

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN MIZO FICTION

**Submitted by
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**Submitted in fulfillment of the requirement of the
Doctor of Philosophy**

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To



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CERTIFICATE

Certified that Mr. Khiangte Chawngte Vannghaka, who is a Lecturer of Mizo Department in one of the Government Colleges of Mizoram has written his thesis '**Influence of Christianity in Mizo Fictions**' under my supervision. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the work embodies his original investigation and findings, and has not been published anywhere. I consider it worthy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Literature, of the Mizoram University.

Jan. 20. 2009

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PREFACE

With the initiative of some scholars and academicians, the subject of Mizo (Language & Literature) has been developed greatly in the recent past. Apart from degree level, the Post-Graduate Department of Mizo is opened under the North Eastern Hill University (NEHU) Mizoram Campus from the academic year of 1997-98. It is obvious that the Mizo novel has become one of the important field of studies in the syllabus. However, there is not yet any comprehensive research done on the Mizo Novel even after being under the Mizoram University. So, it has attracted my attention to do research as the field is still very fertile. Being a Lecturer in the Department of Mizo in the Government College, teaching of Novels is an inescapable task, I have therefore selected Mizo Novels for comprehensive study.

I would like to record my deep sense of gratitude to my Supervisor, Dr. Laltluangliana Khiangte, the first Professor in the Mizo (Language & Literature) Department, Mizoram University for making himself readily available for any discussions and for his untiring guidance right from the first day till today. As a leading scholar and initiator of Mizo Subject in the Post Graduate section, and because of his vast knowledge in the subject, he is the right person to guide me in this particular research.

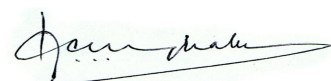
Besides him, some persons have helped me in various ways during my research work. My deep sense of gratitude goes to all of them although only a few could be mentioned here. I am indebted to the authorities of Library of Government Kolasib College and Sub-Divisional Library, Kolasib for facilitating my research right from the beginning.

My special thanks go to Rev.Dr. R.Chhuanliana, Associate Professor of Aizawl Theological College and Mr. Lalzuitluanga, Lecturer, Department of Mizo, Government Aizawl North College and Miss Brenda Laldingliani Sailo, Lecturer, Department of English, Government J. Thankima College for their kind help and valuable advise.

I am grateful to my wife Vanhlupuii, who took upon herself the burden of running the family and caring our children, so that I may give full concentration to my research work. The sacrifices and prayers of my children and my youngest sister Chalkhumi and my niece Lallenmawii, for the success of my research in particular has been tremendous. Without their cooperation and support, this research work would never have been done. Their prayers and encouragements have been the source of my secret success.

Lastly, I thank my faithful God who gave me an opportunity to pursue my doctoral study and who also gave me strength and makes all things possible to His own will.

It is hope that this humble piece of research would add some new dimensions to the existing literature on the subject of Novel, I hope that this work may stimulate others to produce more comprehensive studies in a critical manner so as to make it useful immensely for others who will do research in the future.



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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The aim of this Thesis is to critically examine the influence of Christianity in Mizo fiction and the emergence of subtle changes, and to examine the subtle change in the treatment and handling of this influence with the passing of time.

The term *fiction* in broader sense means any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which invented instead of being an account of events that in fact happened. But in a narrower sense, fictions denotes only narrative that arts written in prose, and sometimes is used simply as a synonym for the novel. So, for the purpose of writing my thesis, the word *novel* is more frequently used as synonym for the fiction.

Elaboration of the Problem

Most of the writers about Mizos and their religion described Mizo religion as animistic, where sacrifices were offered to appease a number of evil spirits who were in control of human fate. Mizos therefore lived in a constant fear of these evil spirits who may harm them. The spirits were believed to be content with the sacrifices and in turn transferred their anger and malevolence elsewhere. This researcher holds the view that Mizos did not worship these evil spirits. In fact, the old Mizo religion was monotheism, for they believed in the existence of one supreme God whom they called '*Pathian*.' This *Pathian* was a God of all humanity and goodness, and it was believed that he lived beyond the sky. Since he was not much involved in daily human life, sacrifices were not

made to appease him or to obtain peace or redemption. They regarded *Khuanu* (synonym of *Pathian*) as the guardian and keeper of their village.

There were two types of village priests – *sadawt* and *Bawlpu*. The former was responsible for performing traditional religious ceremonies to invoke the blessing from God for the people. The latter was responsible for performing rituals that were meant to propitiate the evil spirits and to cure illness. Thus the former is like a religious priest and the latter is like a medicine man.

Mizos observed three community festivals: *Chapchar Kut* (spring festival in early March), *Mim kut* (autumn festival in September), and *Pawl kut* (harvest festival in December). A well-to-do family would observe religious ceremonies like *Sakung Phun*, *Sedawi Chhun*, *Khuangchawi*, and *Zawhzazo*, where they worship God with hogs and mithun and treated the whole community with a feast. A person who accomplished all these ceremonies was called *Thangchhuah* and he is entitled to enter *Pialral* (Mizo Paradise). This would show how Mizos believed in life after death, where non-*Thangchhuah* dead people will go to *Mitthi Khua* (Ordinary abode of the dead, somewhat like Sheol in the Bible).

The arrival of Christian missionaries to this region on 11th January 1894 heralded a sea-change for the religion and socio-economic lifestyle of the Mizos. Missionaries built churches, established schools and dispensary, and they adopted Hunterian system of orthography with Roman script for the Mizo alphabets. They translated and wrote several books in Mizo for the school primer, and translated scripture in Mizo. They gradually won the hearts of the tribe. Once the initial barrier was broken, Mizos accepted Christianity whole heartedly.

The term *Christianity* in this thesis means the religion stemmed from the teaching of Jesus Christ. The central teachings of traditional Christianity are that Jesus is the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; that his life on earth, his crucifixion, Resurrection and ascension into heaven are proof of God's love for man and his forgiveness of man's sins, and that by faith in Christ man may attain salvation and eternal life. He gave a Great commission to his disciples, saying: "...Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have command you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" ¹

Following the Great commission of Jesus Christ, two Arthington's missionaries, namely Rev. J.H.Lorrain and Rev. F.W.Savidge came to Mizoram on January 11.1894 and after they were to move on, leaving the field to other mission, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist, later called the Presbyterian Church of Wales, sent Rev. D.E.Jones to Mizoram.

The advent of Christianity in Mizoram affected not only the people's perception of the world, but also brought changes in all aspects of life. Christianity brought a new world view, western culture, politics, social, medicines, education and literature to the Mizo people. We may say that literature and education were the instruments to bring about change in Mizoram.

In this research, the term *Christianity* not only refer directly to the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Bible, but it refers more to the impacts of this new religion on the existing the Mizo mindset and values in their religious and social practices. What are the reasons for this tremendous success? What has Christianity done to the Mizo? What is the meaning of Christianity for Mizo? An attempt is made to highlight some of the major factors that have contributed

to the change brought on by the Christianity in Mizoram which are reflected by our novels, and the interaction of Christianity with Mizo cultural along with some of the failure of Christianity. A careful study will surely reveal the Influence of Christianity in Mizo fictions.

Finally, there are a series of words related to Christianity. The word *Church* (with a capital C) refers either the proper name of established ecclesiastical bodies or to the Christian community of Mizoram as well as a whole. The word *Church* is more frequently used than *Christianity* to designate the Christian community as a whole.

The Mizos have always valued fellow-feeling, brotherhood and altruism. There might be no major change in the value system of the people, because the new religion preached the same values. Yet Christianity brought about a great change in the traditional socio-religious practices of the Mizos. They were freed from their fear of evil spirits. All their festivals but *Chapchar kut* sans drinking rice beer were discarded now.

It is therefore felt that Christianity has had great impact on the literature and their literary style including fictions. In order to examine these influences, three novels representing pre-Christianity era i.e. (*Hawilopari-1936* by L. Biakliana, *Chhingpuii - 1939* by Kaphleia, *Phira leh Ngurthanpari - 1944* by Lalzuithanga), five novels representing post-Christianity era, i.e. (*Lali -1937* by L.Biakliana, *Thla Hleinga Zan-1978* by James Dokhuma, *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang - 1980* by Khawlkungi, *Kraws Bulah chuan - 1994* and *Nunna Kawng Thuampuih- 1980* by Zikpuii-Pa (K.C.Lalvunga), and six novels representing present day fictions (*Ram leh I Tan Chauh -1995* and *Hmangaih Zoramthangi-1996* by H.Lallungmuana, *Khualzin Nula-1996* by Lalhriata, *Hlimni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw? - 1994* by H.P.Lalremtluanga, *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* by Zothansangi Pa, *Hmangaihzuali* by C.Laizawna) were selected.

With an analytical study of those given works, the thesis will try to highlight the following issues: Whither or not the influence of Christianity felt in the novels or fictions whose settings were of pre-christianity, and in what way? Did Christianity bring about changes in religious beliefs and practices, social values and politico-economic life? If so, in what way and to what extent? Could the dark side of present Mizo society, prevailing corruptions and moral breakdown be the negative impact of Christianity? Finally, how did the Mizo writers handle the subtle changes in the Mizo social life both before the coming of Christianity and in the post-Christianity period? Is there qualitative growth in the literary style of writings from the past to the present context?

Previous Research

There are more than 100 novels written during 1936-1996, there is not yet enough comprehensive research done on them. The following studies are worthwhile to mention here. In his *Themes and Techniques of Mizo Novels*, H.Lallungmuana selected six Mizo novels and he made a careful analysis of the themes and techniques employed. This work has not yet been published.²

B.Lalthangliana, *Mizo Literature*, made a survey of the works of six earliest Mizo novelists like L.Biakliana, Kaphleia, Lalzuithanga, C.Thuamluaia, Capt. C.Khuma, and Zikpuii-pa. His survey is really useful.³ Apart from these, growth and development of Mizo literature, including the origin of Mizo Novel had been dealt in *Lehkhabu Ramtiam* (1993) and *Thuhlaril* (1995) by Laltheastangliana Kiangte.

On the relationship between Christianity and Mizo culture and Society, the following books were very popular: *Christianity and Mizo Culture* (1996) by Mangkhosat Kipgen; *The Life and Witness of the Church in Mizoram* (1987) by C.L.Hminga; *History of the Church in Mizoram* (1991) by J.M.Lloyd; Mizo

Drama (1993) Laltluangliana Khiangte; “Christianity Among the Mizo in Mizoram” *Christianity in India* (1998) by F.Hrangkhuma; *Mizoram Dynamics of Change* (1982) by Animesh Ray; *Mizoram: Society and Polity* (1996) by C.Nunthara; *A History of The Mizos Volume I & II* (1997) by Brig. C.G.Varghese and R.L.Thanzawna; *The Mizo Society in Transition* (1993) by C.R.Nag; *On Every High Hill* by J.M.Lloyd; *Church and Political Upheaval: A Study of Impact of Christianity on the Political Development in Mizoram* (1985) by John Vanlalhluna; *Mizos: Society and Social Change* by Sangkima; *God’s Miracle in Mizoram* (1978) by Rev Zairema; *Christianity in North East India: Historical Perspective* (1983) by F.S.Downs. These books pointed out the great changes brought about by Christianity in socio-cultural, political and economic life of Mizos.

Whereas these valuable books and works are worth noting and recognition, they did not deal with the influence of Christianity on the fiction in Mizo literature. The present researcher felt the need of moving a little more in that new direction. It is therefore felt that the research is dealing with the lacuna, in order that the influence of Christianity on Mizo literature will be greatly enhanced.

Scope and Limitation

This study could not cover the whole realm of fiction writing in Mizo literary world. The work will be limited to a manageable selected works representing several settings as indicated earlier. The above mentioned novels were purposely selected to represent the various settings where the influence of Christianity is felt.

Method of Study

In this thesis, primary materials like Mizo fictions and secondary materials shall be collected and analysed in detail to see the influence of Christianity on the mizo fictional genre. Research papers and books pertaining to Mizo literature, social change, and influence of Christianity on Mizo society will also be utilized in making the arguments. The thesis chapterisation may be like this.

First of all, there shall be Introduction, where the statement of the problem, elaboration of the Problem, Previous Research and the importance of the research, Scope and Limitation, and the Method of study shall be discussed.

The first chapter shall be a background study, where I shall deal with the life of the Mizo people: religion, social practices, the advent of British administration and the works of Christian missionaries and their contribution to the and development of Mizo literature.

In chapter two, the focus shall be on the fictions set in pre-Christian Mizo society, where Mizos were depicted as animistic in their primitive setting. I shall also highlight the tell-tale Christian elements showing how the authors' Christian mindset would be seen even in fictions with unchristian theme and setting.

The third chapter, dealing with Mizo fiction with settings of post-Christian period, shall focus on how Christianity has influenced Mizo fiction in the narrative art and characterization; besides Christian impact on the social changes in Mizo community life shall also be depicted.

The fourth chapter shall be dealing with Mizo fictions today. There shall be a shift from normal story telling to the negative and dark side of Mizo

society; social evils among the Mizos and the indirect impact of Christianity shall be explored.

The fifth chapter shall be the Conclusion, where I shall try to summarise all the findings of the previous chapters and to show how Mizo fictions developed subtle changes. I shall also try to show the novelists' treatment of Mizo social life and how the influence of Christianity had been handled in the thoughts of fiction writers.

Notes and References.

1. The Bible : St. Matthews 28:18-20.
2. In the Seminar organized in 1989 by Mizo Lecturers Academy, R. Lallianzuala presented a paper on "*Major Themes in Mizo Novels with special reference to the Prescribed Texts*" edited by Laltluangliana Khiangte. Plus K.C.Vannghaka has contributed an articles to Meichher Magazine on the *Influence of Christianity in Mizo Novels* in June 2003 issue and the *Importance of Novel in Literature* in June 2004 issue.
3. B.Lalthangliana, *Mizo Literature*. Aizawl: RTM Press. 1994. p. 294-306. Here the author highlighted the works of early Novelists, tracing the growth and development of Mizo Novel including the account of the celebration of the Diamond jubilee of Mizo Novels (1936-60)

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND STUDIES

Introduction

The term *Mizo* is a collective name for the people inhabiting Mizoram, possessing one language, same origin and a common way of life. When the introduction of British administration over this land in the late 19th. century, the Mizos were formerly identified as the *Lushais* and the land where they lived was called Lushai Hills. The nomenclature the *Lushai Hills* began to be known far and wide after the British occupation. However, the name of the land, *The Lushai Hills* did not last long. Even during the British Rule, the people, when speaking of themselves did not hesitate to use the word *Mizo* as the identity of their race¹ A desire for change of the nomenclature as to the identity of the people and the land had been voiced louder among the Mizos after the Independence of India; by an Act of Parliament the name Lushai Hills District was changed to Mizo District in April 1954;² and it gained the status of the Union Territory of Mizoram on 21st, January, 1972. It is again given statehood after the agreement was signed between the Government of India and Mizo National Front in June 30, 1986. The land is now politically and popularly known as MIZORAM meaning Mizo land.

I. General environment and Geographical features of Mizoram :

Mizoram is situated between 92°.15 — 93°.29 E Longitude and 21°.58 — 24°.35 N Latitude. The State covers an area of 21,087 Sq. Kms. It lies in the

extreme North Eastern tip of India bordered on the North by Assam, Manipur and on the West by Tripura State and Bangladesh, on the South and East by Myanmar. The population as shown in 2001 census is 8,91,058 and the density of population is 42 per sq.km.³

The territory received an annual rainfall between 2000-3600 mm from both North east and South west monsoon which together conducive range of temperature 20°—30°C during summer and 11° — 21°C in winter.⁴ The rainy season usually starts from the month of May and lasts for four months.

II. Climatic Condition :

The monsoon climate with moderate sunshine, heavy rainfall and high humidity help in a considerably rich growth of bamboos, trees, orchids and thick foliage throughout the land. The entire state is hilly, made up of a series of ranges running from north to south. Thus, except for a few patches of flat land bordering the plains of Cachar and Bangladesh the topography of Mizoram is composed of steep hills and deep gorges. The hills are covered with thick forest composed of tropical plants of various kinds and infested with wild animals.

Mizoram is rich in flora and fauna. The vegetation has a great natural beauty. Almost all the tropical plants are found in abundance. The different species of birds and animals like tiger, leopard, wolf, deer, wildcat, wild mithun, elephant and rhinoceros are also found in large number. At present elephants, rhinoceroses and wild mithuns are rarely found, probably because of a gradual destruction of the bush.⁵

III. Religion :

The old Mizo religion is *monotheism (sic)* but they also believed in the existence of minor gods bearing different name. However, some writers of Mizo history described the traditional religion of Mizo as 'Animism.' McCall also observed that before the occupation of their land by the British, the Lushais were wholly animist, ⁶ and some writers went so far as to suggest that the Mizos have no religion at all. They believed that every big tree, hill, big stone etc. are inhabited by various spirits and storms, bad crops and accident were brought by them.⁷

Such writers ignored any element of theism in the religion, which should be classified as '*primal*' rather than '*animism*.'⁸ Though there was a certain element of truth in these characterisation of Mizo religion, they were by and large, illustrations of the ignorance of those who claimed to have 'advanced' religions about the nature of primal religion.

According to Liangkhaia, the famous Pastor of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, in the heart of Mizo religion, they are not worshipper of demons. In fact, they merely worshipped demons and offered sacrifice to cure their sickness but no longer offer such sacrifices since they used medicine today. In *sakhua* (religion) the Mizo worshipped *Sa* (which is the god worshipped by the ancestor or clan) and *khua* (which is the guardian of the village), it was eventually combined and became *sakhua* (religion). The Mizo worshipped *sa* with castrated pig while *khua* was being worshipped with a mithun.⁹

The Mizos believed in the existence of male supreme God, who was the creator of the universe whom they called *Pathian* who was considered to be supreme power. They thought that he lived somewhere beyond the sky and as such he was called *Chung Pathian* (God on above) or *Pu Vana*, which literally

means Mr. Heaven/Sky, a god of all humanity and goodness. He possessed all authority on every creature but had a little concern with men. He was so kind and gentle that he could not be provoked to anger. As he never ill-treated or tormented human beings, an offer of sacrifices to appease him was unnecessary. He was protector and guardian of men against all dangers and blessed them with fortune. When they were blessed with good fortune they said, '*Ka Pathian a tha*' 'My God is good' and when they were in danger, they uttered '*Pathianin zah a ngai ang chu*' 'May God be merciful upon us.' But when misfortune frequented them they said, '*Kan Pathian thin a ur*' meaning 'God is angry with us.' If a couple enjoyed married life, they said '*Pathian samsuih*' meaning 'God appointed partners.'¹⁰

According to their belief *Pathian* or *Pu Vana* was the creator of all things. He was omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent as well and ruled in heaven and on earth. He lived in heaven from which he clearly saw everything on earth and was never doing any harm to human beings; they therefore conceived the idea that they need not offer sacrifices to him. So, they offered sacrifices very frequently but to the evil spirits which abounded both in the jungles and in the rivers. "Sacrifices were not made to obtain peace with God or redemption as in some religion."¹¹

The Mizos also believed in the existence of subordinate good spirits who caused no harm to them, and they offered sacrifices not to propitiate them but to invoke abundant blessings from them. They believed that these good spirits either lived in heaven or below the earth. These good spirits were identified and given different names in their relation with human beings. For example, *Khuanu* (the synonym for *Pathian*) was the owner of all blessings who took care of man, they said, '*Khuanun hualhim zel che rawh se*' meaning 'May God protect you.' And *Khuavang* (guardian spirit) who was considered to have much more concern with mankind. These good spirits were regarded as

benevolent and they were under direct control of *Pathian*. They also believed that each person was given a good spirit as a protector or a watch called '*Khal*.'

