really low and bad in the society.

Zadeng's novel *Sihlipui* which was published in 2012 also have women as leading characters as the author is a woman. A woman is portrayed as the one with authorities in this novel, men played by the rules of women in this novel. The character of women changes with the time era of the story. It can be seen that she was opposed to the opinion that women are the weaker gender and wanted them to have authority. As Laltei and Mathana were about to get married, she had a sexual affair with Mampuia. Laltei asked Mampuia to take leave from his work and go abroad for sometimes. She believed that she could get married and sort things out while he was away. The man obeyed the women and played by her rules, he did not even speak of his opinion as a man. He had an accident while he was abroad when he tried to save a life of a drowning person, he lost his memories in the accident and end up as Sevio the son of a beggar named Martino.

In this novel the author humbled men to a great extent. Considering the various status of men and women in the Mizo society, the status of women and men in this novel is really distinctive. Mathana knew that Laltei was pregnant with another man's child though they were engaged. The fate of a girl who gets pregnant before marriage is worst in the Mizo society and at their homes as well. A husband controlled by his wife is called 'thaibawih' (henpecked), and it is considered a shame. Though this is their situation Mathana could not really hate Laltei, he even took care of the poops and pees of Laltei's baby, and look after and take care of the baby as his own. It can also be assumed as the author's fancy thoughts that his bethrothed had sexual relations with his best friend Mampuia, and not only this she was pregnant with his child but still he could humble himself and take care of the baby as his own. Many opinions of the Mizo society regarding women as the weaker gender and suppressing them can be seen in the previous novels. But men are not idolized and considered superior in this novel.

Amongst the women characters in this novel *Sihlipui*, the role of Ramparmawii (Shona) is portrayed more often than that of Laltei. The story shows how she was sold by her father due to poverty, how she met Savio in that place, and Savio was the one who impregnated Laltei, they lived like married couples but Savio

lived under the domination of Shona. As the Mizo society is a patriarchal society, women are considered to be weak, soft hearted, kind hearted, easily petrified, housewife material, good followers and easily frightened. But the author of this novel wrote this story which in many ways is opposite to the ways of the Mizo society. Shona's father sold her away due to poverty, after she was forced into prostitution at Goa she got married to Fernando's father an old man who was the main culprit behind the illegal flesh market business. They never have sex even though they lived together as a married couple.

After her husband's death the story showed how Shona fights Fernando who used to illegally force girls into prostitution. It can be seen by the words of Shona in this story that she is a brave woman. Humble and kindhearted women are the qualities of a good woman in the novels of Khawlkungi, but Shona is just the opposite of that as most of her words can be considered offensive for the words of a woman. Her deceased husband left her lots of money and estates. She can go back home with all the riches if she wanted to. But she did not want to do it as she wanted to investigate the wrongs of people involved in sex trafficking and giving them the punishment they deserved.

Zadeng showed how women stepped out and participated for the love of their homeland which is not seen in the novels of Khawlkungi. Zorinpui's (Z-Chhantu) love and actions for her homeland can be seen in the novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*. Shona's love for her homeland can also be seen from the novel *Sihlipui*. In the opinion of the Mizo women feminist the status of women is still not good in matters relating to affairs of the state and religious affairs. Women did not take much steps to participate in the governance of the state. They raised their voices demanding for the upliftment of women as there are only a few women candidates participating in the state general elections and as those who even participated as candidates seldom get elected. Even in church affairs they raised a question on why women cannot be pastors and church elders. Later the Baptist Church agreed to allow women to be church elders. But it can still be assumed that the paths for women are still narrow to take part in such affairs.

The third wave feminism raised their voices for the authority of women, they mostly showed off the power and abilities of women. It seemed that Zadeng also find this very important. In the olden days Mizo people live in different villages each villages having its own king. Women never participated in the administration of the village along with kings and elders. As such is the tradition from the old days, it might still be attached in the Mizo society till today. But it can be assumed that Zadeng have an opinion that women can be leaders and have the ability to rule. But in the Mizo society if a woman stood up and express her thoughts and raise her voice in a public gathering, that women is considered shameless and immoral. And as such is the view of the society on women they often choose not to open their mouth and stay silent.

Shona's love for her homeland was not like that of a politician, she bravely took a step to fight the people who do wrong things. Her aim was to rescue Mizo girls who were forced into prostitution and to give punishment to Fernando the ring leader of the business. She used Savio as an important asset under her command and pacified and calmed those women who were forced into prostitution. The story shows how she rescued them from their place of detention. The story in the novel showed that Shona is a brave woman, strong willed, clever and also a good leader. Many people from other races can also be seen in this novel, Fernando the man who forced many girls into prostitution was shot dead by his own daughter when she knows the truth about what her father did. Shona bravely fought Fernando for the wrongs that he did, and he died at the hands of his own daughter.

The author emphasized the strength of women in this novel, Ramparmawii (Shona) was sold by her own father due to poverty. She was forced into prostitution in a brothel, but she cleverly finds a way to get out of that place. She did not want to be the only one to get out of such a place, she even rescued and calmed other girls who were in her position. She is the mastermind and commander behind the rescue of other prostitutes. Not only Shona, Fernando's daughter found out the wrongs of her father, and at the very end she was able to end his life with her own hands. This

portrayed the strength of women in this novel. It also showed that women are the ones who have authority. Laltei made a plan for Mampuia (Savio) to stay abroad and he obeyed and does as she asked. The way Mathana obeyed Laltei can also be seen in the story. The way Ramparmawii's (Shona) husband who was an old man made her his heir to inherit his belongings, and the way Savio acted on her authority and carried out her plans showed that women are the ones with authority. Even when it comes to patriotism, the story showed that woman can step out for their homeland as much as men does from the actions of Shona. The way women are portrayed in this novel goes along with the theme of third wave of feminism.

Khawlkungi is a pioneer among the Mizo people, she was also an early novel writer among the Mizo women. As she is a woman, taking a closer look into her novels it can be seen that she portrayed many bad status of women in the Mizo society. What she portrayed most in her novels and what she wanted women to have the most is the ability to choose a husband. She made the female characters in her novels brave in this particular field. She let Vanlalremi, Sangpuui and Malsawmi go to marry a person of their choice. But she still find it hard to let go of the expectations of the Mizo society. She portrayed girls/women as kind, tolerant, soft-hearted, easily petrified, nervous and well mannered. And she gave good stature to such women in her novels. She made sad endings for women who acted beyond the expectations of the society. In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* she prioritize the importance of men for the upliftment of women. From the three novels of Khawlkungi the improvement of women in the fields of education, employment and family matters can be seen depending on the era in which her novels are published. But still no improvements can be seen in the fate of girls who were pregnant out of marriage in all of her novels.

On the other hand Romuanpuui Zadeng is a young woman who is from the present generation. She portrayed prostitution in her novel which is not seen in the novels of Khawlkungi. She highlighted in her novels that eventhough many women chose prostitution as a profession on their own will, there are reasons that led them into prostitution such as underaged sexual violation, having a drunkard for a husband

or selling liquors illegally that made them choose a wrong path and earning for the education of siblings through prostitution due to poverty. She also showed how women are forced and tricked into prostitution against their will. The author of the novel showed that the main cause of this is the inequality of men and women in the society which causes men to look down on women and have thoughts and opinion that they are superior compared to woman in strength and abilities. She also showed that the inequality of the status of men and women further worsen the status of women.