The early Mizos also believed in the existence of evil spirits which were commonly known as '*ramhuai*.' Just as the good spirits, *ramhuai* were identified and were given different names. They thought that these evil spirits tormented human beings and they were the source of all illnesses. Living in poor hygienic conditions and without modern medicine the people of those days suffered from many diseases ranging from ulcerous sores to tuberculosis, malaria and mental disorders. They were convinced that all of these illnesses were caused by angry spirits. So, they called in the *puithiam-Bawlpu* (Priest), who prescribed necessary sacrifice to be offered to appease the angry spirit. It was because of the time and cost expended in seeking cures for illness or reversing misfortune through these procedures that many observers were led to believe that a belief in and the appeasement of the spirit was Mizo religion.¹² Some Mizo historians also said that the early Mizos thought that evil spirits were the source of all illnesses and misfortunes, therefore they worshiped and sacrificed animals thinking that the blood of the animals killed would satisfy and appease these evil spirits.

In contrast to the belief in the existence of the *Huai(s)* or demons, to whom were attributed every illness and misfortune of every description, John Shakespear wrote about the Mizos' common belief in *Pathian* thus :

“Practically all divisions of the Lushai-Kuki family believe in a spirit called *Pathian*, who is supposed to be the creator of everything and is a beneficent being, but has however, little concern with men”¹³

Rev. Edwin Rowlands, who grasped the genius of Mizo character from within also wrote the true religion of Mizo in his report 1899 :

“During the first tour, we witnessed one of the Lushai feasts, in which as they say, they worship their God. They generally sacrifice to demon, of whom they are in great fear, but two or three times in a year they worship their God. Two of these feasts are held, one after cleaning of the land for sowing and the other after the harvest home”¹⁴

The Mizos believed that there were two different types of spirit (*thlarau*), good spirit and bad spirit. Accordingly the Mizos offered sacrifice to these two spirits separately. The sacrifice was performed by two classes of priest, without whom no sacrifice was possible. The functions of the two were laid down. So that in every village, there are two types of priests, *Bawlpw* and *Sadawt*. The *Bawlpw* performed sacrifices to propitiate the evil spirits that caused illness to humans. As early stated the priest felt the pulse of the patient and prescribed a domestic animal to be killed for sacrificial offering for recovery of the sick.

The *Sadawt* was another class of priest whose principal duty was to offer sacrifices to the good spirit called *Pathian* (God). Each clan had its own religious rites and rituals for which they killed a pig where the *Sadawt* had to offer sacrifices to the good spirits. The village chief's *Sadawt* functioned as the official priest and as such was responsible for performing all the religious functions of the whole village community. It was the *sadawt* who sacrificed the full grown hog, the most precious animal of a household, to ensure safety and prosperity for the village. The *Sadawt* also performed the family religious rituals (*sakhaw biakna*). Castrated hogs were required to be kept by every family and the largest of them known as *Vawkpa sutnghak* was set apart for this purpose.¹⁵

The term '*sakhua*' is a compound words, '*sa*' and '*khua*.' Literally, '*sa*' means 'meat' and '*khua*' means 'village' but in the religious terms, '*sa*' stand for the god worshipped by the ancestor or clan and '*khua*' for the guardian of the village or community. *Sa* was worshiped by the clan or family with hog

(*vawkpa sutnghak*) while *khua* was being worshiped with sacrifice of a mithun. While performing the sacrifice, the *sadawt* did the chanting. The one used by the *sadawt* of the Lushei clan as recorded by Liangkhaia serves as example. (Each invocation begins and ends with a long drawn out note. The refrain, “And accepts,.. with castrated pig) is repeated after each line.

To whom my parents’ god, accept my sacrifice with castrated pig.

Arise from *Sakung* and accept my sacrifice.....

To whom *Dara* worshipped, accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *thlan chhak* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *thlan thlang* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *khawlai* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *kawtpui* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *leirut* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *thawh hmun* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *Bualchhum* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *lailawi* and accept my sacrifice

Arise from *chumchilh* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *Zinglai* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *chhuatpho* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *chhuatcheh* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *muallian* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *lenpui* and accept my sacrifice.....

Who hang up the skull of animals at the street has usually chants as follows :

Arise from *Mualchhip* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *mulen* and accept my sacrifice.....

Arise from *fuanthar* and accept my sacrifice.....

and so on. ¹⁶

Here we see that the religion of Mizo was not ‘animism’ but a worship of supreme natural high God.

Apart from the occasional animal sacrifices for worship of God by the family or clan or occasional animal sacrifices to the supposed evil spirits, the Mizos also observed three festivals—*Chapchar Kût* (Spring festival in early March), *Mim kut* (Autumn festival for the deceased, in early September) and *Pawlkut* (Harvest festival in December). These festivals were rather social than religious in their characters.

Mizo also believed the life after death. They believed in the continuance of life beyond the grave either in *Mitthi khua* or *Pialral*. *Mitthi khua* (the village of dead) was the abode of the departed souls of the commoners. On the other side of *Mitthi khua*, beyond *Pial river* was located *Pialral* (the land beyond the *pial* river). *Pialral* was the Paradise of the rich, mighty, brave or skilfull. There everything was luxurious and abundant. Above all there was plenty of husked rice, meat and *zu* in *Pialral*, ready to be cooked. It was the *Thangchhuah* (title of a specially distinguished man) alone who qualified for access to *Pialral*. This title would be achieved in two ways.

One way was to give a series of public feasts, five or six time for the villagers. The feasts were actually provided through the sacrifices of various domestic animals, in a prescribed order as given below :

- 1) *Sakung Phun*
- 2) *Chawng*
- 3) *Sechhun* (or *sedawi*)
- 4) *Mitthi rawp lam*
- 5) *Sechhun* (or *sedawi* again)
- 6) *Khuangchawi*
- 7) *Zawhzazo* (one who completed everything)

This *Thangchhuah* title is known as *In lama Thangchhuah* (Completing all-fame at Home).

Mizos believed that when they give feasts, *Pathian* that resided in the sky would be pleased. Similarly, the practice of carrying about the effigies of their ancestors in the *mitthi rawplam* is supposed to be acceptable to the spirit of the departed.¹⁷

The other way of *Thangchhuah* can be achieved by killing one each of the following species of animals—barking deer, bear, wild boar, wild mithun and elephant. Though these were considered sufficient one would again receive greater honour if one also killed a Viper (*Rulngan*), a flying lemur (*vahluk*) and a species of eagle—*Muvanlai*. This *Thangchhuah* is called *Ramlama Thangchhuah* (completing all-fame in Jungle). The difficulty in achieving this title lay in the fact that most of animals that had to be killed are ferocious and one had to kill at least one each. Killing a large number of one species does not count for *Thangchhuah*.¹⁸

When one attained the status of *In lama Thangchhuah*, this not only assured a man of safe passage to *Pialral*, but at the same time it gave him a position of honour and respect in their present life. He was entitled to make a window in the side wall of his house, build an enclosed back verandah and proudly wear *Thangchhuah Puan* (a special shawl) together with a special headgear called *diartial*, all these symbolized a special position in the society. Eternal life thus began on earth. At the same time, there were some points of difference of *Ramlama Thangchhuah* from *Inlama Thangchhuah*. They are :

- 1) The former need not follow the custom of buying the ground from the chief;

- 2) He could neither open window in the house nor make shelves in the house.
- 3) It did not entitle the person to wear the *Thangchhuah puan*¹⁹

Pialral was now, anyhow, the abode for both kinds of *Thangchhuah*; when they died their spirit will go to *Pialral*. The cruel *Pu Pawla* and his wife *Sanu* hid in terror as *Thangchhuah* went by, especially from *Ramlama Thangchhuah* for he would be escorted by the wild animals he had killed.²⁰

The Mizos also believed that when a man died, the soul escapes through the cracks at the top of skull of the deceased and wanders in the village. The soul begins its journey to *Mitthi Khua* only after three months was over. On the way the soul first comes across the *Rih* lake and then proceeded onwards to a high hill called *Hringlang tlang* from where it could see the world of living, and a feeling of longing for living relatives and friends arouse. Then it comes to the other side of the hill to a little stream where the *Hawilopar* (flower of no return) bloomed. He would pluck the bud, put in his hair and this would greatly subside their desire to return to the living world. Then he drinks water from the stream called *Lungloh Tui* (heartless water) and would then lose even the recollection of the world. After this he proceeds swiftly but only to be confronted by the dreaded *Mr Pawla*, who guarded the narrow gates where all the seven paths from the world of the living converged.

Pawla would then rush out with his pellet bow in hand and shoot with such precision that he never missed his prey. The egg-sized pellet struck with such a great force that it would cause painful tumours which take at least three years to be healed. From *Mr Pawla*'s yard one path led some spirits to ordinary *mitthi khua* where they would live even after doing all the painful labour for a living as they did when they were alive on earth. Those souls of *Thangchhuah*

would enter *Pialral* and would be bestowed there with all the choicest food and cherished pleasures.²¹

From the above discussion, this section may thus be concluded that the Mizos had ‘animistic’ elements in their lives, but worship of or reverence for the spirit was not present. Therefore, the activities in relation to the ‘*huais*’ was not, strictly speaking, religious. Liangkhaia was correct in saying that the Mizos never worshipped demon (*huais*).²²

Evil spirits : The Mizos also believed in the existence of numerous malignant evil spirits who were believed to cause all human misery, sufferings and misfortunes. The evil spirits were: *Phung, Khawhring, Tlanglal, Khawmu, Pheichham, Tulum, Tuihuai, chawm, Huai, Phungkur, Hmuithla* and *Lasi*. The *Lasi* seemed to be only concerned with animals, over which they were believed to possess sole authority, and some hunters who were possessed by *Lasi* were known as ‘*Lasi zawl*, and they were excessively successful hunters.’ Till recent years the *Lasi zawl* were found practically among the Mizos.²³

IV. **Social Values of Mizo Society.**

The Mizos had always valued feelings like brotherhood, compassion, sympathy, altruism and *Tlawmngaihna*. *Tlawmngaihna* is a Mizo code of conduct that marked selflessness, othermindedness, or service to others. Honesty, courage, self-discipline were in fact largely summed up in the untranslatable word, ‘*tlawmngaihna*.’ This virtue was-and-is highly prized and had certain elements in common with courtesy and chivalry. Commenting on *tlawmngaihna*, J.M. Lloyd observed,

“*Tlawmngaihna* is the Mizo code of morals and good form. One cannot, for example, be regarded as *Tlawmngai* unless one is courteous,

considerate, helpful, unselfish, courageous, industrious and ready to help others even at considerable inconvenience to himself. A *tlawmngai* man or woman will always try to ensure that he or she does not stand in need of help from others; and will try to surpass others in doing his or her ordinary daily tasks efficiently. We thus see that *tlawmngaihna* embraces various types of activities and manifests itself in various forms which can be summed up as ‘Group over self’ wherein self-sacrifice for the need of others is the spontaneous outcome. A man who practices to precepts of *tlawmngaihna* is highly respected.”²⁴

In Mizo society, *tlawmngaihna* is a rule for good works and the basic guiding principles of the Mizo society, but it is not like other moral code of conduct enforced by strong communities which can be intimidating and compelling force in the life.

Next to *Tlawmngaihna*, *pasaltha*, bravery in a young man in war or hunting was highly valued by the elders in the society. This is clearly indicated in our Mizo fictions whose settings were of pre-Christianity era. The early Mizos were hunting and war-like people, they had to occasionally fight to protect their village against external aggression from a neighbouring village and the attack from wild-animals, tiger etc., the young men of a village needed to remain alert to fighting as and when such situation arise. Whenever a male child was born in a village, the elders would bless him to be brave so as to be able to kill an elephant, and other wild animal.²⁵ The life of *Pasaltha* as we read from the stories of *Chhingpuii* and *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, was adventurous in exploring the jungle, ready to face any kind of suffering. They had the patience to endure all difficulties right till the end of their life. They were the true heroes of the society.

Besides, in the early Mizo society, holding honesty is highly esteemed. Theft was very rare in the Mizo society. It was shameful to steal anybody’s property or goods. A descent and courteous behaviour with others was what was

considered valuable for everyone- young and old, men and women. Showing reverence to elders was one among the many acts of decency which the children were required to learn.

V. The Advent of British in Mizoram :

Before the British occupation of their land in 1890, the Mizos were known outside world as daring head-hunters whose periodic raids was a source of terror to their more peaceful neighbours in the low hills and plain of Assam and Eastern Bengal. Being such head hunters, as known to the outside world, the Mizos conducted periodic raids upon their neighbouring settlers. They also raided Alexandrapore Tea Estate, Cachar District, Assam on 23.1.1871; they killed James Winchester and took his daughter Mary Winchester, the six years old girl as a captive. The British expedition party recovered her in 1872 and the offenders in the previous Cachar raids were also punished.²⁶

The Mizos repeated their raids on the British Territory and killed a number of persons and they took away many captives. The British Government sent a bigger scale expedition from Northern and Southern regions. The Northern force of the expedition was under the command of Col. C.J. Skin and the Southern column was led by Colonel V.W. Tregear.²⁷ The combined force consisted of 6871 men not counting the police column supporting each group. The operation began in November 1889 and was successfully concluded five months latter in March 1890. The British Administration was introduced henceforth.

The land was divided into two - Northern and Southern Lushai Hills. Southern part was placed under the Bengal province with C.S. Murray of Bengal Police as the first Superintendent with his headquarters at Lunglei. The Northern part was put under the administrative jurisdiction of Assam with

Captain H.R. Browne as the Political Officer, with Aizawl as his headquarters.²⁸ Administration was from this period being slowly consolidated. A Conference was held at Calcutta in 1893 at which it was proposed that the North Lushai Hills of the Government of Assam and the South Lushai Hills of the Government of Bengal should be amalgamated as one district; and this proposal has materialised in 1.4.1898.²⁹ On this same day another proclamation by the Assam Government placed the amalgamated Lushai Hills under the charge of an Officer designated Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District. At the same time Major John Shakespear was appointed the Superintendent and was posted at Aizawl, which remained the headquarters of the District. Lunglei in the south became a Sub-Divisional headquarters.³⁰

VI. Arrival of Christian Missionary

The first missionary to visit Mizoram was Rev. William Williams, a Welsh missionary to the Khasi in 1891. Amidst imaginable hardships, he left Shella, Khasi Hills on Feb.15, 1891 and arrived Aizawl on March 20,1891 and remained there till 17th April. He reported that he spent most of his short stay in Aizawl among the Mizos, observing their way of life and trying to pick-up their language. He distributed Bible pictures and he thought that the Mizos seemed to know God already when he tried, in his very limited capacity, to tell them about God. He also preached to the Khasi labourers in their language. He was therefore the first to preach to the Mizos about the Christian God.³¹

He sent an urgent appeal to the Home Board of his Mission in Liverpool asking that they undertake a mission among the Mizos at the earliest possible time. He also offered his own services, expressing his strong desire to go there to teach them the Gospel.³² The General Assembly also decided to adopt the

Lushai Hills as a Mission field. Unfortunately a few months after he returned to Shella, he died of typhoid ³³ that led to a delay in implementing the plan.

While the Calvinistic Methodist, later called the Presbyterian Church of Wales, planned to send Missionaries to Mizoram and waited for suitable persons, two Arthington Missionaries, J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge came to Mizoram on Jan.11, 1894. During their four years of stay, they reduced the Mizo language to a written form, they taught a number of Mizos to read and write and they translated the Gospel of Luke, of John and the Book of Acts into Mizo language. They also prepared a Mizo grammar, a dictionary and a number of small books and a catechism. The first alphabet they prepared was as follows:

AW A B D E F G H I J (chei) K L M
N O P R S T T (thraw) U V Z CH (chaw) ³⁴

It was greatly blessing for the Mizos that the arrival of Missionaries was the exactly right time as the British Government, for its own convenience, was intending to impose the Bengali language on the Mizos as a court language. ³⁵ Even before their arrival one Bengali clerk had taught them the Bengali alphabets which they found very difficult to acquire. ³⁶

The pioneer missionaries started the school on 1.4.1894 with two students, Suaka and Thangphunga from whom the Missionaries had learnt Mizo language. The school was held from 9-11 a.m. everyday. Soon after, Khamliana Sailo the chief of Lungleng also joined the school and those who had attended the school taught their friends at home what they had learnt, thus desire for learning to read and write quickly spread among the young men.

After the pioneer work had been done, Arthington Missionaries were to move on, leaving the field to other missions. Such an understanding was reached with the Welsh Mission, then the General Assembly appointed Rev. D.E. Jones as a Missionary in May 1897, subsequently he was ordained and sent out.

D.E. Jones received a warm welcome and great help from Lorrain and Savidge; and four months of their staying together with him were of considerable benefit. Jones began the work of language study, learning 90 words everyday for four months.³⁷ After the pioneer missionaries departed, Jones was soon joined by another Welsh Missionary, Edwin Rowlands. They were assisted by Rai Bhajur, a Khasi Presbyterian who gave up his job as Sub. Inspector of School in Khasi Hills.³⁸ The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram which they planted, became the biggest denominational Church in Mizoram.

In 1903, the Baptist Missionary Society, after making an agreement with the Calvinistic Methodist, sent the former Arthington Missionaries, J.H.Lorrain and F.W. Savidge to Southern Mizoram. They planted the Baptist Church of Mizoram, which became the second largest denominational Church in Mizoram. R.A. Lorrain, the brother of J.H. Lorrain started works among the Lakher (Mara) sometime after 1910 as a Missionary of the Lakher Pioneer Mission, an independent Mission agency. He planted Mara Independent Church.³⁹ These three Missions pioneered the mission work in the virgin field of Mizoram.

There are other denominational Churches with connection outside of Mizoram, such as the Salvation Army (1921), the Roman Catholic (1925), the Seventh Day Adventist (1941) and the United Penticostal Church (1949). These

Churches were started by Mizo Christian dissidents but soon connected with their kind outside of Mizoram. Apart from these, there are several scores of churches, which are breaking away, mostly from the Presbyterian and Baptist Churches.⁴⁰ Thus these Churches did not make any significant contributions to the over-all growth of Christianity in Mizoram. That growth was mainly through the works of the three pioneering Churches.

VII. Impacts of Christianity in Mizo Society.

After the pioneering missionaries had worked very hard for five years, the first Mizo converts to Christianity, namely *Khuma* and *Khara* were baptised on 25.6.1899. Unfortunately, *Khara* who secured a job in the Government later reverted to his old faith. On the other hand, *Khuma* usually visited every house in whatever strange village he had arrived at, before sitting down to meal, he always asked one simple question, “*Have you accepted the Gospel?*” and requested them to become Christians saying “*Believe in Jesus Christ.*” The power of God won the hearts of the hearers. The active participation of the early Christians was one of the reasons for the rapid growth of Church in Mizoram; ⁴¹ within period of less than a half of century all of them became Christians.

The impacts of Christianity on the Mizos have been numerable and favourable. As already mentioned earlier, the Mizos had always valued-feeling, brotherhood, compassion, sympathy and altruism. As Christianity also preaches the same, religion did not bring any major change in their value pattern. But Christianity brought a sea change in the traditional socio -religious practices of the Mizos. Of the three festivals mentioned earlier, only *Chapchar Kut* is still observed today, the functions were organised by the State Government with the collaboration of Young Mizo Association (YMA), as a festival of the gaiety-and-merriment and cultural shows sans the drinking of zu (rice beer), which is

considered unchristian. The other two festivals, *Mimkut* and *Pawlkut* were no longer observed. Traditional religion has now completely disappeared. Christianity banned 'pagan' ceremonies, *zu*, fornication, adultery, divorce and polygamy.