Zadeng placed women highly in most all of her novels. Khawlkungi placed women who humbly submitted to the authority of their husbands, well mannered, obedient and gentle girls as the leading characters in her novels. She also portrayed the need of upliftment of women by men in terms of education, occupation and other aspects of life as they are weaker than men. In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* she portrayed the development of women in the fields of education, occupation, business and heirships etc, it can also be seen how men played an important role for such an upliftment. Romuanpuii Zadeng on the other hand characterized strong women in the novel *Sihlipui*. It can be seen that men followed the plans and abide by the authority of women in this novel. She portrayed the qualities of women as strong, courage, clever with the ability to endure pain and difficulties. She portrayed woman who have the ability to rescue her fellow women who face the same troubles she had faced, patriotic women who stepped out to show their love for their homeland. She does not place men highly and instead praised the ability, endurance and strength of women. And such women played the leading role in her novels.

In their novels, Khawlkungi and Zadeng both showed that the Mizo society is a patriarchal society. They both portrayed in their novels how women suffered suppression under the authority of men. In her novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* Khawlkungi showed how Vanlalremi suffered suppression by her husband, she did not have the courage to complain the drinking habits of her husband. She bear the difficulties she faced with endurance. The husband of her aunt also tried to get Vanlalremi married to a man of his choice without her consent. Her aunt and her

daughters did not have the courage to stand up for Vanlalremi. Somehow similar to the above novel Zorinpuii (Z-Chhantu) was sexually abused by her stepfather against her will in the novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, even her own mother trusted her stepfather more than she trusted her. Thanzuala showed violence and beat up his wife Khiangmawii, and even told Khiangmawii how she would be the one who gets humiliated even if they got divorced. Even Khiangmawii's brother Lalmawia did not care to defend his sister. He even stopped his wife Chalthangi from telling the truth. But Chalthangi could not bear it anymore and raised her voice by bravely telling her husband how they could not even prove their rights due to suppression and subjugation. This two novelist portrayed the low status of women in the society due to suppression by men. Romuanpuii is the one who let woman raise their voice regarding this matter in her novels.

From the study of Rozamliani's novel she also prioritizes women characters in her novels just like Zadeng. She portrayed women as determined and enduring, capable of doing things beyond her limits in order to achieve her goals. This is a distinct feature of the novel of Rozamliani. As the Mizo society is a patriarchal society as mentioned in the previous studies it maybe difficult for women to choose their path and do anything they want. Women have to step carefully under many restrictions. It had been shown from the studies of researchers that there is a dos and don'ts, manners and etiquettes laid especially for girls in the Mizo society. In the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* the author portrayed women opposite to the nature of women in the Mizo society.

Zonunmawii (Maria) was born in a very poor family. She have an elder brother, her parents accidentally fell in a river and drowned on their way home from the farm. The story showed how this incident added to their poverty. They had to live with their paternal aunt and her husband. Their aunt asked her brother to stop going to school, as he was not in a position to refuse he left school and started helping them in daily chores. But Zonunmawii eventhough she is a only a girl have no intention of leaving school like her brother. She was willing to do anything if it would enable her to continue her studies. This is also shown through the story of this novel. She is

determined to achieve success and is able to put aside anything that could stop her from achieving her goals.

It can be seen from this that a girl is more determined, brave and strong willed than a boy. She had no intention of discontinuing her studies like her brother. Zonunmawii's brother is not only a boy, he is even elder than her, but it can be seen that he is not comparable to his younger sister. Zonunmawii stayed as a maid in the house of other people while continuing her studies, but as they were not good people it became difficult to stay with them. She is willing to do anything in order to continue going to college and to achieve her goal in becoming a college lecturer. Nunfela the brother of her friend Thartei have lost his ability to walk because of a motorcycle accident. As he is their only son, his family requested Zonunmawii to bear him a son who would inherit their family's wealth. This showed how a male son is valued and highly regarded in the household of a Mizo family.

As Zonunmawii was willing to do anything in order to continue her studies she agreed to their proposal. They live together as husband and wife but their contract states that she will leave them as soon as she bear them a male child. But Nunfela began to fall in love with her eventhough their marriage was just a contract. He wishes to make her his lawfully wedded wife. His family persuaded her to stay after she bears him a male child. But as Zonunmawii already had a plan long before she enters their home, she left her son, his father and the whole family. She then continued her studies and succeded in achieving her goal in becoming a college lecturer.

Her style of piortraying women is very unique. In the Mizo society a girl can have a good life if she is married to a good man, but her life will be full of miseries if she is married to a bad person, this is a very common thought among the people in the society. Having a husband and starting a family is thought to be one of the most important achievements of a girl. Because of this every parent wants a good husband for their daughter. They prefer to marry the man of their choice to their daughter instead of allowing her to choose a husband. Although Zonunmawii the main



character from the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* have been in a contract marriage her pretend husband fell in love with her, they were also a rich family. His family were also good people and wanted their son to marry the girl he wants. But Zonunmawii thought that getting married could be an obstruction in achieving her dreams. So she had to leave everything, she did not want to spoil her dreams of success by living under the shadow of a husband and thus left and continue her studies.

She is not the gentle, loving, humble, well mannered, good wife/daughter that the Mizo society expected. This novel portrayed her as a determined and headstrong woman who could leave her own child. She is portrayed as a woman who has no love and feelings. This is opposed to the expectation of the Mizo society on the nature of a girl/woman. In the past the need for girls to get highly educated is considered unnecessary as they were to be married and become housewives. Looking after their husband and children is considered to be in their hands. But the woman Rozamlani portrayed in this novel is brave, she is determined and does not care about the thoughts and opinions of others while taking steps towards her dreams.

From the words of Zonunmawii she can live a wealthy life if she is married to Nunfela but if she is divorced she knows nothing about her future and so she find it best to be able to find a way to live and stand on her own. The status of Mizo women in terms of inheritance and divorce is very bad and their situation could get worst if they did not have a stable job. It is a normal thing that Zonuni thought this way. But still if a woman leaves her own child to pursue her dreams of success, she surely will be despised and criticized. The women characters in the novels of Khawlkungi also left something, in the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* Vanlalremi left her aunt instead of marrying a man she does not love. The novel *Pasal Duhthlan* also showed how Malsawmi left her home to study abroad and to live her life freely. In the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui* Hmingi took good care of the child she had with Hussain who was a man from another culture and educate her child keeping him in a hostel although the father of her child left her. After studying the three novels of Zadeng there are no women who left their own child in order to secure a better future for them. It can be

seen that the woman Rozamliani portrayed in her novel is a bit extreme in her actions. There can be split thoughts regarding the actions of Zonuni.

Even Zonuni could not forgive herself thoroughly for the decisions she had made, she considered herself wrong and sinful for her deeds. This is because of the judgement of the society concerning right and wrong. But it might not be fully wise to find faults in the deeds of Zonuni in her attempt to stand on her own having a stable life as women are always the ones to suffer the most in times of trouble. This might be an outcome of a feminist mindset. Many writings of experts have been shown in the previous chapters regarding the necessity of the upliftment of women and need of education and employment for that purpose. Zonuni portrayed the status of women in the society, but she does not want to depend on men like other women and even though she might seem physically weak she is more strong-willed than most men. She might seem like a hateful and shameful woman but if we look deeper it can also be seen that women have great abilities, strength, endurance and determination. Like Romuanpuui Zadeng, Rozamliani also showed interest in the strength and determination of women. But it can be seen that the women characters in Rozamliani's novel are more extreme than the women in Romuanpuui's novels in their actions and by the way she portrayed them. It is also seen that the women characters in Romuanpuui's novel stood firmer till the end.

The novel shows how Zonunmawii is somehow struck back by the wrongs she had done for leaving behind her child and the person who love her. She had a job in a college after she completed her studies in Madras. She married Trevor who was from another race, Zonunmawii (Maria) loved her husband and wholly submitted to him. But on the other hand her husband cheated on her with their maid Mary. Trevor left Maria and moved to USA with Mary. She was left behind just as she had left her son and his father behind. But the author of this novel is reluctant to make a sad ending for her female character. She was reunited with Nunfela in Madras where they were taking treatments for their sick son. By then Nunfela was already engaged to another girl. But the author reunited Maria and Nunfela again, and although she had broken their hearts she was welcomed as a wife in the house of Nunfela. And

further the story also showed how Trevor felt remorse and showed his feeling towards Maria again.

It seems that Nunfela really love Zonuni, and the way he wanted her is to be his faithful wife and to look after and take care of his son. He does not seem to understand the needs and aims of Zonuni, her determination to stand on her own and break free from poverty. Even Nunfela himself criticized her, and his family also shared his feelings and considered her as a cold hearted woman. There is something that does not fit right, a big misunderstanding in this. She was asked to quit her job and follow them home when she was reunited again with Nunfela as they talked about marriage. So, Zonunmawii have to leave behind everything she had fought for despite all the criticisms and humiliations she had been through. It is clear from this that a woman has to leave something behind. Eventhough the author of this novel portrayed a determined woman who chases her dreams with everything she have, such a woman can never really get along in the Mizo society. She will have to leave something behind if she wishes to get along, and showed that she will have to humbly submit herself. The hardships faced by women can also be seen in this.

Again women are portrayed as the main characters in the second novel of Rozamliani called *Tuarna Phenah*. Just like she portayed the life of orphans in the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* she again portrayed the life of orphans in her second novel. Sangtei the main character in the novel live with her aunt as her parents have passed away. The story in this novel portrayed things about domestic violence. Domestic violence can consist of mental, physical and sexual violence. She received false accusation from her aunt and her husband, she was also beaten and made to do many hard works. It can be seen how her she is violently beaten by her aunt's husband that causes bloodshed. Not only Sangtei is a girl, she is also an underaged girl. The crimes committed upon her by her aunt and her husband is a very serious crime.

What can be clearly seen in this novel is that men alone are not always responsible for the hardships faced by women, even their fellow women can be responsible for causing them additional sufferings. Not only that the husband of

Sangtei's aunt behave extremely violent towards her, even her aunt who is her blood relative and a fellow female never stood up to defend her. They made her do all the hard works at home and did not allow her to study eventhough she really wanted to study. She is also ill-treated and beaten violently. Her uncle send her off to fetch him liquors and even forced her to drink alcohol with his friends. He even wrongly molested and sexually violated her. But many people mock and criticize Sangtei instead of standing up for her and defending her. The author of this novel not only portrayed the life of an orphan but also showed how girls can suffer serious domestic violence without others noticing it. This is also proven true from the words of experts which is shown in chapter-4. The Government of India also made 'The Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act 2005' to protect women from such violence. This also shows and proves that there are many women/girls who face such difficulties.

It can be seen through this novel how many Mizo girls faced difficulties at their own homes, but the difficulties they faced are caused by the members of their family who were their close relatives and such things can cause humiliation for the whole family if they raised their voices about it, so to avoid further humiliation they kept quiet and suffered in silence. Human trafficking can also be seen in this novel. Sangtei was tricked by her own aunt and she was sold in a brothel in Delhi. It is seen how she was drugged and forced into prostitution against her will. Sangtei also met a prostitute called Thartei in the hotel Karol Bagh who was married to a man from another tribe. She was also forced to sell herself by her husband and that is how she started to become a prostitute. Sangtei's aunt the one who tricked her into prostitution was also made to sell herself by her husband in order to make money. From the research of Ruth Lalrinliani it is known that human trafficking also took place in Mizoram, there is not a lot of records but the ones that took place are all related to sex.

At first Thani from the novel *Tuarna Phenah* is made to sell her body by her husband for easy money and she continued to become a prostitute, she went further in the business and formed an alliance with the owners of the brothel in the hotel

Karol Bagh and started sex trafficking by tricking other girls into the business. She even sold Sangtei who was her blood relative. She is the victim as well as the culprit in the business. As shown in the previous novel *Puk Dangdai* by Zadeng, even though many girls became prostitutes on their own will, she point out that the main reasons for girls in becoming prostitutes are men who looked down on women and tried to prove their superiority over women by acting wrongly on them, also as Rozamliani wrote further it can also be seen that men are the main culprit that causes girls to become prostitutes. It can be seen that they shared the same opinion as feminist when it comes to blaming the authority and subjugation by men.

Sangtei the leading character in this novel seemed a bit weak compared to the strong and determined woman Rozamliani portrayed in her first novel. She does not believe that she could escape from the brothel of Karol Bagh on her own. Hluna the Mizo guy she met at this hotel Karol Bagh whom she hoped would rescue and help her escape did not care to think of the reasons why she was in such a place and the difficulties she had faced and instead despised and criticize her, and even proclaimed that he could sleep with her whenever he wish to sleep with her. It is already shown that the status of women is lower than the status of men in the Mizo society. Taking into consideration that the status of women is lower than that of men, the status of girls who are prostitutes will be worst in the society and they will be looked down upon with all the criticism and condemnation. Rozamliani showed that men are the reasons they chose to take this path in the first place. Eventhough men are the reason behind it, the ones who despised and look down upon them are men. So it can be seen that the status of women is really difficult under the rule and authority of men.

Hluna rescued Sangtei from the hotel Karol Bagh because he wanted to marry her. It can be seen that Sangtei is not as strong as Shona from Zadeng's novel. Shona is a clever woman, she married the father of Fernando the owner of the brothel, and she employed Savio after she inherited all the wealths of her husband. She even rescued her fellow women from the brothel who were forced into prostitution. She even investigate and dug out the crimes of Fernando and he died by the hands of his own daughter. On the other hand Sangtei from Rozamliani's novel *Tuarna Phenah* is

rescued by Hluna. Her struggle or attempt to escape is not seen in the novel. After Hluna took her home to Mizoram where she was married to him, she stayed humble at home, and tried her best to be a good wife and a good daughter-in-law. Her mother-in-law wrongly accused her of suffering from AIDS. This shows how woman can be responsible for the cause of difficulties in other women.

In her third novel *A Mak A Na* which was published in 2012. Rozamliani again made women as the main characters. This novel portrayed the situation of girls who had sex before marriage and the things they went through. From the old days it is never considered a shame and dishonor for men to have sex before marriage. Boys/men even proudly boast about having sexual intercourse with girls/women. In the old days the Mizo elders believe that after death, Pawla (the gatekeeper of heaven) will not shoot at the spirits of males who have had sexual intercourse while they were alive but will shoot those who never had sex with his big catapult. On the other hand having sex before marriage brings the worst humiliation to girls. She can never have her previous status anymore. And further her situation at home will worsen if she is pregnant with child. Her child never receive care and affection, they live a very miserable life.

This novel portrayed the difficulties faced by Puii both at home and in the society as she was pregnant before marriage. Manuni clearly knew the situation faced by Puii. But she still has sexual intercourse with Rinawma before getting married. Manuni felt a deep remorse for what she did, she always have guilt in her heart for having sexual intercourse before marriage. It seems that Rinawma did not really love her and uses her only to satisfy his sexual needs. He might have hurt the feelings of the girl as his motive was only to satisfy himself through sexual intercourse. Manuni was emotionally hurt and she did not feel any pleasures. It is seen in this novel how she despised herself for what she had done.

Also Manuni knows the status of women in the Mizo society, and how there is no equality between men and women if they have sex before marriage. Women/girls are always the ones who got shamed and humiliated in such

circumstances. She might also be frightened knowing all the possible outcome. Radical Feminist believe that while having sexual intercourse many men only think of their own pleasure and happiness and did not care whether women are in the mood for sex and felt pleasure as they only think of satisfying their hunger. This is exactly what happened between Manuni and Rinawma, and she bravely told him the facts about it. Eventhough they have sexual intercourse the woman was hurt emotionally as she knew that the intention of Rinawma was only to satisfy his sexual urges.