In place of paganism, the Christians introduced the corporate worship services, Sunday School, the celebration of festivals such as Christmas, New Year, Good Friday, Easter Sunday etc. Beside, the rites of baptism, the Lord's Supper and observance of Sunday are introduced by the Christians. Sometimes a family makes a feast for praising of God by killing some animals and inviting the community, which may be said to have replaced the *Thangchhuah* feasts. Christian songs, in the beginning composed or translated by Missionaries, then composed by Mizos using European tunes and Khasi tunes, and finally composed using modified traditional tunes replaced the old Mizo songs. The new songs were sung at worship services, festivals, marriage and funerals. All non-christian religious chants have disappeared. The nature of village social gatherings thus underwent marked change with the influence of Christianity.

Christianity has also almost totally shaken most of their old beliefs. As a proof of genuine conversion, they threw away all sacrificial pots, *kelmei* (goat's tail) charms after being convinced that Jesus had conquered all evil spirits and that there was no danger from them if one had accepted Christ. Christianity has also brought to them an altogether new concept of sin, of hell, of fear of damnation in eternal hell-fire for sinner or unbeliever, and of the idea that once one was a Christian, there was no fear of hell because they had been saved by Jesus Christ.

The extinction of *Zawlbuk* was one of the impacts of Christianity. The early missionaries found the *Zawlbuk* system 'advantageous' for mission work, and instead of criticizing it they made use of it as providing preaching places.

But when most of the Mizos became Christian, they began to frown upon many of the practices associated with *Zawlbuk*. The formal education introduced through establishment of schools and missionary activities for the general welfare of the people slowly eroded the importance of *Zawlbuk*. Besides, new churches and schools sprang up everywhere and the Christian leaders were looked upon with enhanced confidence. Pastors and elder and teachers began to openly express the opinion that, “village children could not study their books, except in their homes, or that the parents could control their children better if kept under their care instead of the *Zawlbuk*.”⁴² The influences of Pastors and teachers have caused the disuse of *Zawlbuk* that makes a problem for the Chief to compel his villagers for maintenance of *Zawlbuk* which they did not intend to use again.

N.E. Parry, the new Superintendent of Lushai Hills, was convinced by the Mizo chiefs on the importance and usefulness of *Zawlbuk*, he issued an executive order in about 1926 to rebuild *Zawlbuk* in every village, this was backed by the chiefs, but it was not with much success. The fast spread of education made it increasingly difficult to maintain them. The children found less time to collect firewood for the *Zawlbuk*. The responsibility of running the institution was laid upon the older boys, but they found themselves less capable as many of them had gone in for school education in other villages. In addition, the growth of Christian concept of family life and parental responsibility created too strong a wave of public opinion against the institution of *Zawlbuk*; this also once again deteriorated the institution. At last the institution of *Zawlbuk* and chieftainship was abolished by an Act of the Government of Assam in 1954.⁴³

The teaching of Christianity also brought new ideas on pre-marital sexual intercourse, seduction, adultery and elopement, which were considered both serious and spiritual sins for both sexes. The marriage become more stable,

seduction and adultery became very rare among the Christians. The marriage ceremonies and the system of bride prices were modified. Owing to the Mizos' adoption of Christianity, the marriage system in the Mizo society has undergone a change in the form of compromise between the indigenous process and Christian method. In the Mizo-Christian marriage system, many indigenous practices have been replaced, many are still preserved, and many new things have been added.

Now a Mizo marriage is conducted in the Church by the Pastor or specially designated Church Elder and the marriage tie is treated as permanent, intrinsic bond between a man and woman which never dissolves. Besides, the practices of consuming intoxicating drink (*zu*) which was a common item in the celebration of Mizos in the past, has been abolished and in its place tea and bread are introduced. A wealthy family also makes feasts for the celebration of marriage. In wedding-dress too, modification has taken place, "one good thing which Christian brought to the Mizos regarding marriage is the giving of presents both in kind and in cash on the day of marriage. This is surely the result of the practice of the missionaries who started giving presents to the newly couples."⁴⁴

Leaving aside all those problems brought about by the changes in Mizoram, what Christianity did to the Mizos is of fundamental importance. Christianity gave them new dimension, their attitude to life and value changed. They found new identity in Christian ideals. The philosophy of their whole being was transformed.⁴⁵ This is something they found difficult to explain except in saying with nostalgia:

We live once in the dark and now,
We are living in the light.⁴⁶

VIII. Introduction of Literature :

Before the advent of Missionaries, the Mizos did not have any written literature. The elders said, “We used to have a book once upon a time, it was made of leather, but it was left in the big wooden mortar (used for pounding rice) overnight, and a dog ate it all up.”⁴⁷ The arrival of the pioneer missionaries was at the exactly right time as the British Government, for its own convenience was intending to impose the Bengali language on the Mizos as a court language. Had that materialised, it might have meant the dying out of Mizo language.⁴⁸ Thus they gave to the Mizo people the supreme gift of written language and a literature and this prevented the adoption of Bengali as the trade and court language for the Mizos.

The two pioneering missionaries, Lorrain and Savidge worked hard to learn and they reduced the language to writing and they left us valuable documents. During their first four years stay in Mizoram (1894-97), they prepared Mizo alphabet and produced a series of books which were the first in their respective fields. First they wrote *Zirtanbu* (Lushai Primer) and then *Zawhna leh Chhanna Bu* (Question and answer book) in 1896. These school text Books were the first works of Missionaries in the Lushai Hills.⁴⁹

They also translated the Bible, Gospel of St. Luke followed by Gospel of St. John and then the Acts of the Apostles. The two Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1898 and 1899 respectively. Lorrain also prepared Grammar and Dictionary of the Lushai language and it was published by the Assam Government in 1898. About this time, the first Newspaper in Mizo language, ‘*Mizo Chanchin Laishuih*’ was published. The first monthly magazine – *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin Lehkhabu* was published from November, 1902 by J. Shakespear, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills in Aizawl.⁵⁰

The first Christian Hymn Book (*Kristian Hlabu*) containing 18 hymns was published by missionaries in the year 1899. The hymn number one, “*Isu vana a om a*” happened to be the first hymn ever composed in the Mizo language which was jointly arranged by Lorrain and Savidge.⁵¹

The Welsh Missionaries, namely Zosaphluia and Zosaphara also had taken up the difficult task of teaching, preaching, translating, composing and compiling books. They found that the publication of Christian literature helped them to convey the message of Gospel to the Mizos. So with the help of some Khasi Christians who were working in the Government offices and the first Mizo literate, the missionaries could produce a number of literatures within a short period of time. Besides, a school text book called, *Zirtanbu Thar* (New Primer) was compiled in 1899. It contains moral and religious lessons and some articles on general knowledge.

Zosaphara was assigned teaching works alongwith other engagement. In 1902, he introduced two text books in Mizo language. They are *Thu Ro Bu* (New Reader) and *Hriselna Bu* (Sanitation Primer) for the students.

These primers were better than the earlier ones in language. Other school books written by Zosaphara was *Chhiarkawpna* (Arithmetic) the first for Mizo, *Khawvel Thu* (Geography), *Khawmualpui Thu* (Continents and Oceans), *Hma Bu* (first primer), Grammatical Primer, *India Ram Chanchin* (Indian History), *A Laibu* (Middle Book), English Primer (in Mizo), English Reader into Mizo (translation book).⁵²

The pioneer missionaries also started Sunday School around Oct. 1895. It was held at Aizawl under the leadership of F.W.Savidge during the pioneering days. It has been a centre for learning from the beginning to the present days, it occupies an important place in the development of literature in Mizoram.

Whenever a Mizo was converted to Christianity, he was taught alphabet, reading and writing in the Sunday school in addition to the scripture lesson prepared by the Missionaries. There was no day school in every village. In a village having no day school, the Sunday school was the best place where the young and old people learnt to read and write in addition to the scripture lessons. As a result, the growth of percentage of literacy in Mizoram became more rapid than in other parts of India.

The Welsh Missionaries were also continuing this Sunday School; Edwin Rowlands wrote a commentary on the Parables from the notes originally given to Upper classes in Aizawl; and D.E. Jones prepared a Reader, more specifically designed for Sunday School, using passages of scripture only.

The two Welsh missionaries began the Bible translation works with the help of Mizo Christian like Chhunruma and Vanchhunga. D.E. Jones translated St. Matthew's (published in 1906), I & II Corinthians (1907), Book of Revelation (1911) after his return from furlough (1907-08). In the same year, Edwin Rowlands translated Colossians and Philemon. With the help of others, they completed the translation of the whole New Testament in 1914 and it was published in 1916.⁵³

Following the publication of various text Books for the school as well as Sunday School and of Bible in Mizo, a good number of translated Christian Hymns were published. The thirst of newly literate persons for more literature to read was nursed with the publication of the Bible Story (*Pathian Lehkhabu Chanchin*) translated by Rev. Challiana and the Mizo version, of 'The Pilgrim's Progress' (*Kristian Vanram Kawngzawh*) by the Rev. Chuaatera in 1910 which remained two of the most readable books, apart from the Bible among the Mizo literates for a long time.

With the rapid progress of education among the Mizos during 1894-1910, there was never enough to satisfy the growing appetite for reading because there was no printing press in Mizoram. A press set up in Aizawl became a logical necessity. Early in 1911, the new Missionary, Dr. Peter Frazer brought to Aizawl a small hand press (only a size of armchair). It was probably the first press ever seen within Mizoram.⁵⁴ The installation of this press solved, to some extent, the supply deficiency and gave a great fillip to the popularisation of education. However, in any case, it was a private property and Frazer took it away with him when he left Mizoram in 1912. The loss of press was a blow to Welsh Missionaries' hope. Having learnt the necessity of Printing Press, Col. G.H. Loch, the Local Commandant donated a foot-treadle press to the Welsh Mission in 1915, the total cost of Press and type was Pound 100 (Rs. 1300/- in 1914 exchange rate). The little press was named Loch Press in honour of its donor.⁵⁵ Scores of editions of books were published over the years and brought flowering of the Mizo literature. All in all it was a remarkable achievement.

At the time of the arrival of Dr. Frazer, the first monthly Church magazine called the '*Krista Tlangau*' (Herald of Christ) was published and the magazine first saw the light in October 1911. The name of the Magazine, which Frazer gave is significant. Every Mizo village had its '*Tlangau*' or village crier. He was one of the village officials and whenever a chief wanted to make an announcement or send out a command to the villagers, he would despatch the *Tlangau* to announce it. Everyone knew that the *Tlangau* did not speak in his own name but on behalf of his chief. The new magazine was called the '*Krista Tlangau*.'⁵⁶

The *Krista Tlangau* was soon renamed, '*Kristian Tlangau*' (Christian Herald) and as such has remained as a monthly Mizo Christian magazine (usually 32 pages), produced without break since 1911, and with increasing circulation upto the present. This magazine is appreciated by the new Mizo

literates with all their heart, and the first group of literates took very keen interest for the development of Christian literature and prose writings. Though *Christian Herald* was a journal of the Presbyterian Church, it maintains its independence and a notable features of its history was that it has never been subsidised from outside, a record that every Church magazine any where could emulate.⁵⁷

The contribution of Missionaries and the Churches like Presbyterian and Baptist towards the development of Mizo literature cannot be over-emphasized. They did not only provide the printed materials, but opened their eyes to wider horizon to the world of literature. Thus, they gave to the Mizo people the supreme gift of written language and provided a common linguistic medium and unity to a particular community.

IX. Origin and Development of Mizo fictions :

Before the day the *Duhlian* (Mizo) dialect was reduced into writing in the Roman script, (now called Mizo language) the early Mizos have folk literature - folk songs and folk stories. Among the folk stories, the legend of *Chhura*, the story of *Liandova* and *Tuaisiala* (orphans triumphant by virtue), the romances of *Hrangchhuana* and *Chawngmawii*, *Chala* and *Thangi*, *Raldawna* and *Tumchhingi* etc, were masterpieces of plot and realism. The telling of legends and stories were the central focus of the social life of the early Mizos.

The Christian missionaries who first came to Mizoram happened to be good linguists and their pioneering works on the language and literature helped to put on a sound footing. The new literates, then lovers of stories used to read the hand written copies of translated novels. Higher education and readings in great literature fostered a new dream. A new stream of prose writing flowed from the minds of educated young men who felt a new calling, or altruistic

enthusiasts who desired to build a new society with the conformity of Christian life.

Following their dream, the first Mizo novel, *Hawilopari* was written by L. Biakliana (1918-41) in the year 1936, followed by a short story called *Lali* in 1937. The author L.Biakliana was the eldest son of Rev. Liangkhaia, a prominent Pastor of the then Mizoram Presbyterian Church and a Mizo historian, and his mother's name was Ngurchhuani. Biakliana was born on Aug. 26, 1918 at Mission Veng, Aizawl. He was a bright student, in 1936, he passed the examination of matriculation in the first Division. In the same year, he joined the Cotton College at Gauhati for Intermediate of Arts (I.A.) course, which he completed in 1937.

While he studied the I.A course, he stayed with his intimate friend Zairema (now known as Rev. Dr. Zairema), they were interested in literature and in 1936, L.Biakliana wrote and completed his first fictional story- *Hawilopari*. Mr. Khuangruma, now living at 'Tumchhung' Madanriting, Shillong⁵⁸ a close and intimate friend of Biakliana, also claimed that they had read the manuscript copy of *Hawilopari* written by L.Biakliana in the month of November 1936 just before their marriage. We can therefore claim that *Hawilopari* is the first Mizo novel and the history of Mizo novel started from the year 1936. The same novelist Biakliana wrote another short story called *Lali*, the second Mizo novel in the year 1937. The two novels could not get printed due to lack of Printing Press. In 1977, *Hawilopari* got cyclostyled and few copies were made. It is only in 1983, that the novel got printed when it was selected as one of the textbooks for Pre-University Course under NEHU.⁵⁹

Unfortunately, L.Biakliana had been suffering from a dreaded disease known as Tuberculosis (T.B.); he was hospitalised in the Presbyterian Church

Hospital, Durtlang in 17th Sept., 1937. Rev. E.L. Mendus, the then Welsh Missionary to Mizoram, sent L.Biakliana to Cherra Theological College to study L.Th. in 1941 after he recovered from his illness. Unfortunately there he relapsed in the same disease and he was admitted into Robert Hospital, Shillong. He died there on the 19th Oct., 1941 and was buried in the hospital compound.⁶⁰

The third Mizo novel, *Chhingpuii*, a romantic tragedy was written by Kaphleia in 1939, the first published copy appeared in the year 1963.⁶¹ The author Kaphleia, son of Chhingvunga and Chuailovi, was born on the 1st Oct., 1910 at Thiak Village. He was a bright student and completed his matriculation from Govt. High School, Shillong in 1935. He then joined I.A. Course at Scottish Church College, Calcutta and completed it in the year 1937. Unfortunately, like L.Biakliana, he suffered from the dreadful disease T.B. He had been hospitalised at W.M. Hospital, Shillong on Aug. 12, 1937, he was released and sent home on Aug. 19, 1937. He was admitted to the Presbyterian Church Hospital, Durtlang on Sept. 17, 1937 and he stayed with his intimate friend Biakliana. He died on Nov.13, 1940.⁶²

The two pioneer novelists prepared and published weekly news namely *Chhura Chanchin* with the permission of Hospital authorities while in hospital. Probably this was the first Mizo newspaper privately published. While he was in hospital, Kaphleia wrote a fiction called *Chhingpuii*. He recorded in his diary in the year 1938: “*Pu Zika visited me and we discussed about the story of Chhingpuii and Lianphunga*” (4th Oct.) “*I started the writing work of the story of Chhingpuii*” (26th Oct.) “*I started the fair copy of Chhingpuii*” (21st Nov.). Then he completed the writing work of *Chhingpuii* on 11th April, 1939.⁶³ Kaphleia also wrote a number of essays and articles such as, *Thlirtu*, *Ui*, *Kurtai* and he composed several songs.

Chronologically speaking, these three novels, viz. *Hawilopari* and *Lali* by L.Biakliana and *Chhingpuii* by Kaphleia were the only novels written before 1940, though they were posthumously published.

The ghostly fiction, *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* was written by Lalzuithanga, son of Chawngnuaia. He was a romantic tragedian born on April 16, 1916 and died on the 28th Sept., 1950. Lalzuithanga passed Class-VIII of Middle English, the highest class at that time in Mizoram. He had a wide experience of works. Lalzuithanga also wrote another ghostly fiction called *Thlahrang* and a number of other short stories, namely, *Aukhawk Lasi*, *Khawfing Chat*, *Eng dan nge ni*, *Engnge Pawi?* These were already printed in a book - form. His unpublished stories included *Ka damchhung leihlawn chanve*, *Tuma hriat loh tur*, *Chawngi*, *Min hriatreng nan*, *Tu thiam loh nge?* *Khawmu chawi*, *Kawla tlan zel rawh*, *Char huai i hlau lawm ni?* *Rina lohva ui buk sa* and *Hrangkhupa khua*.⁶⁴ His drama, *The Black Corner of Aijal town in 1999*, written in 1940 was staged by the Kulikawn Young Lushai Association and it won the second prize in the first Drama Competition of Zosiami Cup organised by Rev. Samuel Davies.

Capt. C. Khuma (Challiankhuma) an Army Officer serving in Burma wrote the tragic love story called *Maymyo Sanapui* in 1946. It was published by the Burma Lushai Association in 1950.⁶⁵ This tragedy was perhaps the first Mizo fiction ever printed and published outside Mizoram. The author has also written other short stories like, *Hmangaih thiamna*, *Fahrah nun*, *Phu loh Zunleng* and *Chhingkhual Lungdi*.

Lalsiama, Driving Instructor of Assam Regiment also wrote his novel - *Tlangthangi leh Lianhnuna* in 1947 while he worked at Tura, Garo Hills. He also wrote another story- *Lalruati leh Tlanzara* in 1970 but it still remained unpublished.⁶⁶

One of the most popular novels amongst the Mizo called *Thla Hleinga Zan* was written by James Dokhuma, son of Hrangchina and Kapkungi. He was born on 15.6.1932. James Dokhuma is one of the best Mizo writers. He has written a number of fictions, viz. *Good Bye to Lushai Brigade*, *Rinawmin*, *Irrawaday Luikamah*, *Tumpangchal nge Saithangpuii*, *Hmangaihna Thuchah*, *Kymoto Synora*, *Khawhar In*, *Silaimu ngaihawm* etc. and other books.⁶⁷ He wrote *Thla Hleinga Zan* in 1969 inside Nowgong Special Jail while he was imprisoned as Security prisoner and he completed it in 1970 after being transferred to Gauhati District Jail. The novel was printed in 1977 and it was selected as one of the Text books for B.A. Course in Mizo under NEHU. James Dokhuma was awarded Padma Shri on literature by President of India in 1985.⁶⁸

In 1977, Khawlkungi wrote the Christian love story called *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* in the love story writing competition organised by Central Kristian Thalai Pawl, Aizawl and the story got first prize. Khawlkungi, the daughter of H. Chhuma and Kaii, was born on Sept. 14, 1927. She also wrote a number of other stories like *A Tlai lutuk ta*, *Sangi Rinawmna*, *Fahrah Nun*, *Pasal Duhthlan* etc. and other dramas. However, *Zawlpala Thlantlang* is her best work.⁶⁹

Here one may say that Mizo women had distinguished themselves as poets and novelists. With greater opportunities of education in the late 20th century, it was inevitable that more and more women had competed with men in the popular field of literature. Khawlkungi is also one of the greatest names in the Mizo literature. She was awarded Padma Shri on literature by the President of India in 1987.⁷⁰

Noted Novelist K.C. Lalvunga, known as Zikpuii-pa, an Indian Foreign Service officer, a former Indian Ambassador to different countries, also wrote a

novels like *C.C.Coy No. 27* (first person formed novel), *Silvarthangi*, *Hostel Awmtu*, *Kraws bulah chuan* and *Nunna Kawng Thuampuih*. *Nunna Kawng Thuampuih* is another first person formed novel written by Zikpuii-pa and it was published in 1989.⁷¹ Zikpuii-pa (K.C.Lalvunga) was the son of a famous Mizo poet Hrawva Kiangte, chief of Aizawl in the pre-Independent period. Zikpuii-pa was a well-known essayist and poet, he wrote a number of essays and he composed several songs.