The changes and development in the status of women can also be seen in this novel. It can be seen at first that Manuni's father was really hurt as his daughter was pregnant before marriage. But the situation of women pregnant before marriage was not as bad as it used to be in the past, their status was a bit better in the household as they did not have to go through all the difficulties women faced in the past. Manuni asked her father for forgiveness, and she was forgiven by her father. She even did not discontinue her studies just because she was pregnant but continued to study eventhough she was pregnant. This shows that there is a change in the ways women are treated in the household. The man who impregnated her refused to marry her, he even told her to abort the child. She was tremendously wounded in the heart. But her family stood by her side and she does not receive the ill-treatments that women who gets pregnant before marriage used to get in the old days. It can be seen how this helped her a lot. So the bad status of women in the society and the need for their upliftment should be taken into consideration.

There is a similarity between the women characters from the novels of Rozamlani and Khawlkungi. In Khawlkungi's novel *Pasal Duhthlan* it is seen how Malsawmi a woman who does anything she wants without regarding the opinion of others was pregnant with the child of another woman's husband and how her parents asked her to abort that child that further led to the untimely ending of her life. Hmingi from the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* also live by the way that pleases her and she was pregnant with the child of a man from another tribe. She was left by Hussain the father of her child and she was in a very bad situation, but her situation was not bad till the end as it gets better. She find it best for women to live up the expectation of

the society as a well mannered and humble women under the authority of men and as such she portrayed this in the characters of Vanlalremi, Hliri and Sangpuui. She emphasizes the drawbacks of the situation of women who does not want to live by the expectations of the society.

Rozamliani also portrayed Zonunmawii from the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* as a brave, strong, determined and headstrong woman. She took a huge step by leaving her own child behind and also the person who loved her dearly in order to be successful in life. But that does not last as she have to leave behind her job which she secured through lots of hardships and the reason why she was called a heartless woman just to go back and get married to Nunfela. Just as men are responsible for the upliftment and the moving forward of women in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui*, Sangtei from Rozamliani's novel *Tuarna Phenah* was also rescued from the place of prostitution by Hluna after she faced many hardships and difficulties. It can be assumed that these two authors have an opinion that men are important for the upliftment of women. But on the otherhand Zadeng differs from both of them as the women characters in her novels have the abilities and strength to get through the difficulties they faced, they even have an authority and command over men. It can be seen that she have a wild interest on the motive of the Third Wave of Feminism regarding women empowerment and this can be seen from her novels *Puk Dangdai*, *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* and *Sihlipui*.

The research shows that the selected novelists portrayed the inequality of men and women in the Mizo society in their novels. Khawlkungi showed how women/girls are forced into marrying bachelors chosen by their relatives and how they they are wed unwillingly. She also wanted girls/women to have a freedom to choose a man of their likings when it comes to marriage. She also showed the worst condition and situations of girls who gets pregnant before marriage from the fate of Lalkhawthangi in the novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, Malsawmi in the novel *Pasal Duhthlan* and Hmingi in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuui*. What can be seen clearly from her novels is the fact that Mizo society is a patriarchal society where women have no authority at home and they lived under the subjugation and rule of men.



From Zadeng's novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* it can be seen that women suffered suppression at home so much and no one cared to take a look into their sufferings even when they suffered domestic violence, instead the victims are the ones who received criticism and humiliation. It can also be seen that their voices and complaints are not taken into consideration because of the fact that they are just women. Women are looked down upon under the authority of men, the feeling of superiority and control over women causes them to carry out many evils such as sexual violence, domestic violence and human trafficking. Comparable to the opinion of Zadeng in her novels, Rozamlani also portrayed the opinions of the Radical Feminist in her novel *Tuarna Phenah* by pointing out that the causes of the difficulties and hardships face by women in the Mizo society is due to the inequality of men and women in the society, this inequality allows men to have feelings of superiority and control over women which further led them to look down and disrespect women.

The research finding that the selected novelists also talked about education in their novels. Education of women is not seen in the first novel of Khawlkungi *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. Although this novel is released in the year 1977, it can be assumed that the time era on which the novel is based is during the World War II. The education of women might still be very backward and regressive during that era. It is considered best for a girl to marry a government servant during those times. *Pasal Duhthlan* was published in the year 1982, it can be assumed that the novel was also based on the 1980's era. The education of girls can be seen in this novel, they are even able to pursue higher education not only in Mizoram, but are able to go to other states for the purpose of education as well. It is seen in the novel *Duhtak Sangpuii* how women even travelled to Delhi for the purpose of education. The novel shows how education is a source of development and upliftment for the widow Sangpuii the main character in the novel and her child. Although Hmingi was left by the father of her child, she soon got herself a job as she was well educated and also have lots of talent. She was able to live a comfortable life with her son. This clearly shows how important education is for women.

Zadeng did not portray much about education in her novels. She portrayed a little bit of education in the novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*. As Zorinpuii (Z-Chhantu) is a girl she was sexually violated by her stepfather at home. She was also sexually assaulted by the warden in her hostel. She could not properly continue her studies under such circumstances. But she became highly educated after she disguised herself and lived like a man. Rozamliani on the other hand portrayed the importance of education in her novels, her novels showed how education is the most important means for a woman stand on her own. She showed how Zonunmawii (Maria) from the novel *Lawm A Kim Lo* could sacrifice everything in order to continue her studies. In the novel *A Mak A Na* eventhough Manuni was pregnant is pregnant without marriage her parents supported her and allow her to continue her studies. In the end she fulfilled her dreams and became a doctor. Their novels showed that education is an important factor for the devlopment and upliftment of women. The thoughts and opinions of the society regarding education of women can also be seen from their novels.

The result of the study the selected novelists also portrayed domestic violence in their novels. Khawlkungi portrayed domestic violence through Vanlalremi, Thuami, Tluangi and Lalkhawthangi in her novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. All these women suffered physical violence and rigorous treatments. It can be assumed that they will be burdened with emotional sufferings as well. The time era of Khawlkungi's novel is based on the World War II. It can be seen that the status of Mizo women during the year 1940-1946 is still very low. They have a very low status in the fields of education and employment, in the household and in the society as a whole. Zadeng and Rozamliani dwell in the present generation, they are still at a very young age at this very moment. From the lifestyle of the characters and events portrayed in their novels it can be seen that their novels are based on the present era. As they showed the improvement and development of women, they also both portrayed domestic violences that happened to women. Zadeng showed how Zorinpuii's stepfather acted upon her, how she suffered both physical violence and sexual violence in the novel *Hmangaihtu Leh Hmangaih*. It can also be seen how her mother Khiangmawii suffered physical violence from her husband. Rozamliani also

portrayed how Sangtei suffered domestic violence in the novel *Tuarna Phenah*. The husband of her aunt violently beat her and also sexually abuses her. She was made to do many hard works at home instead of allowing her to study. But from the novels of these three authors, it can be seen that these women/girls seldom talk about their sufferings to other people. They silently endure the domestic violence they suffered. Nothing of the sort of raising their voices or fighting back and crying for help can be seen in the novels. There is no difference regarding this in the novels released a long time ago and the novels of the present era. Eventhough the status of women have improved and is developing in many ways, domestic violence is still prevalent in many households.

The research also shows that the selected novelists have both similarities and difference by the way they write their novels. As they are woman novelist, they all portrayed woman as the main characters in their novels. But as studied earlier, there is a difference on the way Khawlkungi portrayed girls/women, the way Zadeng portrayed them and how Rozamliani portrayed them. All of their novels are linked to Christianity, and each of their novels have teachings and life lessons. The three novelists all portrayed the suppression of women both in the household and the society as a whole, and how they did not have the ability to raise their voice even to tell the truth and speak of their rights and opinions. Khawlkungi emphasized the importance of men for the upliftment and development of women while Zadeng mentioned how women are capable of uplifting and developing themselves through her novels. Rozamliani also made the woman character in her novel *Lawma A Kim Lo* as an arrogant and determined woman having the ability to endure sufferings more than a man, but unlike her fellow novelist Romuanpuui Zadeng, she did not made the strength and abilities of her female character last till the end of the story. She humbly submitted herself to the man she had left a long time ago and leave behind her job and everything she had worked for. She did not make strong charactered women who have the ability to boost and uplift themselves like the women characters Zadeng made in her novels. As they are women novelist it is clear that they have something good in their mind for the upliftment of women which they illustrate in their novels, but it can also be seen from the study of their novels that

they have a different desires for women and mindset by the way they write their novels. All the novels of the three women novelist are linked to Christianity, and although the upliftment and development in the status of women through Christianity can be seen in their novels, it can also be assumed by the way the three women novelist portrayed the status and sufferings of the women in their novels that the development is still not satisfactory and have not reached every household.

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HSSLC	2010	MBSE	II	50
B.A	2013	MZU	I	60.75
M.A	2015	MZU	I	63.5

## Publications:

1. *Voices of Women in Khawlkungi's Novel Zawlpala Thlan Tlangah*. Journal of Mizo Studies, Volume X No.3, July-September 2021, Care –List No: 193, ISSN: 2319-6041, Pages 397-407.
2. *Khuanu Leng Chawi Hrawva*. “Hrawva Hlaa Tawrhna”. ISBN: 978-81-945490-5-5, Pages 155-163, 2020.
3. *Bingbi (A Study of Mizo Fiction)*. “‘Ka Hmangaih Tlat Che’ as a Christian Fiction”. ISBN: 978-81-947253-5-0, Pages 203-211, 2021.
4. *Rothul*. “‘A Va Pawi Tak Em!’ Lemchan Atanga Mizo Thalaite Hmelhmang Zirchianna”. ISBN: 978-81-951732-5-9, Pages 270-279, 2021.
5. *Ziakmi Zairema*. “Mizo Pipute Rinna leh Puithunaa Rev. Zairema Ngaihda”. ISBN: 978-81-944202-8-6, Pages 204-214, 2021.
6. *Mizo Screenplay*. “Mizo Film Hmakhua leh Hmathlir”. ISBN: 978-93-5473-242-3, Pages 312-323, 2021.
7. *Aiting*. “‘Zan Lalnu’ Hlaa Romantic Poetry Ziarang”. ISBN: 978-93-94429-00-0, Pages 120-128, 2022.
8. *Hla Phuahthiam C. Durthanga Hlate Zirchianna*. “Cultural Criticism of C. Durthanga’s Selected Poems”. ISBN: 978-93-94909-87-8, Pages 64-75, 2024.
9. *Zoram Fachuam Mafaa Hauhnar*. “Mafaa Thuziak Mawina leh Hlutna: A Essay Thenkhat Atanga Thlirna”. Pages 191-200, 2024.
10. *Mizo Society-a Hmeichhiate Dinmun*: Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih Novel Romuanpuii Zadeng Ziak Atanga Thlirna. Journal of Mizo Studies, Volume XIII No. 3, July – September 2024. ISSN: 2319-6041, Pages 364-381.

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APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL :	
1. DRC	: 30 <sup>th</sup> March, 2021
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3. SCHOOL BOARD	: 15 <sup>th</sup> May, 2021
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EXTENTION (IF ANY)	: NIL

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**VOICES OF WOMEN IN MIZO NOVELS**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
PHILOSOPHY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF MIZO**

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES**

**JULY, 2025**

**VOICES OF WOMEN IN MIZO NOVELS**

**BY**

**LALZARZOVI**

**Department of Mizo**

**Supervisor**

**Dr. ZORAMDINTHARA**

**Submitted**

**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Mizo of Mizoram University, Aizawl.**



This thesis interrogates the representation and lived experiences of women as articulated in the novels of Mizo women writers. The study is circumscribed to the literary productions of female authors, deliberately excluding male-authored texts. The primary corpus comprises the novels of three eminent Mizo women writers: Khawlkungi, Romuanpuii Zadeng, and Rozamliani.

Khawlkungi is a pivotal figure in Mizo literary discourse, with a prolific output of twenty-five novels. Her oeuvre extends to thirty-seven plays and numerous translations, underscoring her expansive literary engagement. This thesis specifically engages with her novels *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* (1977), *Pasal Duhthlan* (1982), and *Duhtak Sangpuii* (1998), which provide nuanced insights into the construction of female subjectivities, reflecting the author's distinct positionality.

Romuanpuii Zadeng has substantially impacted the contemporary Mizo literary field. This thesis scrutinizes three of her novels: *Puk Dangdai* (2000), *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih* (2009), and *Sihlipui* (2012), wherein Zadeng foregrounds female characters.

Rozamliani, the youngest among the three novelists, has produced the most recent works. The novels selected for this study are *Lawm A Kim Lo* (2005), *Tuarna Phenah* (2007), and *A Mak A Na* (2012).

Women's studies started around the 1960s, according to Margaret H. McFadden, "Women's studies, as a concept and site of learning, really began with the second wave of the women's movement in the late 1960s". "Women's studies as an academic enterprise had its roots in second wave feminism and originated as a challenge to male-defined and male-centered knowledge," (Jackson). It can be perceived that Women's studies started by the start of the second wave feminism. "The first courses in women's studies were taught at Cornell University and San Diego State University in 1969" (Jean Fox O'BARR).

Women's studies also have a significant role in the discipline of literature and is not a new thing even in the area of research. But studies and approach towards it can vary. 'Voices of Women' is not a new topic, legion learned scholars had done a

research on the topic of ‘Women’s Voice’ and ‘Voice of Women’ in the discipline of literature. Even in the field of Mizo literature the studies approaching feminism and women’s studies is not a new topic in research. But research based on “Voices of Women in Mizo Novels” is the first of its kind as there is no research from an approach such as this.

The word ‘Voice’ can have two different definitions. The Merriam Webster dictionary define it as, “sound that passes out of the mouth and throat of vertebrates and especially human beings and is produced mainly by the vibration of the vocal cords within the larynx (as in speaking or shouting)...the right to express a wish, choice, or opinion,” (“Voice” 479). It is the sound made by a human being from the mouth and it comes out through the throat, it is also defined as a right to express one’s own belief, choice and birth rights. ‘Voices of Women’ refers to the voices made by women regarding their rights, status and their freedom. From the past women had long raised their voices and still raise their voice regarding their status in a family, community, religion, education, identity etc. They raised their voice for equality and against rape. Feminists proclaimed that subjugation and subordination of women happened all around the world and so they fight for the equality of men and women. Most of the clans and tribes around the world are under the rule of patriarchy and thus management of community, the Church and even state affairs is based on the ideology of patriarchy. Keeping this view in mind many women started a movement in order to gain their rights and dignity, that women too have great abilities that equals the abilities of men and shouted for equality. This gave birth to Feminism and Feminist Theory.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provides an introduction, while the final chapter presents the findings and conclusions of the study.

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This introductory chapter explicates the thesis title, situating the status of women within Mizo society, which is comparatively more favorable than in many other contexts. It traces the evolution of Mizo novels and the emergence of female

novelists within this literary tradition. Additionally, it provides a historical overview of the origins of women's studies, the concept of feminism, and its various waves.

The nexus between feminism and the "Voices of Women" is central to this thesis, which is analyzed through a feminist lens. The multiplicity of feminist definitions reflects diverse scholarly perspectives. Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini assert that, "women were able to spread it all over the world, make it a symbol of equality, and make all people believe that men and women deserve equality in all opportunities, treatment, respect, and social rights" (16). Rajiva Ranjan describes feminism as "a noble concept against the ignoble thought of discrimination on the grounds of sex" (120). At its core, feminism posits that women should possess equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities as men.