After 1980, a number of fictional works appeared, Lalengmawia Ralte wrote about seven fictions, and C. Laizawna also wrote more than ten (10) novels. One of his novels called *Hmangaihzuali* was selected by the Mizo Academy of Letters as the Book of the Year in 1990.⁷² And even after 1990 to 1996, there were a number of novels appeared like *Khualzin Nula* by Lalhriata, (*Khualzin Nula* was selected for the second Book of the Year 1996, selected by the Mizo Academy of Letters.) *Ram leh I tan chauh* and *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* by Dr. H. Lallungmuana, (*Ram leh I tan Chauh* was also selected by the Mizo Academy of Letters as the Book of the Year in 1995.)⁷³ *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* by Zothansangi-pa (B. Pawlthanga), *Hlim Ni Kawl eng ve tak ang maw?* by H.P.Lalremtluanga etc.

These novels are more complex, frank and intimate in dealing with the Mizo society than their predecessors. At the sametime, a careful study of all these novels has reflected no other religion but Christianity. The main reason of the influence of Christianity is the high percentage of Christians among the Mizos, nearly 100%. Anyhow, more than 100 novels were published during the sixty (60) years (1936-1996).(see Appendix I) Now our main task will be to examine how Christianity has influenced our novels, and these will be analysed in relevant chapters.

To conclude this chapter, the introduction of British rule and arrival of Christian Missionaries in the hills had brought about remarkable changes in the social and cultural life of the people within a short period of time. The sincere effort of missionaries made it possible to convert the Mizos, all the religious ceremonies and animistic rites into Christianity to the extent of more than 96 percent within a life time of one generation. On the pattern of western culture the Mizo society has had converted into a Christian oriented society. Under the influence of Christianity, the custom and faiths like, head-hunting, Bawship, Zawlbuk system, belief of good and evil spirit, necessity of Thangchhuah for attaining Pialral etc. totally disappeared. Socially speaking, Christianity had brought so much to the Mizos, they gained education, modern way of life, western culture etc. and it had given them a new identity as tribe, which united them into one strong nation or tribe.

* * *

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CHAPTER - II

SETTING MIZOFICTION: PRE-CHRISTIANITY ERA

Introduction

In this chapter, it is proposed to examine the Mizo novels whose setting was of pre-Christianity Era and how the novels reflected the Mizo society in olden days, and how Christianity influenced the writer of these novels.

Amongst the Mizo fictions, there are three (3) novels whose settings reflected the pre-Christianity era, viz, *Hawilopari* written by L.Biakliana, *Chhingpuii* written by Kaphleia, and *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* written by Lalzuithanga. Each of these three novels was a kind of love story with the historical background of pre-Christianity era. These novels have reflected the social life of the Mizos in olden days, like the village administration, their social values, economic life, their superstition, and inter-village war and raids, etc.

Hawilopari is the first ever Mizo novels in written form. The author L.Biakliana was the eldest son of Rev. Liangkhaia, a famous and prominent Pastor of Mizoram Presbyterian Church and a Mizo historian. As already stated in the previous chapter, Biakliana wrote his *Hawilopari* in 1936 while he studied I.A. Course at Cotton College, Gauhati.

The first work in Mizo fiction *Hawilopari* is a kind of love story whose historical background was of pre-Christianity era. The love story is about the three pairs of lovers, Hminga and Pari (Hawilopari), Liana and Mawii, Chhana

and Ngaihi with their leader Zema. The most important characters in the story are Hminga and Pari, (Hawilopari) a pair of lovers and their leader Zema.

The story can be summarised as follows: After the death of the mother of Hminga and Liana, their father married another girl. But his second wife was bad tempered and quarrelsome, their new step-mother badly treated the two brothers. Life became unbearable for them and they decided to go away from their village. But they were too young and they did not know where to go. Fortunately Zema, a kind and loving young man in their village met them and discussed their plan with him. The two brothers asked him whether or not he knew where to go. Then Zema made up his mind to help and guide them in their wandering. While they were discussing where to go, another boy of their age Chhana by name, son of the village chief came, and heard their plan. He took pity on them and also decided to go with them.

The three boys had met their girlfriends on the same evening and told them that they would go away and they will return after sometime. Thus, the boys left their village secretly on the next day and their girl-friends saw them off.

The boys spent four years at Silchar. They were somehow recruited in the Indian soldiers by one English Army Officer. They made a good record in their fighting with the rebel forces and they were soon promoted to higher ranks. After being away for ten years and three years after being promoted to higher rank, the Lushai's raiding expedition party came to Alexandrapore Tea Estate one day; they raided the workers and killed one Englishman (namely James Winchester) and took away his only six years old daughter (namely Mary Winchester) as captive. So, the expedition troops were sent to Mizoram to rescue the captive (Mary Winchester). Fortunately, the four boys also came out

to Mizoram among the troops and they returned to their village after the completion of their task.

While they were away from their village, Hawilopari (Pari) has faced many problems at home. She had a suitor, Khuala, a son of the village Chief's elder. At first her parents thought the proposal agreeable and they tried to persuade their daughter to agree. But Pari refused to marry Khuala who is not her love; she rather told her parents everything about her problems that she had fallen in love with Hminga, who ran away from home with his brother Liana and his friends ten years ago. Thus, the marriage proposal was turned down.

In retaliation, the rejected suitor Khuala at the instigation of the meeting of the enemies (snakes) of Pari tried to defame and disgrace Pari. So Khuala publicly claimed that he had a sexual relationship with Pari and she was his girl. Pari and her father went to the village (Chief's) court. But when their case was heard, the court declared Pari guilty and it justified their opponent Khuala, probably because he was the son of the village elder. Pari and her father came out from the court very angry and they were received by the kind mother at home. She gently put her hands on the shoulder of Pari and consoled her.

Now the parents could do nothing for their disgraced daughter and they decided to migrate to another village, where Pari's uncle Ruala lived. And they moved out from their village to that village just before the date of the arrival of Hminga and his friends in their village. After the reunion with their girl friends, the two pairs of lovers Liana and Mawii, Chhana and Ngaihi were happily married.

After sometime, Hminga went to meet Pari in their village, but unfortunately he lost the way. When Zema heard that Hminga went to see Pari in their new village, he followed him immediately and reached the new village

before the arrival of Hminga. The village was just raided by the Pawis of the Chin Hills of Burma; they burned down all the houses and took away all the inhabitants including the family of Pari as captives. Zema, being Pawi by blood and origin, now disguised himself and joined the raiders as one of their members. He then somehow managed to rescue the captives but he lost his life. Before dying he asked Pari's father to give his daughter to Hminga who is the lover of Pari. Pari's parents instantly granted his plea and promised that the happy marriage of true minds was avowed. Then the story comes to an end.

The third Mizo novel called *Chhingpuii*, a romantic tragedy whose setting is of pre-Christianity era appeared in 1939. It was written by Kaphleia. The novel *Chhingpuii* is a kind of love story with the secular historical background of pre-Christianity era. The tragic end of the heroin Chhingpuii is a historical fact. The writer Kaphleia made this beautiful novel from a historical fact of events. It can be said that the main theme of this novel is that a true and faithful love endures time and test. The story of this novel can be summarised as follows:

In the village of Ruanzawl, Chhingpuii was a beautiful and modest young girl. She had fallen in love with Kaptluanga, a youngman of the village. Their love reached the climax when Kaptluanga and his friends came home successfully after ten days of elephant hunting, Kaptluanga brought home the elephant's tusker as requested by Chhingpuii for weighting down a spinning wheel and he gave it to Chhingpuii while the hunting party were received by the villagers happily in the outskirts of the village; in turn Chhingpuii also gave him a cup of beer. Subsequent to this event, Kaptluanga shot other wild animals again and again, so he was very popular in the village. He was favoured and honoured by the Chief and the elders.

Kaptluanga, however, was unfortunately much envied by somebody and he was then bewitched by someone to suffer from consumption and his health could not be improved. Consequently he suffered the dreaded disease Tuberculosis. The writer described Kaptluanga's suffering as follows:

“He suffered from cough and his sputum became bloody as if scratched with a comb and he spitted with blood. He lost appetite and could not sleep well, he became thinner and thinner. He felt backache and some pain in his body and got tired even while walking in the street just like an old man”

Henceforth, Kaptluanga being unable to do any kind of work was dependent of others. He could not shoot the wild animals anymore and there is no more ceremony (*salu ai*) in his house to celebrate the heads of animals killed. So, the fair weather friends had forsaken him like a false friend dog. No one would claim that he was their relative. Chhingpuii, however, had remained faithful to him and her love for him was ever increasing. Whenever she had time, she always visited him with some packs of tobacco for smoking; she also innocently combed his hair and tried to make him happy. Out of her love, Chhingpuii refused to assist a person in the jhum work (*in lawm*) with any other youngmen for fear of hurting her lover's mind.

In those days, the war between the east and the west of Mizoram broke out. A village warrior or raiding party were rampant and killed many innocent people of other village and that was retaliated by the victim's villages. At the sametime, the chief of Tachhip village requested the chief of Hmawngkawn village Lunglana to raid the Ruanzawl village where Kaptluanga and Chhingpuii lived.

One morning, on her way to jhum, Chhingpuii refused to go along with some young men by pretending not to hear their request to accompany her on the way, she preferred to go along with an old man namely Rena ahead of others. But, unfortunately on the way, they were ambushed by the raiders from Tachhip village, an old man Rena was shot dead at the spot. Chhingpuii instantly throw her basket and ran for her life, but one of the raiders ran after Chhingpuii and cut on her shoulders with a big dao. Chhingpuii fervently begged him to spare her life, telling him that her father had a large sum of money to pay him for the ransom. But the raider refused and chopped off her head.

The news of the death of Chhingpuii was shocking, frustrating and heart-breaking for Kaptluanga. His fate appears to be worse than death itself now. His mental and physical suffering was unbearable. He thought that all the days of his joys are gone and the clouds of sorrow now prevailed upon him. His only dream is now to meet his lover Chhingpuii in the third world called Paradise (*pialral*). Thus, he committed suicide by shooting himself with his gun to join his lover Chhingpuii in the third world, called paradise (*pialral*).

The fourth Mizo novel called *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, a romantic tragedy, whose setting is of pre-Christianity era was written by Lalzuithanga in the year 1944. This novel is also a kind of love story with the secular historical background of pre-Christianity era. The story can be summarised as follows:

Phira and his friends, raiding expedition for head-hunting under the leadership of Mangapa (father of Manga, teknonymy was very common among the early Mizos. The father of a child called Manga will generally be known as Manga Pa) spent several nights; they succeeded in their expedition and brought seven human heads. But, unfortunately on their way home, they were attacked by the warriors of Lalbuta's village under the leadership of Hrangchina. The

enemies killed all the companions of Phira and he also escaped from the attack with great difficulty.

After killing all their enemies, Hrangchina sent Bawiha, son of Lalbuta, the village chief as a messenger to inform the chief that they succeeded in their expedition. But Phira ran after Bawiha and killed him by wringing the neck; he threw his dead body down the road among wild banana in the outskirts of their village. He took the weapons of Bawiha and entered the village at midnight; he burnt down the village and gutted all the houses of the village.

Then Phira went to the village of Lalhrima, the younger brother of Lalbuta, pretending to be a messenger on the death of his (Lalhrima's) aunt Darpuiliani. At the same time, Lalbuta also sent a special messenger to Lalhuapa, the chief of Phira's village under the leadership of Khuangapa (father of Khuanga) to make peace with and to stop enmity between the two villages. The party also entered the village in the same evening of Phira reached the village. Pari, (Ngurthanpari) daughter of Lalbuta was among them to stay with her paternal uncle Lalhrima. Phira and his newly acquainted friend Thianga went to the house of the Chief to inform his mission. Here Phira and Pari (Ngurthanpari) met each other and the seed of love has been sown between them at first sight.

However, unfortunately, when the host of Phira, namely Dailova checked the weapons of Phira, to his surprise, all the weapons belonged to Bawiha, son of Lalbuta and he found out Phira was not a messenger but an enemy and killer of Bawiha. Then he went to the chief's house and told the chief that Phira was not a messenger but their enemy. In the meantime, Ngurthanpari ran to the *Zawlbuk* (bachelor's house) and met Phira, she told him that they had found out that he was an enemy, a killer of her elder brother Bawiha and who gutted their village. Then she gave one cloth and dao, urged him to run away for his life.

The chief Lalhrima was very angry. He called Thianga, the new friend of Phira and send to the *Zawlbûk* (bachelor's house) to bring Phira at the chief's house. He made an arrangement to drink a beer and intended to kill Phira while he sucks the beer from the pot. But Thianga returned alone and told the chief that he did not found Phira. Then as suggested by the queen Lalpuii, the chief sent a village youngmen to ran after Phira and one group was led by Thianga to the route of Hmunzawl. On their way to Hmunzawl and near the river bank, Thianga found Phira, he woke him up and told him that he would give a secret sign of the route by putting the bush on the way. Thus Thianga released Phira.

One evening, while the chief Lalhrima was away, the queen Lalpuii and Ngurthanpari discussed about Phira, it was secretly listened by Dengvunga, the village blacksmith from the door. The queen requested him to share a beer with her at night because she wanted to know whether or not he knows everything they had discussed about Phira. At night the blacksmith came to the house of the chief and shared a beer with the queen, then he asked '*Does Ngurthanpari released Phira?*' and the queen plainly told him the truth without defending Ngurthanpari. Then, she requested him to hunt a crab at the river of Kahthelh on the next day. So, they went to the river of Kahthelh from different route and met at the river. The queen killed the blacksmith while he tried to catch the crab from its hole in order that he may not divulge their secret about Phira.

Phira reached their village on the seventh day after he has escaped from the village of Lalhrima. He went to the chief house and gave a detailed report about their expedition; he narrated how his companions were killed by their enemies on their way home, how he escaped from their enemies and burnt down the village of Lalbuta and reached their village with great difficulty to bring the sad news. He also informed the chief that Lalbuta sent a special messenger to make peace but Hrangchina and his party came to attack and to burn their village on warfare secretly.

When Lalluapa heard the news, he instantly sent village young men to find out Hrangchina and his party before they reach the village. Phira and Laiveta also went to the jungle and they found Hrangchina and his companion on the bank of Tuikum river. Phira killed one raider and caught Hrangchina, his big rival enemy. And they put him in the corner of *Zawlbuk* (bachelor's house) tightly bound to be killed on the next day.

But in the midnight, Hrangchina was secretly released by a boy namely Lalluta, son of Buati, who is a blood relative of Hrangchina, the boy informed him that his mother requested him not to burn down the village, but ignoring the request, Hrangchina set the village on fire and several houses are gutted down.

When Phira heard the news that Hrangchina had secretly escaped from their custody, he instantly ran after Hrangchina with company of Dova, one of the village young man to overtake him before he reach their village, he was afraid that Hrangchina might openly divulge the secret of Ngurthanpari; because while he arrested Hrangchina in the river bank of Tuikum, he had proudly divulged that Ngurthanpari was his lover, who not only secretly released him from the hand of the chief Lalhrima but also gave him a cloth and dao. They reached Lalhrima's village before sunset on the same day of Hrangchina has reached the village. After darkness, Phira entered the village and listened to the conversation of Hrangchina and others in the chief's house from beneath the house. Then Hrangchina divulged that Ngurthanpari was the person who released and gave a cloth to Phira. He also accused Ngurthanpari as a lover of Phira, the killer of her elder brother and the burner of their village. He also warned that if her father knows the truth, her future may be very terrible.

But the queen cleverly defended Ngurthanpari and pretending to be angry upon Phira. She also requested them to converse about the act of the spirit of Bawiha (elder brother of Ngurthanpari). The queen and Thianga said that the villagers of Lalbuta always saw the dreaded action of Bawiha's spirit. Following their conversation Phira acted some fearful action by killing piglet and chicken, he throws the blood of animals to the crowd. But Thianga, the new friend of Phira does not believe that it was the act of Bawiha's spirit but merely an act of Phira; then he tried to find him. When he found him beneath the chief's house, Phira told him that he want to meet Pari and her mother, the queen. Then Thianga secretly made an arrangement in the outskirts of the village for Pari and the queen to meet Phira. Here, Phira asked Pari to forget him and he himself will also try to forget her because of their unequal status.

While Phira and Dova were away from their village, Luta confessed that he secretly released Hrangchina as compelled by her mother. The public arrested Buati and Luta, they beat them with bloodshed and brought to the chief's court. When the kind and gracious Lalhuapa saw the mother and child, he was full of pity, so he pardoned and spared the life of Buati and her son Luta. The public were very much annoyed but dared not complain.

When Phira and Dova returned to their village, Ngurthanpari was unable to bear the separation with Phira, then she slept in the bed without taking food and water due to her throes of feeling loneliness, and she became half-minded. Then she was brought to her parents. One day Hrangchina told Ngurthanpari's mother that her daughter Pari loves Phira very much, who killed her elder brother Bawiha and burnt down their village. Pari's mother was very surprised.

After a few days, Pari's step-mother Lalpuii visited her and suggested to call Phira secretly for she hope that Pari's health might be improved if she met Phira again. Then they secretly sent Thianga to call Phira, and Phira also came

to meet Ngurthanpari. When Pari heard the voice of Phira, she was instantly improved and her health was also normal within a few days. But when her father Lalbuta, the chief heard that his daughter fell in love with Phira, the killer of his son; he was very much angry and tried to kill both his wife and his daughter. So, Ngurthanpari and her mother ran to the village of Lalhrima for the sake of their life; but they could not reach the village. They were missed and no one knew where they had gone.

On the side of Phira, his mother urged him to marry a girl namely Khumi, daughter of the village chief's elder. Phira's mother sent a mediator but Khumi's parents demanded a set of gongs for the bride price. So Phira went to the village of his grandparents, to seek a set of gongs of his grandparents, and his grandparents were also pleased to give him. While he stayed with his grandparents, his rival enemy Hrangchina was killed by a tiger while he came to the same village.

One day, Phira, his mother and wife Khumi went somewhere in jungle to find out any treasures. They went inside the cave, there they found some treasures - like necklace and large-gongs, they were very happy. However, at the sametime they heard a terrible sound of crack. It was an earthquake. While they tried to run out from the cave, the roof of the cave crushed and the three persons were crushed and died. Then the story comes to an end.