According to Rajiva Ranjan, "The first wave of the women's movement started in the 18th century and lasted until the beginning of the 20th century" (120). This period saw women challenging educational disparities between genders and advocating for the advancement of women's education. They also campaigned for the right to work outside the domestic sphere, property rights within marriage, and suffrage.

Second Wave Feminism emerged post-World War II, initially gaining traction in the United States before extending to other Western nations. While the First Wave primarily focused on suffrage, the Second Wave addressed broader systemic gender inequalities. This movement combated rape, domestic violence, and workplace discrimination, aiming to elevate women's status, ensure their protection, and resist defamation. It represented a holistic struggle for women's justice.

Amina Ghorfati and Rabha Medini observe, "This wave of feminism referred to a group of feminist activity. They appeared in the early 1990s and continue to the present. Rebecca Walker is the symbol of this wave. She used the term 'third wave feminism' for the first time in 1992" (19). This denotes the inception of Third Wave Feminism in the 1990s, with the terminology introduced in 1992. Rebecca Walker, while publishing *Ms. Magazine*, contributed to a platform originally founded by

Gloria Steinem. Ms. Magazine has played a pivotal role in advocating for Third Wave Feminism.

## **Chapter 2: Women's voices on patriarchy in Khawlkung's Selected Novels**

This chapter interrogates three novels by Khawlkungi: *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, *Duhtak Sangpuui* and *Pasal Duhthlan*. *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, although Khawlkungi's second story, is considered her first complete novel, published in 1977 with a narrative set in the 1940s.

In this narrative, Vanlalremi emerges as the central female figure, subjected to domestic violence by Rochhinga, her aunt's husband. Vanlalremi recounts her ordeal to Malsawma: "Just as he heard me say that I did not wish to marry Lalmuana, he pushed me to the ground and started kicking me. I did not have the courage to say anything more; if I uttered another word, he would have surely broken my arm, as there is no one to stand by my side to protect me. And yet I am deemed guilty for running away from him" (Khawlkungi 41). Rochhinga employs physical violence as a coercive tactic to force her into an unwanted marriage.

Janet C. Lalhmingliani and Vijanti Namchoom assert, "in traditional Mizo society, women were generally discriminated against simply on the grounds of sex. The Mizo society is a patriarchal and patrilineal society... Women do not have any say in decision-making, whether at home or outside" (32). Despite his alcoholism, Rochhinga maintained ultimate authority within the family, using violent threats and physical force to suppress dissent from female family members.

*Pasal Duhthlan*, published in 1982, contrasts with *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, published in 1977 but set during World War II. The setting of *Pasal Duhthlan* appears to be the 1980s. In this narrative, Malsawmi's perspectives challenge societal norms. Her parents pressured her to abandon her education to marry a suitable boy, reflecting a belief that a girl should marry a successful man and depend on him. Her father articulated this view: "It is best that you get married and have a husband. Even educated girls come home looking for a husband. I don't think it is a good idea to go

away when there is a suitable man waiting for your hand in marriage” (Khawlkungi 25).

Grace Kim Khaute stated, “Women had no right either in the family or in the society. In body, mind and spirit, she belonged from birth till death to her father, brother, or her husband” (35). In *Pasal Duhthlan*, the narrative reveals a prevailing belief that men determine the fate of girls. Higher education for girls is deemed unnecessary; instead, early marriage to a suitable boy is prioritized, reflecting gender inequality in Mizo society.

Khawlkungi’s *Duhtak Sangpuii*, published in 1998, sixteen years after *Pasal Duhthlan*, depicts an improved status and condition of women compared to *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* and *Pasal Duhthlan*. Khawlkungi’s protagonists often conform to societal norms, yet she advocates for girls’ opportunities in education, employment, and inheritance rights, indicating her feminist inclinations. Nonetheless, she emphasizes humility towards men and adherence to societal expectations for girls’ behavior.

Khawlkungi did not employ her characters’ voices to explicitly advocate for women’s rights to possessions or the necessity of improving women’s status, as feminists often do. However, in *Duhtak Sangpuii*, Hmingi’s father, in his will, ensured that both his daughters, Hmingi and Zuitei, received a fair share of his wealth alongside his son.

Thus, she did not explicitly preach gender equality through her characters or her own words. Nevertheless, she depicted the status of women in society as a lesson, advocating for inheritance rights for girls and their freedom to choose whom they will marry. As a woman, she subtly conveyed these feminist ideals. However, it might also be inferred that she perceived girls as weaker than boys and believed women should humbly live under male control.

### **Chapter 3: A Study of Empowerment of Women in Romuanpuii Zadeng’s Selected Novels**

This chapter engages with the life and works of Romuanpuii Zadeng. Women's voices manifest in diverse forms, and their literary contributions are subject to extensive analysis. The status of women in the fields of politics, the domestic violence they faced, their low status in society and household affairs, the inequality they faced due to gender difference and their voices they raise studied in this chapter. In the words of Sarah Sherman,

Second wave feminists have a lot of issues with prostitution. A lot of their issues with prostitution mainly stem from the issues they were fighting the most against, which is the oppression and /or subordination of women... Since second wave feminists were fighting so much against the oppression of women and the patriarchy in general, it is not surprising that the biggest issue that they take with prostitution is that they feel it reinforces the power of men and their place in society. ("On Feminism and Sex Work")

The narratives of the prostitutes in *Puk Dangdai* suggest a self-determined entry into prostitution. Chhingpuii articulates, "It is because of the mistakes of my own making. I married against the will of my mother and father... I was really in love with my husband in the beginning of our marriage, but my husband was a heavy drinker and we were very poor that we had to illegally sell liquor... we were irresponsible and both our children did not get the care and affections they are supposed to get from us, my mother and father pity our children so much that they had to take them away from us for their care and safety. I continued to live recklessly..." (Zadeng 64). Her narrative reveals a self-attribution of fault, indicating that her trajectory into prostitution was a consequence of her own decisions. Chhingpuii perceives her path as a result of her own volition, describing herself as a "naughty woman" who consciously chose this profession.

In *Puk Dangdai*, Ramngaizeli, later known as Lucy, is coerced into prostitution against her will. Initially employed as a cook at Ramu's establishment, she is subsequently forced by her employer into a prostitution cave hotel. "The boss made her swallow one of his pills, after a short while the pill began to have its effects on her, she felt really light, she also began to lose her conscience and began to do

things which she would never do on a right mind. She began to entertain her customers with her body, she willingly submitted to their pleasures as she was high on the drugs they gave her..." (Zadeng 39). Lucy's narrative reveals her subjugation through drug-induced compliance, leading her to actions contrary to her volition. This coercion constitutes a severe violation, profoundly impacting her life trajectory.

In *Puk Dangdai*, the narrative implicates men in the trajectories leading women into prostitution. Puii's experience begins with rape by a wealthy family friend before puberty. Her parents not only fail to treat him as a criminal but also arrange her marriage to him. Following their divorce due to his infidelity, Puii enters prostitution. Public perception may deem Puii contemptible, yet her path is rooted in her early victimization and parental neglect.

Chhingpuii attributes her entry into prostitution to her own decisions, yet her husband's alcoholism and their illegal liquor trade contribute significantly to her circumstances. Ramngaizeli, (Lucy), is coerced into prostitution through drug-induced compliance, highlighting her lack of agency.

These narratives collectively underscore the structural and interpersonal dynamics that compel women into prostitution, challenging simplistic moral judgments and emphasizing the complex interplay of victimization, agency, and socio-economic pressures.

In societal discourse, women who deviate from prescribed moral paths are often deemed to possess an inherently lecherous nature, reaping the consequences of their actions. The author of this novel endeavors to challenge this notion, suggesting that the causes of such deviations may lie in male influence or familial discord.

In *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, Zorinpuii defies societal and familial norms. Wrongly accused of alcohol consumption, she finds no sanctuary from male predation until she adopts a male disguise. Confronted with myriad challenges both domestically and publicly, her voice remains unheard. Marginalized to the extent of being denied the opportunity to reveal the truth, she resorts to masquerading as a man for safety within her home, society, and educational environment. The narrative

chronicles her life in disguise, highlighting how this transformation empowers her to articulate previously suppressed thoughts. Her evolution into a social thinker, aspiring to instigate societal and cultural reforms, is particularly significant.

The novel elucidates that the underestimation and disdain of women, and the perception of women as inferior to men, are not intrinsic but are culturally constructed beliefs rooted in antiquity. Zorinpuii's transformation was not merely sartorial; her disguise allowed her to evade the tribulations she previously endured. Without this subterfuge, she would have been precluded from continuing her education and subjected to societal scorn. However, her disguise facilitated her academic pursuits, enabling her to emerge as one of the brightest students in her cohort. She made significant strides and delivered impactful orations for her tribe and motherland.

*Sihlipui*, published in 2012, features women as central characters, reflecting the author's gender. The portrayal of women in this work warrants extensive examination. Shona, the protagonist, epitomizes strength. She is courageous, possesses remarkable endurance, and remains composed and decisive in adversity. She demonstrates leadership and the capacity to make final decisions with fortitude. One of the main theme of the Third Wave Feminism is 'Girl Power', this theme is brought up and publicized by a punk rock girl band called Riot Girls. In the definition of Amgelica L, Setianto leh Maria V. Win,

The concept of girl power was introduced by Riot Grrrls, which is a sunset of third-wave feminism, and quickly became popular in the mid-90s. By then, it had been deployed greatly in pop culture by mainstream media. The traits of powerful young women who fought back and claimed their power was not accepted because of their gender, which then initiated the rise of Girl Power as a strategic way that was aimed to promote adolescent female empowerment ant to establish the term through which the 'Girl Power' itself had been analysed...Thus, in each different setting, girl power also represented female independence and empowerment in a more playful approach of the traditional



femininity and ‘girllishness’ which channeled the voice of the third-wave feminists. (574)

There is a growing belief and opinion of feminist nowadays that women have the strength, abilities, expertise, courage and intelligence that is equivalent to that of a man in many ways. Feminist advised and urged women to stop shunning away in the corner and to keep their inferiority complex aside so that they will be able to recognize the things that they are capable of doing, the things they could do as they have the strength and abilities for doing many things a man can do.

As a victim of human trafficking, Shona undertook the formidable task of rescuing girls sold into prostitution. She confronted affluent and influential adversaries with unwavering resolve, prioritizing not only her own safety and freedom but also the liberation of her fellow tribe members. Addressing her fellow Mizo girls, wrongfully sold into prostitution due to poverty, she reassured them: “My dear sisters, do not be afraid. Please do not fear me. I won’t allow you to feel terrified even for a second anymore. Stand up bravely. The police are continuously working for you. All your fear and distress will soon end. I am sending you all home to your families. You all can go back home if you want to. We will always be there to free and rescue you. You are now under protection. You can all be calm and peaceful now” (Zadeng 93). Her words reveal her inherent leadership qualities. While women are often perceived as feeble and subservient, this novel illustrates their profound strength and resilience.

Feminism arose from the recognition of pervasive inequities between men and women. As Margaret Walter articulates, “...Western feminists have struggled against sexism, and against social and political inequalities, women in the ‘Third World’ have had to confront additional, and even more intractable, problems. They often have to combat sexism in the form of deep-rooted local beliefs and practices, to do with class, caste, religion, and ethnic biases” (118). This underscores the multifaceted nature of gender inequality, wherein women are frequently perceived as inferior, weak, and powerless.

Feminists have exhorted women to eschew passivity and surmount their inferiority complexes, thereby recognizing their own capabilities and strengths. Women are endowed with the capacity to undertake tasks traditionally ascribed to men. The narrative in “Sihlipui” exemplifies that women possess abilities, intelligence, and strength, and can embody the attributes of effective leadership. The author refrains from portraying female characters as subordinate to male authority; rather, she depicts them as decision-makers and wielders of power.

This novel elucidates that girls bear the brunt of poverty engendered by governmental failure and corruption. Yet, it concurrently portrays girls as strong, brave, intelligent, patriotic, and resilient, endowed with leadership qualities. The voices and actions of women in this narrative embody the ethos of Third Wave Feminism’s ‘Girl Power’ movement and women’s empowerment. It also subverts Mizo society’s traditional views and expectations regarding the character and identity of women.

#### **Chapter 4: A Study of Women Voices in the Works of Rozamliani’s Novels**

This chapter elucidates the life and oeuvre of Rozamliani, examining the status of women as depicted in her novels from various perspectives.

In her inaugural novel, *Lawm A Kim Lo*, women are prominently featured. The protagonist, Zonunmawii (Maria), narrates her own story, thereby centering the narrative on a woman’s experiences. A critical aspect of this story is its focus on a woman’s life. However, a meticulous analysis reveals an absence of explicit discourse on the unequal status of men and women, the subordinate status of women, or their aspirations for equality.

In this novel, women are portrayed as resolute individuals with remarkable endurance, determined to achieve their objectives. Rozamliani’s depiction of a strong woman is evident. “Women’s duties as good daughters, good wives, and good mothers are well-defined in Mizo patriarchal society” (Lalsangpuui, 43). The patriarchal structure of Mizo society imposes stringent expectations on women to fulfill these roles, thereby constraining their ability to live autonomously. Such

societal demands pose significant challenges for women seeking to exercise personal agency.

In *Lawm A Kim Lo*, Rozamliani does not explicitly address gender inequality or the status of women. However, the protagonist, Zonuni, subverts Mizo societal expectations of women. At times, she is portrayed as more resolute and strong-minded than her male counterparts. Mizo society anticipates women to be kind-hearted, gentle, and virtuous. Yet, in her pursuit of becoming a lecturer, Zonuni agrees to be a surrogate mother. Despite the man who hired her for surrogacy loving her and wishing to marry her, she perceives marriage and motherhood as impediments to her aspirations. Consequently, she decides to leave him after bearing his son.

Rozamliani's *Tuarna Phenah*, published in 2007, similarly features a female protagonist, Sangtei. The narrative explores domestic violence, which Sangtei endures. Julie Lalrinzami defines domestic violence as encompassing "physical violence, mental and verbal violence, giving insufficient food by deliberately causing malnutrition" (46). "The behaviour that is commonly called domestic violence can take on a variety of different aspects. It can be physical assault, sexual abuse, threats of either, or psychological abuse" (Lockton and Ward, 7). Thus, domestic violence includes physical and mental abuse, non-consensual sexual abuse, or attempts thereof.

In *Tuarna Phenah*, the protagonist Lalrinsangi, known as Sangtei, endures profound torment and harassment. This mistreatment emanates from her own relatives, specifically her aunt and her aunt's husband, whom she had trusted to provide shelter following her parents' demise. Her aunt's husband not only berates her but also physically assaults her over trivial matters.

Brian F. Kingshott and Tonisha R. Jones assert, "It is acknowledged that in highly patriarchal societies, human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation is likely to flourish. In such societies, patriarchal perspectives ascribe to the ideology that women's sole purpose is to please men, especially sexually" (5). The subjugation of women under patriarchal rule, where they are expected to please

men and provide them with enjoyment, is posited as a contributing factor to human trafficking.