These novels have a peculiar characteristic, for despite labelling them as fictions of the pre-Christian period due to their setting and selection of themes, yet the work cannot escape the tell-tale sign of being written by Christian authors. The action, events and characters are often interpreted from a Christian point of view. The influence of Christianity on these novels can be elaborated as follows:

I Friendly / Brotherly love :

The kind of friendly love can be identified with what Mizos called '*Tlawmngaihna*.' According to the Welsh missionary, Rev. J.M. Lloyd, "*Tlawmngaihna* is the Mizo code of morals and good form. It is not easy to make a one-word definition. One cannot, for example, be regarded as *Tlawmngai* unless one is courteous, considerate, helpful, unselfish, courageous, industrious and ready to help others even at considerable inconvenience to himself"¹ Rev. J.H. Lorrain, the first Missionary in Mizoram also defined *tlawmngaihna* as 'to be self-sacrificing, unselfish, self-denying, preserving, to be loth to lose one's good reputation, prestige etc.'² However, this friendly love we have seen from *Hawilopari* is more biblical than human or brotherly love, it conforms to the Pauline teaching in his Epistles to Corinthians. Here comes Paul's exhortation:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always preserves"³

In his Epistle, St. John also exhorted the believers as follows :

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God; because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us. He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love, not that we loved God, but that He love and send his Son as an atoning sacrifice to our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us"⁴

Again Jesus said that, ".....greater love had no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"⁵

Christians are commanded to have brotherly love. In Epistle to Hebrew, we read, “*Let brotherly love continue.*”⁶ The brotherly or friendly love is the closest fellowship of man to man in an attitude characterised as a brother (or sister), and the Bible requires the believers to keep on loving each other as brothers to be devoted to one another in brotherly love. So, man can inculcate, possess, and practice divine love even on earth. The friendly love between Zema, Chhana, Hminga and his brother Liana, in the novel of *Hawilopari* was biblical or divine love rather than human love. Now let us examine this friendly love found in the novel of *Hawilopari*.

L.Biakliana, in his *Hawilopari*, has championed this love between friends. The novel described the love of Zema, a young man of the village, who had sacrificed even his life for the poor young brothers—Hminga and Liana, and the two pairs of lovers Hminga and Hawilopari. Due to his efforts and self-sacrifice, Hminga and Pari could unite in marriage at last.

The love of Zema and Chhana for the poor young brother Hminga and Liana was immeasurable. When life with their step-mother was unbearable for Hminga and his brother Liana at home, they decided to go away; but they did not know where they would go. In this needy hour, Zema, out of love and pity decided to help and guide them at any cost.

Not only this, while they were discussing where and when to go, another boy of their age, Chhana, by name, the son of the village chief appeared and his love has been aroused for the poor young brothers. The decision of Zema and Chhana to lead the poor two brothers is an act of great love. A friend in need is a friend indeed. The tear of Hminga comes down on his cheek due to joy when he knows how much Zema and Chhana love them. Chhana also counted the cost of going when Zema told him all about the problem of the two brothers and he was convincingly willing to leave the village. Chhana tried to

persuade them not to go away from the village and he promised that he will report all their problems to his father if they agree, thinking that his father would know how to solve their problems. But Zema clearly told him that that would not be fruitful but in vain and would not change the mind of their step-mother.

Then Chhana deeply thought; there was a great struggle and tumult in his mind. On the one hand, he had sympathised and pitied the two brothers, and he wanted to help them, but there was no way other than to go with them to share their fate. On the other hand, he was the son of the village chief, one day he would succeed his father's throne and would become the chief. If he go with them, he would loss everything, the throne and the chieftainship of his father. So, it was very difficult for him to make a decision and he was in a dilemma. The author gives account of the struggles in his mind beautifully thus:

“Ngun taka a ngaihtlak chuan Zema thusawi chu dik em emin a hria a. Mahse a lo dik ni ta ang se, a duhthusam thinte kha a bo zo dawn ta a ni a. Awm chu an awm thei dawn ta lo ni ang se, engtin nge ka tanpui ve theih ang aw! A rilru chhungrila Hminga te unau a duhsakna chuan, “Nangmah kal ve mai rawh” arawn ti a. A rilru pawnlang zawk chuan, “Mawina, I kal zawngin tlang leh ram te i chan ang a chu lo rengah pawh khawi lam ram nge kalna tur tih hriat hleih lohte chu, engnge i tawh dawn pawh i hre si lo va...” a lo ti ve bawk a. Lehlamah chuan, “Duh leh tlang leh ram te chu chan ta mah la, engnge pawh ang? I thian duhte nena in tuar ho phawt chuan a pawh hlek law, tun hi anmahni i hmangaihna i tihlanna hun i neih chhun a ni, engnge i thlan dawn? Ka thu awih la, kal mai rawh, kal rawh” a lo ti bawk a.”⁷

(When he carefully listened, he thought Zema was right. However, if that was true, then all his dreams for life would become null and void. If they were not in the village, but were go away how can he help them? His deep love for the two poor brothers urged him saying, ‘Go with them yourself.’ But his outer mind crossed and said, ‘If you go with them, you would forfeit the land and

chieftainship. Besides, you do not know where you will go and what will happen to you...' On the other sides, his love for them repeated as, 'no matter if you forfeit them all. You will go and suffer together with your friends and this is the only chance that you can show your love for them. What will be your choice. Obey my word, go, go with them'")

Then Chhana counted all the cost of going with his poor friend, but still his inner love for the two poor brothers urged him to go with them, finally he decided to go with them. Surely this decision will be more difficult than that of Zema. While reading the love of Chhana for his friends, the researcher was reminded of the love of Moses for his people, the Israelites. As Moses surrendered all his pleasures, and has forfeited all claim to the throne for the sake of his people of Israel as found in the Book of Exodus.⁸

Similarly, Chhana, the village prince who would inherit his father's throne and kingdom was willing to forfeit everything for the sake of his poor friends. The novelist seemed to have a religious background in writing this novel; perhaps he may be influenced by the love of Moses to his people as found in the Epistle to the Hebrews and Paul's Epistles to Philipians, and Thessalonians. It is written :

"By faith Moses, when he came to years refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"⁹

"Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble thinking of other's as better than yourself. Don't just think about your own affairs, but be interested in others' too and in what they are doing"¹⁰

"But concerning the pure brotherly love that there should be among God's people, For God himself is teaching you to love one another"¹¹

Again, the author may also be influenced by the teaching of Jesus Christ about brotherly love, that “And so I am giving a new commandment to you now, love each other just as much as I love you”¹²

Further, the love of Chhana for his poor friends also reminds me of the love between Jonathan and David. In the Book of Samuel one reads that the love of Jonathan for his friend David was noblest friendship, unselfishness, warmth of affection, helpfulness and loyalty. Jonathan always interceded for his friend to his father Saul, King of Israel, when he first realised his father’s animosity towards David. Many times he risked his life for David. He has a humble thinking for David’s betterness than for himself and he is willing to surrender all his claim to the throne of his father for his poor friend David and he also accepted the leadership of David.¹³

Similarly, the love of Chhana, the village prince, who would inherit his father’s throne has been aroused at this time, he was willing to surrender all his claims and forfeit everything for the sake of his friends; he also accepted the leadership of Zema just as Jonathan the prince accepted the leadership of David. So, Zema and Chhana went away with Hminga and Liana to an unknown land to suffer with them and to share whatever their joys and sorrows.

Besides, the nobler brotherly love is found in the character of Zema. While writing, the author might have also in mind how Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt to Canaan in the wilderness to share their sorrows and suffer with them and faced a number of difficulties. Zema also led the two boys with their friend Chhana out from the village as far as to Silchar. During their ten years of wandering from home Zema share the sorrow and faced many difficulties as well as dangers.

After the lapse of ten years, he had successfully brought them back to their own village safely with some coveted properties like gun and ammunition.

The two boys Chhana and Liana now marry Ngaihi and Mawii respectively who had faithfully waited for them even in those uncertain days. But Hminga could not marry his girl-friend Pari, because she was no longer in the village.

Suddenly Hminga moved out to find Hawilopari, who had left their village in protest against the partial judgement made by the village court. Yet Zema's deed of love did not end here. He immediately ran after Hminga, and reached the village ahead because Hminga lost the way. Unluckily the village was burnt down by Pawi raiders and all the inhabitants including Hawilopari and her parents were taken as captives. In such a difficult situation, Zema, being a Pawi by blood, disguised himself as one of the members of the raiders. He made a tactful arrangement in the very night to rescue the captives and gave a good counsel to a few captives. He watched the camp. At midnight, Zema saw a torch light at a distance and he understood the rescue party was coming. Applying their best tactic, Zema shot the fire, which suddenly extinguished the fire. The captives then fought back the captors under the cover of darkness and fled away. Zema rescued Hawilopari from Pawis, but he was severely wounded when the raiders and the rescue party opened fire. Hawilopari, all of a sudden called out her parents, and they immediately joined her. The rescue party or Luseis reached the spot alongwith Hminga, now all the raiders had run away.

When Hminga came to the spot where Zema lied down, he was very surprised to see Zema's wound and he wondered how Zema was involved in the rescue operation. When the happy and surprising meeting took place, the wounded Zema made his last request to Hawilopari's parents. His dying request was still not for himself but for the two lovers Hminga and Pari, so that the mutual physical and spiritual union will be possible. Hawilopari's parents instantly granted his plea and promised that the happy marriage of true minds would be avowed by joining the hands of Hminga and Pari to their marriage.

Then Zema died with contentment. As Moses sacrificed his life for the people of Israel in the wilderness, Zema also sacrificed his life for his friend.

Let us make a brief reflection in this connection on one passage from the Bible. As we have seen in Saint John Chapter 15:13, “*the greater love had no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend.*” Again, the self-sacrifice of Zema for his friend Hminga, that love possesses divine nature as we find in the letter of Paul to Romans 12:10. Here, Paul says “*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brother love, in honor giving preference to another.*” Of course like Moses, Zema did that. He had sacrificed his life for his young friends. He had been following unimpeachable consideration and unconditional kindness and love for the young lovers. Hence the love shown in his life on earth by Zema was undoubtedly genuine in character.

Though the writer is very much influenced by the teaching of Christianity and the biblical stories, there may be dearth of people who love their friends and live for them in this world. In choosing this theme, Biakliana universalised the situation which otherwise, would have remained only for the Mizo reading.

The kind of friendly or brotherly love is not clearly indicated in the novel of Chhingpuii. In contrast of Biakliana, Kaphleia rhetorically stressed how the fair-weather friends have forsaken their friend like a false friend. The writer went so far to remark as follows:

“A ni, mihring zingah hian vanneih laite leh hausak lai tea ka u ka nau ti thinte hian vanduaina a lo thlen hunin kan intlansan leh thin. Thenkhat phei chu hnunglama kawz zuitute an ni thin. Ui fing hi chu englai pawhin a pu lakah a rinawm reng a, mihring erawh chu kan ni thin lo. Mi hlimna leh lawman chanpui duh siin, an lungngaihna leh manganna chanpui duh lo chu thian sual, hmelma hriat sa aia hlauhawm zawk an ni. Lungngaihna leh manganna tizualtu an lo ni thin.”¹⁴

(Yes, There are people in times of prosperity call us ‘Brother’ but abandon us when we fall on hard time. A few even point at us our backs. The wise dogs always remain faithful to its master, but humanbeing is not. Those who want to share with us our good times but not our sorrows and troubles are worse than our known enemies. They are the ones who add to our unhappiness and heartache. The fair weather friends used to forsake us in times of troubles and sorrows, some even turn to run away from us. The wise dog always remains faithful to his master, but man is not. Those who would only share the blessings and the joys of others but not their sorrows are worse than the known enemy for they are simply multiplying our sorrows.)

This portion of the story would remind the researcher of the suffering of Job, a righteous man in the Bible. He was struck by Satan, he was inflicted with a terrible case of boils from head to foot. He has been forsaken by his brothers, relatives as read in the book of Job.

“My relatives have failed me; my friends have all forsaken me. Those living in my home, even my servants, regard me as a stranger; I am like a foreigner to them. I call my servant but he doesn’t come. I even beg him..... Even young children despise me, when I stand to speak, the mock”¹⁵

When Job, a righteous man was inflicted by such terrible case of boils, his three friends from different places had come to him, to comfort, to console and to help him. They silently sat with him several days. But when they finished their works, they started to ask strange questions like enemies. Job arraigns his friends’ vexing his soul, giving him a bad character, estranged themselves from him and magnifying themselves against him, so, he called them as miserable comforters because of their endless repetition and wrong conclusion.¹⁶

Likewise, the author also blame the fair-weather friends of Kaptluanga who shared his good times but foresaken and failed him in his sorrows. He

alleged they are worse than the known enemy because they are simply multiplying sorrows.

At the sametime, the novelist evaluated the love and faithfulness of Chhingpuii for her lover Kaptluanga. If she had a convenient time, she always visited him, she gave him tobacco, and she combed his hair and tried to make him happy. Here one can see that the love of Chhingpuii for Kaptluanga was not merely erotic love but having an affinity with divine love which is identified by the Mizos as '*Tlawmngaihna*' - hospitality, kind, generous, helpful to others etc.

But from the cultural point of view, the act of Chhingpuii for her lover Kaptluanga to always visiting him to make him happy was shameful for her, and it was against the traditional life of Mizo girls, because the Mizo girls never went and visited the young men, their lover in their house to comfort and to make them happy while they were ill. On the other hand, reading from the Biblical point of view, the love of Chhingpuii was not bound by cultural life. It was right for her to show her love towards Kaptluanga. So, it can be said that the writer is much influenced by the teaching of Christianity and biblical as we find in the first letter of Saint Paul to First Corinthians, here Paul says:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not seeking, it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoiced into the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always preserve.”¹⁷

And in the third novel selected, like L. Biakliana, Lalzuithanga had clearly indicated the friendly/ brotherly love in his novel, *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*. The novel described the love of Thianga, the popular young man in the village of Lalhrima, who was devoted for his new friend Phira and Ngurthanpari, daughter of Lalbuta.

When Phira returned from the expedition and burned down the village of Lalbuta on the way, he came to the village of Lalhrima, elder brother of Lalbuta. He was received by Thianga in their jhum and Phira pretended to be a *Zualko*, (a messenger) on the death of Darpuiliani, the aunt of the chief Lalhrima. Thianga brought Phira to their village, and accompanied him to the house of the chief to tell the death of Darpuiliani. And there they chatted with Ngurthanpari who arrived on the very same date. When they found that Phira was not a messenger but an enemy, he escaped from the village with the help of Ngurthanpari. The chief sent Thianga and his party to run after Phira to the route of Hmunzawl to catch Phira. But Thianga was full of pity upon Phira and he was willing to rescue and spare the life of Phira, so he scratched the foot-print of Phira before his party arrives.

Then he sent his party to another direction and he alone tracked the foot-print of Phira and found him while he (Phira) was asleep. Thianga considered the event as an opportunity to show his love by action. Then he wake up Phira and told him that he would give a secret sign of the route by putting the bush on the way. They did not talk about their friendship before, but Thianga simply showed his friendship by action. Phira also didn't look at him as a good friend but as his elder brother. When Phira came again to the village for the sake of Ngurthanpari, they had a secret meeting with Thianga, Pari and her aunt Lalpuui.

Here, the love between Thianga and Phira was not merely '*Philia*' (friendly) love, but it conformed to the biblical love which was found between Jonathan and David in the Book of I Samuel. Here we reads:

“Saul now urged his aides and his son Jonathan to assassinate David. But Jonathan, because of his close friendship with David, told him what his father was planning. ‘Tomorrow morning’ he warned him, ‘you must find a hiding place out in the fields. I’ll ask my father to go out there with me,

and I'll talk to him about you; then I'll tell you everything I can find out"¹⁸

“Then Jonathan said, ‘By the day after tomorrow everyone will be asking about you, so be at hideout where you were before, over by the stone pile. I will come out and shot three arrows in front of the pile as though I were shooting all at a target. Then I'll send a lad to bring the arrows back. If you hear me tell him, ‘they're on this side’ then you will know that all is well and that there is no trouble. But if I tell him, ‘Go farther-the arrows are still ahead of you’ then it will mean that you must leave immediately. And may the Lord make us keep promises to each other, for he has witnessed them”¹⁹

Again in the Book of II Samuel David composed a dirge for Saul and Jonathan which is quoted from the Book of Heroic Ballads, he says:

“How I weep for you, my brother Jonathan; How much I love you! And your love for me was deeper than the love of women! The mighty ones have fallen, stripped of their weapons, and dead.”²⁰

Here we reads that Jonathan interceded for his new friend David to his father Saul, King of Israel, when he first realised that his father intended to kill David. Many a times he risked his life for his new friend David, and he rescued him from the hands of his father. He loved his new friend more than the love of women and as we can see from his laments that David also loved him very much.

Similarly, the village chief Lalhrima was willing to kill Phira, because Phira was not only the enemy but the killer of his step-son Bawiha (Lalphunga) who burnt down the village of his younger brother Lalbuta. So, he sent the young men of his village to kill Phira. But Thianga risked his life for his new friend Phira and spared his life; he helped him and provided all his (Phira)

needs. The love of Thianga for his friend Phira was really beautiful and splendour, it was not merely human love but having an affinity of the love of God or Biblical love. As Jacob said, '*faith without deeds is dead.*'²¹ Thianga also proved his love in action.

Besides, Lalzuithanga also clearly indicated the friendly love between Thianga and Ngurthanpari. Ngurthanpari always needed Thianga in times of hardship, anxiety and perplexity. Her step-mother and Thianga alone could share with her desperate thoughts and bewilderment. Thianga always devoted himself to help her at any time. When Ngurthanpari had fallen unconscious and became half-minded due to ponders of longing, at the request of Lalpuui the queen, Thianga secretly brought Phira in the village of Lalbuta to make Ngurthanpari happy.

Here, Thianga was so kind and loving for Phira and Ngurthanpari. He had a mutual understanding and love for the welfare of the two lovers. A man who thinks of the welfare of his fellow-men has no time for thoughts of self-exaltation and ambitious design for his own benefit only. The brotherly love in the society and towards other humankind not only represses hatred, envy and other degrading follies of men; but it cultivates pity, gentleness, courage and some more qualities, which enable others to make a true gentlemen.

So, friendly love or brotherly love is the least biological love and it is a love that has no exchange of payment. All the great religions of the world, especially Christianity put greater urge for the inculcation of brotherly love which should be manifested in one's life. Again, the writers of these novels were Christian believers, they always interpreted the actions, events and characters from the Christian point of views. For them, therefore, the theme of friendly/brotherly love comes naturally from the Christian perspective.

II: Parental Love :

Parental love and filial love are inter-related and inter-dependent in Mizo novels. Parental love is an intuitive love from the parents towards their children, the offspring of their own flesh and blood. They feed, protect and guide the young ones. At the same time filial love is a love due to the parent from their children. It is a key to relationship between parents and children.²²

The duty and role of the parents and children had been professed by most religions. Christian and Jews uphold God's fifth commandment to Moses in the Mount Sinai, saying, "*Honour thy father and mother.*"²³ In his Epistle to Ephesian, Saint Paul urged the children to obey their parents in the Lord, "*that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*" At the sametime, he warns the fathers not to provoke their children to wrath, "*but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*"²⁴ Again, in his Epistle to Colosians, St. Paul also said, "*father, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*"²⁵

The authority given to parents is clear, the complete obedience expected of children is clear. But it is also clear that parents are not to use that authority to relieve their own frustrations, cover up their laziness and mistakes, protect their self-esteem or excuse their failure to listen.²⁶ Parents had the charge of their children, they are teachers for their children, they corrected them but with love and patience with a long-ranged view of how their children will be developing.

The family is a universal phenomenon. It is the institution which not only permits survival but prepares children for life. If the family fails then all the other institutions of society will fail. The family is that basic unit of society which undergirds all else. Every influence which weakens the family and make it more difficult for it to do its job will ultimately weaken society. All that is

done to build strong, healthy, happy, and effective families will increase the possibility of a strong and healthy society.²⁷

In the early Mizo society, parents were very fond of their children and fathers were often seen carrying their infants about. In times of scarcity whatever rice can be gotten is reserved for the young children; the children assist their parents as much as they can, tiny girls accompanying their mothers to the spring and bringing up one or two bamboos of water, while the lads help their fathers in cutting the jhum. No one, however, takes any good care of children, they are allowed to run about the village as they like in all weathers, which no doubt accounts largely for the heavy mortality among them, as their clothing is of the scanties.²⁸ It will be interesting to study against these backgrounds the parental love portrayed in the early Mizo novels.

In the first Mizo novels, *Hawilopari*, the author Biakliana depicted loving parents who would do anything for their only daughter Hawilopari, the name of the heroine in this novel. Her parents love her so much because she is the only child (nowhere has the writer mention of either her brother or sister). This girl seemed to be brought up with due parental care and love as is evident from the family life. The parental love for this girl is more clearly shown when Pari was in a very awkward position. Hawilopari has been depicted in the novel as a beautiful and virtuous girl of their village. It is reasonable for the parents to expect a youngman as their son-in-law. Rightly the author has one readily. The name of the boy was Khuala, a son of a wealthy elder of the village chief. For those parents their aim was to make their daughter happy in her life time, and Khuala was a very desirable person for Pari. True, her mother was all out for Khuala, because she believed that he was a good match for her only daughter.

Again, as usual practice in the Mizo society, the mediators sent from the family of Khuala were requested to come again for final decision or

arrangement of wedding. Before that, Pari has to be consulted for her consent. When her mother consulted Pari, she reacted very differently. Her mother told her in the mildest manner, that they wished her to marry Khuala because they were a wealthy family in the village and she will be fortunate if she married him. But Pari could not agree to marry Khuala for she did not love him. Rather she wept and told her mother everything; that she had fallen in love with Hminga who had ranaway from home with Liana and his two friends some years ago. So, she rejected the proposal in a gentle manner. The loving parents thereafter realised Pari's problems, they took pity on her because of their love for their daughter. So, the marriage proposal was turned down.

In retaliation, the rejected suitor Khuala tried to defame her and he publicly claimed that Hawilopari was his girl. Hawilopari and her father brought the case to the court of the village Chief and their case was heard. But there was no impartial judgment; the village court justified Khuala whereas Pari was declared guilty, because Khuala was the son of a village Chief's elder. The angry father and daughter came out from the court and the kind mother received them. She gently put her hand on the shoulder of her daughter, Pari and tried to console her. Now the kind parents could not do anything against their opponents and to restore the reputability of their daughter in the village, except to move to another village secretly.

The setting of this novel is about 1862 to 1872 A.D. In those days Christianity or the Gospel was not heard. So, it was not a common thing on the part of parents to share the feelings of their daughter especially in matter of marriage because in those days, it was the social convention and practice that the girl should marry the boy of her parents' choice but not her choice.²⁹

In the Mizo society, a family was constituted through the institution of marriage and the exercise of leadership in the family was patriarchal. The

husband or father had the right to command over the wife or mother in the family unit. In all affairs relating to family life such as celebration, issues of inheritance etc. the husband or father exercised power. In regard to the recognition of descent of the married couple, patrilineal system was in vogue i.e., an heir was recognised through the male line. In fact, an indigenous Mizo family was quite clearly dominated by the father or husband.³⁰

The family environment was in word, calm. The members of the family seldom talked to one other. Meal times were, by and large, the opportune moments when all the members of the family had time to meet together. Wives would not utter the names of their husbands; likewise husbands too would not call their wives by name. Whenever occasion demanded to call husband by a wife or wife by a husband, the usual practice was to call after the name of their eldest son or daughter (i.e., *Pari pa*, or *Pari Nu* etc.)³¹

As stated above, there is a union of man and woman to constitute a family, and in this sense a woman is equal to a man in the constitution of the family. But the indigenous Mizo social system was such that there was a dominating role of menfolk over the womenfolk in the family and the society. Women's place in the family in the real sense was that they were under an autocratic dominance of their menfolk. This has been best expressed in the following statements, "A woman had no right at all. Body, mind and spirit, she belonged from birth to death to her father, her mother, her husband. Menfolk could treat her as they liked and a man who did not beat his wife was scorned by his friends as a coward"³² "A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them the better they be" "Crab's meat is not counted as a meat as a women's word is not counted as word" "bad wife and bad fence can be changed. But unthreatened wife and unthreatened grass of the fields are both unbearable."³³

From the above statement, the women's position in the family was insecure and they are not to be against the word of the father. The father can choose the young man for his son-in-law if the person is fit for his daughter. The discussion about marriage in the family was merely formal or a traditional practice.

But in this novel, the writer did not clearly mention whether or not the family had discussed about the marriage proposal, but he only mentioned that the mother sought the consent of her daughter. When Pari told her parents about all her secret with Hminga, it convinced them, they did not force her to marry Khuala. Instead her father assured her that the marriage proposal will be cancelled, saying , "*Chuti a ni maw le, Parte le. I duh lohnaah chuan engpawh ti rawh se, kan tawn zel ang*" *a ti a, a chhuak ta nghauh va*"³⁴ (Was it, Parte? If they are disappointed and do anything against you, we shall face" and then he went out).

Here the author, Biakliana clearly exposed his idea on the emancipation of women from the strict authority of parents and he also propounded to give freedom for the female to marry their own choice. When he viewed the women status in the Mizo society from the light of Christianity, he opined that the Mizo girls needed emancipation from the authority of their fathers to enjoy equality with their menfolk. So, he was the person who propounded the freedom of women through a novel.

Again according to the Mizo marriage customs, the young men are courting the girls and they may do so with or without serious intentions. If the man is convinced that the girl is desirable he will most likely suggest that they should in future help each other in their work with a view to getting married. If the girl agrees they come to a definite understanding on the matter and

henceforth help each other in their respective fields and the man will escort the girl when she goes out to carry wood or water. While they are engaged in these occupations the man is diligently courting the girl and making advances to her. The girl has by this time had an opportunity of judging if her suitor is likely to make her a good husband.³⁵ L.B. Thanga goes on even further by saying,

A clever young man can, and always does play a deciding factors as, in a Mizo society where free mixing of boys and girls is permitted, the young man can, in advance, obtain the tacit consent of a girl to a marriage and thus pave the way for a smooth negotiation.³⁶

After obtaining a tacit consent from the girl to a marriage, the initiative was always from the boy's side. His family sent a mediator (*palai*) to the girl's parents. The consent of the girl as well as the boy was always sought before a final decision was made. If a consent was given, the bride's price was negotiated and finally, the wedding itself was fixed at a convenient time for all concerned.³⁷

Besides, when a young man is going on courting a girl, he usually takes with him a boy, who is known as a *puarak*. The *Puarak's* job is to act as an intermediary between the lovers and also to see them actually sleeping together. The object of this is to enable the *puarak* to give definite evidence on the point if later on the girl finds that people are saying that she and her lover have been sleeping together and consequently brings a suit against him for defamation. If a court case arouse the *puarak* steps in and says he actually saw the lovers sleeping together, and where the fact of intercourse can be proved the girl can get no compensation. Where, however, there was no *puarak* and no eye witness to the intercourse, and if it is shown that the man has been saying that he slept with the girl and he afterwards cannot prove it, the girl is entitled to get Rs. 40 from him for having defamed her.³⁸

In the case of Hawilopari, Khuala never courted Pari at home and they never engaged to be *INLAWM*, to help each other in their works and Pari never gave any signal to send mediator. When the rejected Khuala publicly claimed that he slept with Pari, there was no '*Puarak*' between them to give definite evidence before the court. Nevertheless, the court justified Khuala while Pari was declared guilty. Here the author not only exposed the impartial judgement of the village chief's court but that the women's place in the society was very low; in the real sense, the women were under an autocratic dominance of their menfolk. So, the writer being a Christian cried out from his Christian point of view for freedom to be given to the women, or for their emancipation from the autocratic dominance of their menfolk. This may be more elaborated in the next chapter.

III: Religious Life :

Law, customs and fashion were not the only means of social control. Overriding them all were religion and morality which formulated the shape of them. These were not only the most influential forces of social control, but they were also the most effective guides for human behaviour. Besides, all men in all societies ultimately must face certain problems of life individually despite all efforts of the others to help. In that situation religion was essentially an institutionalized or traditional path to salvation.³⁹

Religion, as defined by MacIver is, "Religion, as we understand the term, implies a relationship not merely between man and man but also man and some higher power."⁴⁰ Christopher Dawson writes, "Whenever and wherever man has a sense of dependence of external power which are conceived as mysterious and higher than man's own, there is religion and the feelings of awe and self-abasement with which man is filled in the presence of such power is essentially a religious emotion, the root of emotion, the root of worship and prayer."⁴¹

Durkheim also defined religion as a 'united system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden.'⁴² According to Arnold W.Green, religion is 'a system of beliefs and symbolic practices and objects governed by faith rather than by knowledge, which relates man to an unseen supernatural realm beyond the known and beyond the controllable.'⁴³ Matthew Arnold simply says that religion is 'ethics hightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling.'⁴⁴ Some maintain that religion includes a belief in supernatural or mysterious powers and that it expresses itself in overt activities designed to deal with those powers.

The essence of religion is the recognition on the part of man to some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny and as being entitled to obedience, reverence and worship the general mental and moral attitude resulting from this belief with reference to its effects upon the individuals or community, personal or general acceptance to this feeling as a standard of spiritual and practical life.⁴⁵

According to Anderson and Parker, each religion consists of four primary components. These are :

a) *Belief in supernatural forces* : Each religion believes in some supernatural forces—power outside of man and his observable world. These powers are believed to influence human conditions and events. Some call them forces of God; some call them gods, yet others leave them nameless.

b) *Man's adjustment to supernatural powers* : Since man is dependent on these powers, he must adjust himself to them. Consequently, each religion provides for some outward acts like prayer, hymn, *kirtans* and other forms of reverence. Failure to perform these acts is regarded as sinful.

c) Acts defined as sinful : Each religion defines certain acts as sinful. Such acts destroy man's harmonious relationship with God or the gods and he suffers the wrath of God.

d) Method of salvation : Man needs some method by which he can regain harmony with the gods through a removal of guilt.⁴⁶

Religion seeks to interpret and control man's relations to the forces of his physical and social environment. These forces are thought to be under the control of some supernatural power. The attempt to interpret man's relations to these forces led to several forms of religion like superstition, animism, ceremonialism and fetishism. Religion pervades practically in all the societies but there is an endless diversity of the forms of religious belief and practices.

The religion of the Mizos prior to the advent of Christian missionaries has been described as 'animism' because there was an extensive animistic element in their lives. But the real worship and their reverence was not *huais* but the high God. Therefore, the activities in relation to the *huais* were not strictly speaking, religious. (ref.: Chapter I : III Religion) At the sametime, all Mizo novel writers were Christians and their novels also have peculiar characteristics, for despite labelling them as fiction of the pre-Christian period due to their setting and selection of themes, yet they cannot escape the tell-tale signs of being written by Christian authors. The events, characters and religion of the Mizos in the early days were also interpreted from the Christian point of view.

The period of the first Mizo novel *Hawilopari* was about 1862-1872 because the four friends had joined the Indian Army before the Mizos raided Alexandrapore Tea Estate. As recorded in our Mizo History, the Mizos raiding expedition party raided Alexandrapore Tea Estate in 23rd Jan. 1871, who killed

one Englishman namely James Winchester and took away his daughter Mary Winchester as captive.⁴⁷ So, the higher authority gave order, then the Lushai Expedition was sent in 1872 under the name of ‘The Lushai Expedition of 1871-72’⁴⁸ At that time, Christianity was not heard of in Mizoram and no one even preached the Gospel in the Hills. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the first Christian Missionary who set on foot and preached the Gospel was the Rev. William Williams, who arrived in Aizawl on March 20, 1891 and remained there to open the eyes and hearts of the people till April 17, 1891.

The first two missionaries of the Arthington Mission, Rev. J.H. Lorrain and Rev. F.W. Savidge reached Mizoram on the January 11, 1894. This very date has been accepted as the day of the coming of the Gospel in Mizoram. The first converts Khuma and Khara were baptised on the 25th June, 1899, after five years of Missionaries’ hard labour. They could be considered the first Biblemen among the Mizos, for their zeal of spreading the Gospel.⁴⁹

When we examine the story of *Hawilopari*, it is true that the underlying moral and religious life is quite biblical. The author predicted the Christian life in the character of the heroine, Hawilopari.

In the first chapter, he depicted the family life of Hminga as follow :

*“Chutichuan Hminga te chung chu in leh ramah Pathian leh mihring duhsakin an awm thin a. An lo lamah te pawh kham khawp an nei thei a, in lamah mi duhsak leh ngaihsak em emin an awm a”*⁵⁰

Meaning : “So, the family of Hminga was loved by God and man both at the home and in the field. In the jhum, they could produce the foodgrains to afford their family for the whole year and they were adored by the villager at home” Here the writer Biakliana made a statement of the family of life of

Hminga along the side of the statement about Jesus Christ in St. Luke's Gospel: "*So, Jesus grew both tall and wise, and was loved by God and man*"⁵¹

Hminga's family life was depicted as biblical more than a common family life, and they seemed to be a Christian family. In Chapter 7, the author exposed the true humanly character of the four friends from the light of the Gospel.

When Hminga and his friends got higher ranking, they were very happy but after sometime they were not satisfied in their rank and they want to get higher and higher ranks. The ambition for higher position is God's gift for men. But due to the sin of ambitiousness for higher position, the first human Eve fell to the temptation of Evil (snake). So, he quoted the conversation between Eve and snake in the Third Chapter of Genesis: "*That's a lie!*" *the serpent hissed. "You will not die. God knows everything well that the instant you eat it you will become like him, for your eyes will be opened; you will be able to distinguished good from evil!"*⁵² *So, she wants to take the fruit in order to be 'like God' and she gave her husband too. Thereafter, all human beings become ambitious and all mankind suffered miserably and deeds of the evil things* (p.36).

The name of God was seen in other chapter not as from the knowledge of the early Mizos but Christianity today. In chapter 8, we read, "*the God always help her in her daily works with effort and they became a self-sufficient family in their village*" (p.42). "*Under the grace of God, she does not suffer any excessive hardship but only normal problems which every human being has mentally suffered.*" (p.44). "*The God always remembered the poor girl, so her father also improved to do any work*" (p.57).

Besides the above all, the peculiarity of this novel is that the heroine Hawilopari was praying directly to God while in the throes of her agony, the

author stated, “She prayed to her Creator from her deepest mind and said, ‘*Oh God, please live with me, I am deeply in trouble.*’ She wondered herself why did she prayed so. Although she does not know that her prayer was answered, but she received some peace in her mind and all her trouble were gone” (p.71)

The early Mizo history tells us that the Mizos never prayed to God directly. They believed naturally in the existence of God and they believed him as a **Supreme Being** who they gave the name of *Pathian*, who created the universe. He was omnipotent and omnipresent as well. He was a God of all humanity and goodness, essentially benevolent and never doing any harm to humanbeing. But he was also one in distant heaven, far removed from and having little to do with the daily affairs of humans. This concept of remoteness was not absolute, however, because there was also a belief that *Pathian* was one who sees trouble from above and is both willing and able to uphold justice. It was therefore to him that people turned when in trouble. Thus when frightened Mizos would console themselves with the words “*Pathian a awm ang chu*” (there is God), while perplexed they would resign themselves to their fate with the expression “*Pathian thu thu*” (God will be done) and when suffering injustice they would say “*Pathianin a hria a lawm*”⁵³ (God knows everything). When they were blessed with good fortunes they said, “*Ka Pathian a tha*” (My God is good) and if they were in a state of fear or if things are going wrong with him, they said, “*Ka Pathian thin a ur*” (My God is angry with me.)⁵⁴ There was thus an involving concept of the high God, *Pathian*, as a being in whom the well-being of humanity rested.

At the sametime, along with God, the early Mizos also belief in *Khuavang*, the guardian spirits in whose hands lay the destiny of every human being from cradle to grave. Their spiritual repose was disturbed by spirits of evil known as *Ramhuais*, who had to be propitiated perpetually, so that *Khuavang*, the spirit of kindness and magnanimity, could bring comfort. It was

the *Ramhuais* who brought illness or injuries to humanity and who punished the breakers of oaths.⁵⁵

Accordingly Mizos offered sacrifices to these two *thlarau* separately. They are known as '*Pathian hnena inthawina*' meaning 'sacrifice to God' and '*Ramhuai hnena inthawina*' meaning 'sacrifice to evil spirit,' The rationale for the second group of sacrifices is their belief that each person had an appointed spirit who look after him. When displeased it causes sickness or other ailments, sometimes physical injury, and hence it must be propitiated; and the function was named according to the animal being sacrificed: when a fowl was sacrificed, it was called *ar khal*; it was called *kel khal* when a goat was sacrificed. Whenever a *Khal* was performed, the member of the family should not communicate with any stranger for three days, or visit the smithy nor should they take sour lemon.⁵⁶

In short, their idea about God and of worshiping him was not like that of the knowledge and worship of Christians today. In those early days they did not have a clear conception of God's personality to seek his help as the Christians have today. So, the prayer of Pari to her Creator or God was unbelievable for those days, as Paul's objection in the Epistle of Romans, "How are they to call him on whom they have not believed? How are they to believe in him of whom they have not heard? How are they to hear without someone to proclaim the goodnews to them? How are they to proclaim the goodnews unless they are sent to do so?"⁵⁷ That means, 'you cannot call on God unless you believe in him. You cannot believe in him unless you hear about him. You cannot hear about him unless someone to proclaim the goodnews or unless God commission someone to do so.'⁵⁸

The Missionaries did not come at the time of this event to Mizoram to proclaim the Gospel. So, to whom else could she (*Hawilopari*) appeal while the

throes of her agony without having a clear conception of God? It was only *Khuavang* to whom she would pour her heart for comfort and protection but not God. It is clear that the author has highlighted her religious life from the light of Christianity because he has been influenced by the Christianity.

In the novel of *Chhingpuii*, the writer did not mention the name of God and there are not any religious ceremonies or any performance of sacrifices. But the hero, Kaptluanga was bewitched by some of his enemies. The writer described his suffering as follows:

*“Nakinah chuan an dawi ta a, a mumangah samkhuih an lem tir a. Chuta chin chu a tha thei ta lo va, a ngawr ta a. A khuh a khuh a, samkhuiha rin thi ni awm takin a khakte chu a thi thin a. A chawei a tui tha thei tawh hek lo, a mut a tui tha thei hek lo, a cher telh telh mai a. Tar chhia ang main tha kham te, kawng kham te a lo hria a; khawlaiah dungah takngial pawh hahna a hmu zel mai a”*⁵⁹

(He has been bewitched by someone and his dream he was forced to swallow a comb and his health could not improve. He suffered cough and his sputum became bloody as if scratched with a comb and spitted with blood. He lost appetite and could not sleep well, he became thinner and thinner. He felt backache and some pain in his body and got tired even while walking in the street.)

The early Mizos seem to have recognised the existence of such a disease, although it may have been mistaken for chronic Tuberculosis.