Feminists posit that patriarchal ideology underpins the myriad sufferings and hardships endured by women. As men wield authority over women, the latter are expected to please them, fostering a perception of power that precipitates sexual abuse, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

While the female characters in *Tuarna Phenah* do not explicitly address these issues, and the author does not directly attribute their root cause to patriarchal ideology, a closer scrutiny of the women's predicaments reveals that Thani's husband is the primary source of their afflictions. He commodifies his wife for financial gain, thereby entrenching the women in the flesh trade and exacerbating their suffering. Thani even sells her own niece, her own flesh and blood. Furthermore, the narrative illustrates how Sangtei's friend, Thari, is initially sold to other men by her husband for profit, ultimately leading her into prostitution. Given that men are depicted as the root cause of these tribulations, it is plausible that the author had feminist ideology in mind.

The third novel, *A Mak A Na*, emerged in 2012, marking Rozamliani's last publication to date. As with her preceding works, this narrative centers on a female protagonist. In *A Mak A Na*, Puii, engages in premarital sexual relations, resulting in pregnancy. The text delineates the ensuing adversities: "Nobody wanted to be friends with her after her pregnancy; she does not have friends anymore. I think no one ever talks to her anymore after she dropped out of school. Living with all the shame, having no friends to talk to will be a very tough thing for her" (Rozamliani 15). This narrative elucidates the manifold tribulations confronting a girl who becomes pregnant outside wedlock, encompassing public disgrace, societal censure, and the thwarting of her potential. Lalthansangi Ralte stated, "A man could clearly show his preference to any girl. He could have sexual intercourse with a girl, and the act would not be regarded as shameful or degrading for him. It was rather believed to be manly or something to be proud of. But for a woman, if any man should have a

sexual relationship with her, she was spoken of badly and other men would shun her” (53).

Mizo society is entrenched in patriarchy, wherein, as previously articulated, women bear the brunt of humiliation and repercussions in instances of premarital sexual intercourse. Men impose stringent expectations of chastity upon women at the time of marriage, yet they themselves are not subjected to equivalent standards of virginity or purity, despite their lofty expectations. This disparity starkly reveals the inequity between genders.

As the status of Mizo women undergoes transformation and progression over time, the predicaments and challenges faced by unmarried pregnant women within households also evolve. These shifts are mirrored in the novel, as the author, being contemporaneous, situates the narrative in the present era.

## **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

The selected novelist portrays the inequality between men and women in Mizo society in her novels. Khawlkungi illustrates how women and girls are often forced into marriages with bachelors chosen by their relatives, leading to unwilling unions. She advocates for the freedom of women and girls to choose their own partners in marriage. Additionally, she depicts the dire conditions and situations faced by girls who become pregnant before marriage through the fates of Lalkhawthangi in *Zawlpala Thlan Tlanga*, Malsawmi in *Pasal Duhthlan*, and Hmingi in *Duhtak Sangpuii*. Her novels clearly highlight that Mizo society is patriarchal, where women have no authority at home and live under the subjugation and rule of men.

In Romuanpuii Zadeng’s novel *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*, it is evident that women suffer significant suppression at home, with their sufferings often overlooked, even in cases of domestic violence. Instead of receiving support, the victims are subjected to criticism and humiliation. Their voices and complaints are disregarded simply because they are women. Under male authority, women are

looked down upon, and the sense of superiority and control over women leads to various evils, including sexual violence, domestic violence, and human trafficking.

Similarly, Rozamliani, in her novel *Tuarna Phenah*, echoes the sentiments of Radical Feminism by highlighting that the difficulties and hardships faced by women in Mizo society stem from gender inequality. This inequality fosters a sense of male superiority and control, which in turn leads to the disrespect and subjugation of women.

The selected novelists also address the theme of education in their works. In Khawlkungi's first novel, *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, published in 1977, the education of women is not depicted. Although the novel was published in 1977, it can be inferred that the setting is during World War II, a period when women's education was likely still very backward and regressive. During that era, it was considered ideal for a girl to marry a government servant.

In *Pasal Duhthlan*, published in 1982 and presumably set in the 1980s, the education of girls is portrayed more positively. The novel shows that girls were able to pursue higher education not only in Mizoram but also in other states. Similarly, in *Duhtak Sangpuii*, women are depicted traveling to Delhi for educational purposes. The novel illustrates how education serves as a source of development and upliftment for Sangpuii, the main character, with her widow mother. Despite being abandoned by the father of her child, Hmingi secures a job due to her education and talents, enabling her to live a comfortable life with her son. This clearly demonstrates the importance of education for women.

Romuanpuii Zadeng does not extensively portray education in her novels. However, she does touch upon it in *Hmangaihtu leh Hmangaih*. Zorinpuii (Z-Chhantu), a girl, is sexually violated by her stepfather at home and also assaulted by the warden in her hostel, preventing her from continuing her studies under such circumstances. Nevertheless, she becomes highly educated after disguising herself and living as a man.

In contrast, Rozamliani emphasizes the importance of education in her novels, illustrating how it is the most crucial means for a woman to achieve independence. In *Lawm A Kim Lo*, she depicts Zonunmawii (Maria) as willing to sacrifice everything to continue her studies. Similarly, in *A Mak A Na*, despite Manuni's premarital pregnancy, her parents support her education, allowing her to fulfill her dreams and become a doctor. These novels demonstrate that education is a vital factor for the development and upliftment of women. The societal attitudes and opinions regarding women's education are also reflected in their works.

The three novelists also address the theme of domestic violence in their works. Khawlkungi portrays domestic violence through the characters of Vanlalremi, Thuami, Tluangi, and Lalkhawthangi in her novel *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*. These women endure physical violence and harsh treatment, which likely results in significant emotional suffering as well. The novel is set during World War II, reflecting the low status of Mizo women between 1940 and 1946. During this period, women had limited access to education and employment and held a low status within the household and society at large.

In contrast, Romuanpuii Zadeng and Rozamliani are contemporary authors, still relatively young. The lifestyles and events depicted in their novels indicate that their stories are set in the present era. This modern setting allows them to explore the ongoing issues of domestic violence within a contemporary context.

While these novelists depict the improvement and development of women, they also portray the domestic violence that women endure. Zadeng illustrates how Zorinpuii's stepfather subjected her to both physical and sexual violence in the novel *Hmangaihtu Leh Hmangaih*. Additionally, her mother, Khiangmawii, suffers physical violence from her husband. Similarly, Rozamliani portrays Sangtei's experiences of domestic violence in *Tuarna Phenah*, where her aunt's husband violently beats and sexually abuses her. Sangtei is also forced to perform hard labor at home instead of being allowed to study.

However, these novels reveal that the women and girls seldom speak about their sufferings to others. They silently endure the domestic violence inflicted upon

them, without raising their voices, fighting back, or crying for help. This silence is consistent across novels from both past and present eras. Despite the improvements and developments in the status of women, domestic violence remains prevalent in many households. The three women novelist have both similarities and difference by the way they write their novels. As they are woman novelist, they all portrayed woman as the main characters in their novels. But as studied earlier, there is a difference on the way.

Khawlkungi, Romuanpuii Zadeng, and Rozamliani each presented nuanced portrayals of women in their Christian-themed novels. While all three explored the societal and domestic suppression of women, their perspectives on female empowerment varied. Khawlkungi emphasized the role of men in women's upliftment, while Zadeng championed women's self-sufficiency. Rozamliani's protagonist, *Lawm A Kim Lo*, initially displayed remarkable strength and resilience, surpassing her male counterparts in endurance. However, in a departure from Zadeng's empowered female characters, Zonunmawii ultimately yielded to societal expectations, returning to her former partner and abandoning her career. This portrayal suggests a complex interplay between individual agency and societal constraints, highlighting the challenges women faced in asserting their independence.



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