The disease was closely associated with the power of a spirit, or a wizard with evil designs upon his victim. If a sufferer could show acceptable grounds for belief that his disease was due to some wizardry by another, the chief might well sanction the wizard's death. The sufferer would then wait for his day, time and place and possibly, without any warning, would fall upon his enemy and kill him. He would then hack out the dead man's liver and gorge upon his

blood, thus seeking a cure which was believed to be infallible. Alleviation of pain was sought and found, by the drinking of dog's blood, which could well have been temporarily effective, due to the iron content. The actual details of sacrifices made to overcome tuberculosis were almost unobtainable because, if a priest was successful, he would refuse any offers made to him to disclose the source of his power, knowing that disclosure might involve his supersession.⁶⁰ So, cures were attempted by performance of sacrifices.

But in this novel, the family of Kaptluanga did not make any attempt to cure the disease of Kaptluanga by performing sacrifices and they did not have any suspected person who would bewitched him. It is believable that since the novelist himself had suffered the same dreaded disease called tuberculosis and he was hospitalised in the Presbyterian Hospital, Durtlang; most of his friends and relatives have forsaken him. So, he used the life and suffering of Kaptluanga to depict his own life and suffering. Then he avoided the traditional practices of performing the sacrificial offering to the evil spirit for attempts to cure the disease because he was a believer of Christian faith.

Besides these, when his lover Chhingpuii was brutally assassinated by the enemies, no one has come to his comfort and to make him happy. The desire of Kaptluanga was now to meet his beloved Chhingpuii at *Pialral* (paradise), the author says:

*“Khawvel pathumna- pialralah Chhingpuii tawn lehna awm se a duh em em a”*⁶¹

(His only dream is now to meet his beloved Chhingpuii in the third world (Paradise)).

We can argue that this line is written from the mindset of Christianity. As Mizo history tells us, the early Mizos believed that there are two final abodes for the dead-*Mitthi Khua* and *Pialral*. According to the general belief *Mitthi*

Khua was a resting place for ordinary and common people who could not fulfill certain sacrifices to be performed during their lifetime on earth whereas *Pialral* was resting place for only *Thangchhuah* persons who fulfilled certain sacrifices to be performed during their lifetime.

There is no doubt that Kaptluanga was a good hunter, he always shot different wild animals while his health was normal. But killing a large number of one or different species was not counted as *Thangchhuah*.⁶² To achieve *Thangchhuah* title he had to kill at least one each of certain species of animals like elephant, sambhur, bear, barking deer, wild mithun etc. and he should perform ‘*ai*’ ceremonies. If he did not perform ‘*ai*’ ceremonies, he could not attain the title of *Thangchhuah*. Otherwise, he must give five feasts, like *chawng*, *sedawichhun*, *mitthi-rawp-lam* and *Khuangchawi* etc. to attain another title of *Thangchhuah*.⁶³ But in this novel, Kaptluanga and Chhingpuii were not the persons who fulfilled certain sacrifices to attain *Thangchhuah* status and there is no ground for them, from the ideas of the early Mizos, to live at *Pialral*. So, it is clear that the author Kaphleia has written this novel from the light of Christianity or the biblical teaching about the life after death.

In the novel of *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, the author did not indicate any pertaining religious function or sacrificial offering to God nor *inthawina*, sacrifice to *huais* (evil spirit). He did not mention even the name of god throughout his story. But when we delves deeper into the story, it can be seen that the author has written his novel from the religious point of views. Two examples can be taken out from the story as follows:

When Hrangchina was secretly released by Luta, son of Buati, a widow in the village of Lahuapa, Hrangchina set the village on fire by ignoring the message of Buati, and several houses were gutted by fire. The angry people arrested Buati and her son Luta and beat them with blood-shed. The crowd brought the mother and child to the Chief’s court. When the kind-hearted and

thoughtful Lalhuapa saw the mother and child, he was full of pity. So, he asked one of his elders to call the berieved families whom Hrangchina's killed to come and see the face of Buati and her son that might happened to relief their sorrows.

However, his elder, Ngura replied him that it may not be desireable for the berieved families to see the face of mother and child. So, the chief declared that he has already made judgement upon Buati and her son, because their suffering may not bring any fruit for the village and it may not delight even the berieved families. Then turning to Buati, he said, *'be not afraid any more, no one will touch you again. You will live in our home, not like a slave but as family members. No one will take any revenge against you.'* (p.70)

The public were murmuring, some were discontented on the judgement, they were secretly annoyed and said that their chief Lalhuapa did not have any interest to take revenge but to forgive even his enemies. The chief sent some young men to wash the mother and child and to bind up their wounds. So, the discontenment of the village was quelled.

After reading the Mizo history, we knew that the Chief never makes any judgement in the big case without consulting his *Upas* (elders) unless a person take refuge in the chief's house. The admission of Buati and her son Luta into the family of the Chief, not as a slave but as a family member was also very peculiar. Traditionally, the person who were driven by want of food, or the widows, orphans, and others who were unable to support themselves and having no relatives willing to do so, were admitted and they formed the bulk of *inpuichhung bawi*.⁶⁴ Besides, criminals who, escaped from the consequences of their ill deeds or thieves and vagabonds take refuge to avoid punishment by becoming the chief's bawi. The slaves from these systems were called *Chemsen bawi*. And civil disputes were unblushingly decided in favour of the party who volunteered to become the chief's bawi. It is evident that the custom

in these cases are grown up by decrees from the chief's granting sanctuary to those who, having committed serious crimes, were in danger of being killed by those they had injured or their relatives.⁶⁵

So, Buati and her son Luta committed a deed of crime, for they secretly released the enemy Hrangchina, who later burnt down the village. If the chief was willing to forgive and admit them in his family, they should be treated as *chemsen bawi* as usual practices in the olden days. Anyhow, the novelist has predisposed for the character of the chief to conform the teaching of Jesus Christ which is found in the Gospel of St. Matthew and Luke and in the Epistles of Paul:

“...love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use to you and persecute you”⁶⁶

“.....love your enemies, do good to them which hate you”⁶⁷

In his Epistle to Romans, St. Paul also urged the Christians to love their enemies and not to take any revenge against their enemies. Here comes St. Paul's exhortation:

“Never pay back evil for evil. Do things in such way that everyone can see you are honest clear through. Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible. Dear friends, never avenge yourselves....Instead, feed your enemies if he is hungry. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink....In other words, he will feel ashamed of himself for what he has done to you. Don't let evil gets the upper hand but conquer evil by doing good”⁶⁸

Here Paul taught that everyone has to live at peace with all men if it is possible. He knew that no man can be compelled to control as much temper in hour as another man in a lifetime. A man has to keep himself from all thought

of taking revenge. To treat a man with kindness rather than vengeance is the way to move him. Vengeance may break his spirit, but kindness will break his heart.

There is no greater force to move men than this serene forgiveness. It is better to live in harmony with one another. Long ago, Plato had said that the good man will choose rather to suffer evil than to do evil and it.⁶⁹

Again, in his beatitude sermon or the sermon in the mount, Jesus teaches his followers and said: “Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.”⁷⁰ It means, peace-makers are happy, they love and desire and delight in peace; learnt to be quiet. They keep the peace that it be not another and recover it when it is broken.

As already mentioned above, the chief Lalhuapa had already been conformed to the teaching of Christianity. He was merciful, he had a compassion on the soul of others and he helped them, he took pity on the persons like Buati and her son, Luta, who did things against his village welfare.

Another one is, when Phira listened the conversation of Hrangchina (who hardly escaped from the village of Phira) with others in the chief’s house from beneath, and heard Hrangchina has divulged the secret of Ngurthanpari and saying she was a lover and who secretly released Phira from the village. Hrangchina also warned her if her father knew the truth, her future might be very terrible. But the queen cleverly defended Ngurthanpari and pretended to be very angry upon Phira. She also requested them to converse about the acts of the spirit of Bawiha (elder brother of Pari). Then the queen and Thianga said that the villagers of Lalbuta always saw the dreaded actions of Bawiha’s spirit. All the villagers were full of fear and no one dare to go out at night when they heard the barking of dog.

Following their conversation Phira performed some fearful actions, killing a chicken and piglet and threw a piglet in the street in front of the chief's house. When they went out to see what had happened, Phira threw at them the blood of animals and also threw the intestine of chicken at Hrangchina's neck. By proclaiming his own name proudly, Khuanga tried to enter in the house to take dao, but he fell on the floor by kicking against the body of Lamputa. The persons who heard the sound of screaming animals and saw the dreaded actions were full of fear and trembled, they believed the spirit of Bawiha came to their village.

Before their conversion into Christianity, the Mizos believed that on the death of a man his spirit left him from the top of his skull. It followed the *tung-chaw* (bed post made from Bamboos) and crossed it over *Khanchhuk* (crossed beam) and followed the *liang* (a wallplate) and left the house at the end of *Liang* and went upto *Rihdil*. From there it returned and stayed back around the house for three lunar months in the form of spirit.⁷¹ During which period, the berieved family spared one seat whenever they took a meal. They also believed that some spirits, which they called *Thlahrang*, were troublesome for the family or for the village.⁷²

As told by my grandmother, the early Mizos believed that if a person died unnaturally, by being slayin at the hands of his enemies or by drowning or killed by animals, his soul may come back from *Rihdil* and round the house. It became a demon which would haunt people that made trouble for the villagers.

Not only the early Mizos, but nearly all the people who follow 'traditional religions believed that the spirit or ghosts of the dead live on, either in 'heaven' or close to their former homes or in a special land of the departed' which

different peoples associated with different locations. Some believe it to be below the earth or on one special mountain or beyond the sea or a great river.⁷³

Among Indians, death is not regarded as the result of natural causes, but it is due to the activity of devils, demons or other evil spirits. When it leaves the body, the soul is regarded as a naked and feeble being which can take a temporary abode in an animate or inanimate object. Some believe that the soul will ascend directly to heaven, while others believe that the soul may return to visit those who partake of the feast and some believe the soul wanders around the house or a grave. In such cases a fire, candle, or lamp is kept for the soul to find the way to its place of quietness. Sometimes a nail is pierced through the fingers and toes of the dead to prevent the dead one from harming the living ones. The Egyptians, Chinese and Indians believe that the life in the other world parallels the life on earth. It is expected by the living to provide for their life to continue in the other world. If they do so, the deceased will be in want.⁷⁴

Some said that if a person died unnaturally, at the hand of his enemies or by drowning or by hanging from a tree or in childbirth, while still undelivered, the corpse should be cremated. They believed that the soul may come back from the spirit's world, crying out in the same manner he or she cried out at the time of death. Then the soul became a *payee* (demons) which could haunt people. A premature death causes the soul to wander in this world until it completed the allotted life span, after which it enters the spirit world.⁷⁵

But in the teaching of Christianity or the Bible, there is no spirit acting to haunt the people. From the attitude of Christianity, death is 'passed on,' 'at rest and 'at peace' and it expresses a wide-spread hope that the loved one who has died will be seen again 'in a better place.'⁷⁶ When the Mizos were converted into Christianity, their views about death or life after death were very much different, when a person is dead, his or her soul is eternally abode in heaven. So,

they thought there is not any *thlahrang* who did the dreaded actions to disturb the people in their sleep, to put their hand in the fowl houses and sometimes killing the inmates. Therefore, if anybody talked about *thlahrang* or any dreaded action of the spirit, they tried to prove and catch the person who did such actions.

In this novel also, when Phira heard the conversation, he himself did some dreaded action by killing chicken and piglet etc. At the sametime, his new friend Thianga did not believe that it was the act of Bawiha's *thlahrang* but the action of Phira, and then he tried to find him. Here, the author seemed to expose that there is not any spirit action (*thlahrang*) who did a dreaded action but it was done by some person to make arrangement because they want to do anything while the peoples were so perplexed and to expose the absurdity of the superstition.

The author clearly exposed about this in his first novel called ***Thlahrang***. In this novel, one of the main characters, namely Kawla acted like *Thlahrang* by disguising himself as a dreaded person because he wanted to make some arrangement while the peoples were full of perplexity. Therefore, we can say that the author of this novel revealed the events and actions from the Christian elements which deeply rooted in his mind and portrayed the philosophy which is written in the Bible

IV: Social values :

The early Mizos traditionally had value systems and thought that certain qualities like *tlawmngaihna* and bravery were characteristics of a warring and hunting people.⁷⁷ They always valued certain feelings like brotherhood, compassion, sympathy, altruism and *tlawmngaihna*. '*Tlawmngaihna*' could be interpreted as a Mizo code of conduct that marked selflessness,

othermindedness or service to others. Honesty, courage, self-discipline, mutual help, readiness to organise and be organised were highly appreciated and in fact were largely summed up in the untranslatable word '*tlawmngaihna*.'⁷⁸

Commenting upon *Tlawmngaihna*, J.M. Lloyd said, "*Tlawmngaihna* is the Mizo code of morals and good form. One cannot, for example, be regarded as *tlawmngai* unless one is courteous, considerate, helpful, unselfish, courageous, industrious and ready to help others even at considerable inconvenience to himself....we thus see that *tlawmngaihna* embraces various types of activities and manifests itself in various form which can be summed up as, 'Group over self' wherein self-sacrifice for the needs of others is the spontaneous outcome. A man who practices the precepts of *tlawmngaihna* is highly respected."⁷⁹

In the word of N.E. Parry, *Tlawmngaihna* is a word which has no exact equivalent in English. And he also said, "It is really a very good moral code, enforced solely by public opinion. Unfortunately with the growth of enlightenment, there is a tendency to neglect this *tlawmngaihna*."⁸⁰

Tlawmngaihna is connected with Mizo hospitality. Any Mizo would take in a stranger for a night and provide him, all free of charge, not only with supper, but also with breakfast next morning and a packet of lunch wrapped in two big leaves for the journey.⁸¹

The '*tlawmngaihna*' occupies a distinct spot in the indigenous Mizo culture and it has been rhetorically stressed in our novels. Even before the arrival of foreign Missionaries or embracing the new religion, Christianity, the Mizos practised this kind of self-sacrifices for others which is identified as '*tlawmngaihna*.' It is a compelling moral force which finds expression in self-sacrifice for the service of others in thoughts, behaviours and actions. The self-sacrifice for the service of others has possesses divine love as we find in the

Bible that, “greater love had no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend” (John 15:13). So, this divine love and ‘*tlawmngaihna*’ is closely related, and in this section I am using, the Mizo social values — *tlawmngaihna* for the main focus.

Having explained the nature of *tlawmngaihna*, let us quote some examples from the aforesaid novels. First, in the novel of *Hawilopari*, the author nicely portrayed the true *tlawmngaihna* by using his main characters Zema, a kind hearted village young man and Chhana, the village prince, who dedicated their life to help their friends, Hminga and Liana while they needs the help in the time of their hardship and perplexity. As already mentioned earlier, Zema dedicated himself to guide the two poor brothers at any cost. When Chhana, the village prince also joined them when he heard the problems of his poor friends, his love for them was aroused, he counted the cost of going with them, but his self-lessness and other-mindedness urges him to go with them and to share their hardship.

During the ten years wandering, Zema rendered all his help and comfort to the needs of his friends but he never expected anything in return from them. He was always ready to help them even at considerable inconvenience. After ten years of wandering from home, he has brought them home safely. Even after they returned to their hometown, he again dedicated himself to help his poor friend Hminga.

When Chhana and Liana marry their lovers Ngaihi and Mawii respectively, Hminga moved out to find his lover Hawilopari who already moved on another village due to impartial judgement upon her. Zema, marked selflessness, compassion and sympathy for his friend immediately ran after Hminga without considering what will be happened upon him and reached ahead the new village of Pari. When he saw the village was burnt down by the

Pawi raiders and all the inhabitants including the family of Hawilopari were taken as captives, Zema, being a Pawi by blood tactfully made a plan to save Pari by disguising himself. Thus he rescued Hawilopari from the Pawis raiders, but he was severely wounded by the raiders. When Pari's parents and Hminga reached the spot where Zema was laid, the wounded Zema made his last request to Pari's parents. His dying request was still not for himself but for the two lovers. So, he had sacrificed his life for his poor friend, Hminga.

In this connection, let me reflect from one passage in the Bible: "*My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth*" (I Jn 3:18). Of course, Zema did it. Hence the love shown in his life on earth by Zema and his service for the interest of his friends was, undoubtedly genuine *Tlawmngaihna* in character. His *tlawmngaihna* was also more biblical than the normal Mizo *tlawmngaihna* or the Mizo moral code of life. The theme of *tlawmngaihna* also seems sprouted from the Christian perspective.

The early Mizo novelist have seen the *tlawmngaihna* from two sides, one is Mizo *tlawmngaihna* — Mizo code of conduct that marked selflessness, othermindedness, in the word-need-love; and the other is the Christian concept of '*tlawmngaihna*' or 'brotherhood.' By the term 'the need-love', would mean '*tlawmngaihna* which sends help and comfort to the needy'. It was enjoyable and warm welcome for the recipient.

In the novel of *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, as already mentioned earlier, when Phira was hardly escaped from the village with the help of Pari, the chief sent the village young men to run after Phira; and Thianga the new friend of Phira also led one group to the route of Hmunzawl. Then Thianga renders all his help and comfort to the needy friend Phira. Thianga did not expect anything in return from Phira. Not only this, when Ngurthanpari was anxious with desperate thought and bewilderment, she always need the help of Thianga, and

Thianga was also ready to help her. When Ngurthanpari fell unconscious due to longing for Phira, Thianga has secretly brought Phira in the village of Lalbuta at the request of the queen, to make Ngurthanpari happy.

Further, in time of hardship, anxiety and perplexity, Ngurthanpari always needed the help of her aunt Lalpuii the queen, who understood her real problems and devoted to help her. All the deeds of Lalpuii for interest of her niece were '*tlawmngaihna*' itself. She was always ready to help Pari even at considerable inconvenience on her path.

Again, Phira was enviableness for Thianga because Ngurthanpari, the princess was a lover of Phira. They are not known before he (Phira) came to their village as a messenger. But without having any spirit of envy, Thianga rendered himself to help Phira at any time. Here, the *tlawmngaihna* of Thianga for Phira and Pari was more biblical than the Mizo *tlawmngaihna* practised by the early Mizos, because he did not expect any return from them or has had an aim to get the reward from the chief. In the early Mizo way of life, there was a competition amongst the youngmen to get the credit and honour from the chief by deeds of *tlawmngaihna*. Such persons were held in high esteem not only by their fellow inmates in the *Zawlbuk* but also by the chief and all others in the village. The credit and honour for such persons was symbolized by a special cup of zu, rice beer, called '*Taima zu no*' or '*Huai zu no*' offered to them by the chief at special feasts. This has been the highest award amongst the Mizos.⁸² "This cup of honour" as Rokhuma put it, "was in its own sphere what the Victory Cross is with the British Soldiers"⁸³

Next to *Tlawmngaihna*, Mizos valued bravery as a characteristic of warring and hunting community which they once were.⁸⁴ A Mizo youth cherished to be brave as this was mostly desired of him by the elders in the society. They had to occasionally fight to protect their village against external

aggression from a neighbouring village. All the village youngmen needed to remain alert to fight if and when such situation arose.⁸⁵

Mizos were earlier known as vicious marauders and head-hunters.⁸⁶ But they were not traditionally such an enthusiastic head-hunter in the same sense as that the inhabitants of the Naga Hills have been known to be in earlier times. Nevertheless, head-hunting was practised. In return successful young men had the pick of their village beauties for the asking. Deaths among the nobility occasioned the need for providing retainers and servants for the journey to the *Mitthi Khua* or village of dead men. On return from such raids the young women would accompany the welcoming party and meet the warriors carrying *Zu*, fruit and tobacco and would escort them back to the village with ecstatic jubilation.⁸⁷ Besides, for the tribals it was necessary to prove their bravery, social maturity and manhood. Successful head-hunters therefore won the heart of the aspiring damsels and were highly respected by the society.⁸⁸

Head-hunting was not considered to be a cruel act. It was socially accepted and highly appreciated. To prove his manhood, maturity and to win the heart of damsels, a man was required to undergo the game and bring home as many heads of the enemies as he could. The successful head-hunters were highly respected and called '*Pasaltha*' meaning 'Great warrior or hunter.' To them it was more than a mere fame, for they believed that only such hunters were entitled to settle in *Pialral* (Paradise) in the life after death. The defeated enemies served them in *Pialral* as slave.⁸⁹

Further, a person who killed a numbers of different fierceful animals is also called '*pasaltha*' (a notable hunter). In hunting in the jungles the youth were required to possess physical prowess and bravery in facing fierceful animals. For all such reasons a young man with great bravery was highly valued by elders in the society. The number of heads taken by a person during raids in a neighbouring village increased his esteem in his own village; also the

heads of fierce animals killed were displayed on the walls of the hunter's verandah to show the number of animals he had hunted. The chief also honoured a hunter if he had killed a specified number of wild animals by bestowing on him the title of *Thangchhuah* and offering him seat next to him on any social occasion.⁹⁰

The early Mizo novelists also valued the bravery in hunting and warring. In the novel of *Chhingpuii*, the protagonist Kaptluanga was a successful hunter. He shot the elephant, and different wild animals. He was very popular and highly esteemed in the village. The chief offered to him a special cup of 'zu' called '*Huai zu no*' at the special '*chawng*' feasts to show his credit and honour. He also called him (Kaptluanga) as '*Ka sa bel*' meaning '*my meat pot*.' He was a faithful person and he never acted any deceit for his self esteem.

While his enemies talked about to defame him, he would not resist them and said, "Truth will not rust" (*thutak a tuiek lo vang*). He did not like to take any revenge upon the one who defame his name but endures the blasphemy until he disprove all evil speaking against his name. His character was more than a Christian life than that of a good personality and a gracious man.

In the novel of *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*, Phira was a great warrior and a brave young man in the village of Lalhuapa. After spending seven nights for raiding expedition under the leadership of Manga-pa (father of Manga) and returned with success. But, unfortunately they were attacked by Hrangchina and his party, the village warrior of Labuta. All his companions were killed by the enemies and he escaped from the attack with great hardship. On his way, he killed Bawiha by name, son of the chief Lalbuta, a messenger sent by Hrangchina. He took all the weapons of Bawiha and he burnt down Lalbuta's village and gutted all the houses of the village.

Then he went to the village of Lalhrima, the younger brother of Lalbuta, pretending to be a messenger on the death of Lalhrima's aunt Darpuiliani. When they discovered that he was not a messenger but an enemy of the village, Ngurthanpari, daughter of Lalbuta secretly released him from the hand of the chief because she had fallen in love with him though she knew that he was the killer of her elder brother Bawiha and who burnt down their village. The queen Lalpuui also admired him because of his handsomeness and his bravery. Thianga, a new friend of Phira was also proud of him for his bravery even though he was an enemy of their village.

When he reached his own village, he gave a detail report before the chief (Lalhuapa) and his elders about their expedition and how his companions were killed by the enemies. He said that he narrowly escaped from the enemies, yet he killed Bawiha, the prince of Lalbuta's village and burnt down the village. The chief and his elders look at him with astonishment and also proud of him for his bravery. He also told the chief that he will go again to the jungle to find out Hrangchina and his party, who were coming to raid and to burnt their village. The chief also gave him his gun for the hunting of Hrangchina and his party and wished him a success.

Then he went to the jungle with the companion of Laiveta to find out his big rival Hrangchina and his party before they reach the village. In the river bank of Tuikum, they found Hrangchina and his companion. Phira killed one raider and caught Hrangchina, his big rival. They took the head of dead man and brought Hrangchina in the village and put him in the corner of *Zawlbuk* (bachelors' dormitory) with tightly bound to be killed on the next day.

The chief and elders of the village highly esteemed Phira for his courage. Without his presence, the chief Lalhuapa did not like to make any decision or judgement upon Buati and her son, who secretly released Hrangchina. But after

hearing Phira was not in the village, he declared his judgement upon Buati and her son, Luta.

At the sametime, some questions come to mind after carefully examining the story. In the early Mizo life, when a '*pasaltha*' (warrior) brought home a head of the slained enemy, before entering the village the assailant standing by the side of the killed enemy would call his own name thrice out of joy to let the slain know his (assailant) name to enable him to identify his master, his assailant.

To enter their village, the victors had to wait in the vicinity of the village for the fall of the evening. There they would spend the rest of the night firing in the air and proclaiming their victory. So, the villagers would welcome their victors by various acclamations.⁹¹ When a head of the enemy was brought home even children were given dao or any weapon to hit it with. This was considered tantamount to killing his enemy, and a feast to this connection was prepared as an act of recognition and appreciation by their parents. Vanchhunga proudly remarks that he too had a chance to hit the 'heads' when he was a small boy.⁹²

Besides, the assailant or *pasaltha* should perform '*ai* ceremony, for the spirit of the slain would accompany him in the world of the dead as a slave and he would have to serve him in the abode of the dead. Otherwise, the spirit of the slain would make resistance and fight back his assailant in the village of the dead.⁹³

However, Phira, a village warrior, who returned successfully with the head of enemy and a captive (Hrangchina, a village warrior of Lalbuta) was neither welcomed by the villagers with various acclamation, nor he called his name by standing near the side of the head of slained. They merely put Hrangchina in the corner of *Zawlbuk* with tightly bound; they did not appointed anyone for the

sentry to watch over their captive. Even Phira, a village warrior was not in the *Zawlbuk* as usual practised in the olden day, but in his home that very night.

The author expressed that the acclamation of the victory over Hrangchina and his friend was not convenient because some families in the village were mourners due to lost of their beloved; Hrangchina and his party killed them while conducting their raiding expedition. Here the author ignored the traditional life of the Mizos or the traditional practice called '*Ralthah sawngbawl dan*' or '*rallu ai*' ceremonies. Perhaps the author felt that it was not necessary to indicate the said ceremonies as he was a believer in Christian faith.

All the fictions discussed in this section were having a pre-Christianity setting, yet the authors were all committed Christians. The stigma of Christianity is visible from their presentation of the characters in their fictions. The friendly and brotherly love shown by the lovers show the mark of Christian love which condescended traditional love found in earlier Mizo life. The parental love shown to the less fortunate people in the fictions is also very genuine. Could not this be the imprint of Christianity? The religious life and social values presented are also indicating the Christian values. The traditional values like celebrating the head of game animals and men were incidentally ignored in many cases. If this has not been the impact and influence of Christianity, what else could it be? The kind of *Tlawmngaihna* shown is also very genuine as a result of the growing influence of Christian mindset among the elite group in the society. All these could be the influence of Christianity, and this could be further exemplified in the coming chapters.

* * *

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CHAPTER – III

SETTING OF MIZO FICTION : POST- CHRISTIANITY ERA

Introduction

In this Chapter, I will attempt to trace the influence of Christianity on Mizo society; the changes brought about in religious beliefs and practices, in the social values and in the sphere of the economic and political life which the novels have reflected. I have selected five Mizo novels of the post-Christianity era which were outright Christian and moralistic in tone, i.e. *Lali* by L.Biakliana, *Kros bulah Chuan* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* by Zikpuii-Pa (K.C. Lalvunga), *Thla Hleinga Zan* by James Dokhuma and *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* by Khawlkungi. These novels have highlighted the religious aspects of the Mizo society in the early and middle twentieth century, their thought about Christianity; and also the new way of life of the Mizo society.

The novel *Lali* is the second Mizo novel or the first Mizo short story, written by L. Biakliana in the year 1937. It is a Christian love story. This novel won the first prize in the story writing competition on “The status and fate of Mizo Women in the Society” organised by the Mizo Students’ Association in 1939-40¹ The main theme and narrative of the story is the upliftment of the status of women in the family as well as in the Mizo society by Christianity. The outline story can be summarized as follows :

The family of Lali (whose full name was Lalawmpuii) lived in a Christian village, all their family members, except (Lali’s) father who remained unconverted and addicted to alcohol, were good Christians. By this time,

Christianity had prevailed in Mizoram, but there were a few old men who had not converted to the new religion, who lived in the old fashioned worldly life. One of them was Lali's father, who was in the habit of being prejudicially affected by strong drink. When he got drunk he became quarrelsome, abusive and was used to behaving very badly in the family; so his family was also scared of him when he came home from a place where drinking is carried on.

Lali was a good young girl and the only daughter in the family. So all the domestic work, like carrying water and firewood, cleansing unhusked rice etc. are put on her shoulder, she was not helped by her brothers in the work. So, she was busy in her daily routine work. At the sametime, she was a devoted Christian and a regular Church-goer. She had been appointed as the Sunday School teacher in the Junior Department. She always read and prepare the lesson on Sunday morning with the help of a young man called Biakmawia, a regular sleeper in their home and a co- teacher in the said department.

Once time, Lali had a suitor, namely Rozika, the only son of a wealthy man in the village. To Lali's father, Rozika was the suitable young man to be his son-in-law because of his (Rozika) father's wealth and possession. So, he forced his daughter Lali to marry him, but Lali declined. Her mother and maternal uncle Manga also tried to persuade her, but when Lali told everything she knew about the character of Rozika, they also refused to accept the young man for his loose character. Uncle Manga plainly told the father why Lali refused to marry the man Rozika; but Lali's father got very angry and he forced her again while they were having dinner. Lali knows that the word of her father was final and she had no right to go against her father's decision. So, she got up and wept.

Then the kind mother defended her only daughter, but the angry father lost his temper. He asked his younger son Zuala, to call his uncle Manga for

consultation to push through his own desire. Zuala, having a headache at the time did not go immediately but lingered on near the door complaining his headache. The father could no longer tolerate it and threw a firestick against Zuala and hit him on the latter's shoulder. Zuala fell down to the floor, the kind mother took care of the crying son and scolded her husband for his misbehaviour, but the angry father beat her up and she had to leave the house for her life. Zuala then fell sick and could not sleep well and he was always groaning through the night. The father asked Lali to call her mother, then she went with Biakmawia as a companion. On the way, the eye of love was opened between the two persons.

When Zuala's condition become more and more critical, Biakmawia was always there to help the family through the night while other young men had fallen asleep; they asked him to sleep because of his hard work during the day, but he refused and was always ready to help them. One night, the dying young boy asked his father three important questions about death and life after death etc. His father could not answer any of the questions because he has never thought about it before. A fine young man Biakmawia answered the questions and also consoled Zuala, telling him that he will not die and he will be improving very soon. Then Zuala died after suffering his illness for four days. The death of the younger son changed the life of his father completely and he become converted. His conversion also changed all sphere of their family life.

One night, he heard the conversation of some boys about Rozika's sexual relation with one young girl, Zami by name, and that he was expelled from the Church. So, the marriage proposal was cancelled. The father also felt that Biakmawia, an ordinary young man and a son of a widow, but a good Christian, was the suitable person for his son-in-law because of his self-sacrifices and readiness to help them while Zuala was on his sick-bed. After one

year, Lali was married to Biakmawia, a good Christian young man of her choice, whom she loved from her youth.

Thla Hleinga Zan is written by James Dokhuma. It was the biggest novel in Mizo language at the time of the first publication. The author James Dokhuma was born on the 15th June 1932. After passing class five he joined the Assam Rifle, where he acquired a working knowledge of English, Hindi and Urdu; he was awarded proficiency certificate in Hindi. He is one of the best Mizo writers and as a writer he became the first Mizo recipient of Padma Shri Award for Literature in 1985.² He is a novelist, dramatist, story-teller and poet. He has written several novels namely, *Thla Hleinga Zan*, *Good Bye Lushai Brigade*, *Rinawmin*, *Irrawadi Luikamah*, *Tumpangchal nge Saithangpuii*, *Hmangaihna Thuchah*, *Kymoto Synora*, *Khawhar In*, *Gabattha*, *Silaimu Ngaihawm etc.* and other books. *Thla Hleinga Zan* is his masterpiece. He would be best remembered as novelist, for his novels portray his best thought and imagination.

Besides, he also wrote four drama plays which are ‘literature of propaganda.’ As mentioned in the Preface, the author wrote the first half while he was imprisoned in Nowgong Special Jail as a Security prisoner in 1969, and he finished the second half after he had been transferred to Gauhati District Jail in 1970. It was printed and published in 1977. *Thla Hleinga Zan* and *Tumpangchal Nge Saithangpuii* were selected as the textbooks for B.A. course in Mizo under NEHU (now under Mizoram University) and his ‘*Khawhar In*’ novel also was selected for the text of M.A. under Mizoram University.³

The novel dealt with two pairs or dual love story; Kapthuama and Rozami on the one hand, Liankhuma and Thankimi on the other hand. Kapthuama and

Rozami are the main characters of the novel in a tragedytragic nature while Liankhuma and Thankimi are in a comic nature.

Kapthuama and Rozami, the first pair of lovers, lived in different villages. Fortunately a Presbytery meeting was held in the girl's village and Kapthuama also attended the same Presbytery. The two lovers met each other on a full-moon night (called *Thla Hleinga Zan*) and had a fellowship with one another at a platform in front of the girl's house. On their first meeting, they fell in love with each other. But the young man Kapthuama did not earn the favour of the girl's father, because he was the nephew of one-time rival in love with Rozami's father, where the latter (Rozami's father) was the loser. So, Kapthuama tried to earn it with his best effort. In the next year, Kapthuama stayed for three weeks at Rozami's village to help his cousin Thanthuami in clearing weeds in their jhum. One day, a girl Chhingpui by name, the close relative of Rozami, was carried away by the spirit of *Khawmu*, the village young men searched for her in the jungle. Kapthuama also went to the unknown jungle to find out the girl in dead or alive. Fortunately, after four days, he found her sleeping upon a fallen tree and he brought her home alive. The father of Rozami also praised him but still intended not to give his daughter in marriage.

Once Rozami fell sick and she become very serious; at last, on the verge of death, she called upon the name of Kapthuama, the name of her lover. Her parents sent a messenger to call Kapthuama and he came. Before they reached the village, they heard the cry of a spirit in the forest; Thuama believed that it was none other than Rozami, so while his friends were standing still with fear, he called it loudly by her name and the spirit also came, returned and reached the home (body of Rozami) with Kapthuama; so Rozami begins to recover and eventually got quite well again. So, his miraculous evocation of her from the death now won the heart of the father and allowed to give his daughter

to Thuama. Rozami also requested her lover to send a mediator as soon as they finished clearing the jungle for jhum or cultivation.

Unfortunately, Kapthuama was severely injured while clearing the jungle for jhum and he could not send a mediator. One day, Kapthuama went with his two friends to Indo-Burma border area to look for the goods left over in the II World War. Unfortunately he was seen and captured by Japanese soldiers on duty for unknowingly pocketing a small British propaganda leaflet he found on the way. His friends saw him being led away by the Japanese soldiers and they also heard two rounds of gun shots. They believed that he was shot dead by the Japanese soldiers. Then they came home hurriedly and reported what they saw and heard about Kapthuama. Though the news shocked Rozami, yet she did not believe his death and was determined to wait for him. Several months had passed but nothing was heard of Kapthuama.

In the meantime, Rozami had a suitor, Thanseia, Havildar of Indian Army. He was favoured by her father and he wanted her to marry. But Rozami refused to marry because she wanted to wait for her lover at least for some more time. But her father forced her to marry and she could no longer resist the decision of her father. Meanwhile, Kapthuama came home escaping from the hands of his captors. Rozami heard the news of the arrival of Kapthuama the day after her marriage, but it was too late now. After losing his lover, Kapthuama also married another girl, Hmingdailovi of another village. Unluckily, Rozami was divorced by her husband, Thanseia because one girl loved and followed him. So, Rozami returned to her family and lived a very distressing life, for she had already conceived a child. Her only hope was to be remembered by Kapthuama on every fullmoon night as promised in the bygone days.

Another pair of lovers in the novel are Liankhuma and Thankimi. Liankhuma was a close friend of Kapthuama, but he was not a good Christian

or serious worshipper of God while Thankimi was a convicted believer of God. They were in the same village. Thankimi always tried to convince him with all her effort. She also prayed to God for her lover. When Liankhuma requested her to sleep with him, she refused. Instead, she told him that the desire of sexual relationship is not the best means of love but the love in conformity of the teaching of Bible is the best way of love. So, she requested him to believe Jesus Christ. At last she succeeded.

One day, Liankhuma met one person on the way to their jhum, which he had never seen before the stranger said, “*I come to do your will.*” He was amazed but he could not forget and that voice makes him a troublesome. On the day of Good Friday, he attended the Church; when he looked at the pulpit, he saw in bleeding Jesus Christ being crucified, and he also saw the same words, *I come to do your will.* He was very worried and troubled in mind. On the same evening, he discovered his iniquity, at last Jesus Christ revealed Himself before him by stretching His hands. When Liankhuma saw that, he instantly surrendered to Jesus Christ and then become a born again Christian. After these, the two lovers married and lived a happy married life based on Christian love.

The novel, ***Kros Bulah Chuan*** is written by Zikpuii-pa (K.C. Lalvunga). The author stated that he has developed this novel from the poem ‘*we kiss again in tears*’, by Lord Tennyson.’⁴ Zikpuii-pa’s real name is K.C. Lalvunga, IFS, the first Mizo to become an Indian Foreign Service officer and the first Mizo to become a full-fledged Indian Ambassador to different countries. He was the son of famous poet - Hrawva Kiangte, the chief of Aizawl in the pre-Independent India. K.C. Lalvunga was born on Dec. 27, 1929; he was a bright student, he passed Matriculation in 1948 and completed B.A. in 1953. After passing B.A., he joined the post of Sub-Inspector of School in the year 1955-56, and then he became the Headmaster of Gandhi Memorial High School,

Champhai during 1956-62. He was appointed for Headmaster of Saitual High School in 1959-62. In 1962, he joined the Indian Foreign Service and worked at different countries.⁵ He was one of the founding fathers of the first and primer college in Mizoram, which is now called Pachhunga University College.⁶ He retired from the Indian Foreign Service in 1990 and died in Oct. 10, 1994.⁷

K.C. Lalvunga wrote several novels, namely *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, *C.C. Coy No.27*, *Silverthangi*, *Hostel Awmtu*, and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is his masterpiece. He also wrote a number of essays and he has composed several songs. All his novels, essays and songs were printed and published.

The story of *Kraws Bulah Chuan* (meaning- *Near the Cross*) started with the ambitious Pastor Tlangkhuma, who was determined to bring up his only son Lalsawma, by name to be a Doctor; he thought that the job of Doctor was an ideal job for serving the Lord next to Pastor. He admitted his son to Shillong Government High School. Lalsawma was a bright student, an obedient boy. He never complained against his father's decision. When he passed Matriculation he wanted to join the King's Commission Officer, but his father did not allow him. Instead he was determined to send his son to the Medical College to become a doctor. Lalsawma, an obedient son also made up his mind to go to Medical College to study Medicine, as his father desired.

Lalsawma came out to Mizoram after he completed the examination of Matriculation to wait for his result in their hometown. During his stay at home, the local Church Committee appointed him as a Sunday School teacher. At the sametime, he had fallen in love with one local young girl, namely Thanchhingi. His father Pastor Tlangkhuma did not know anything about the love between his son Lalsawma and Chhingi while all the local young people have known it.

When their parents heard about the news of their love, both fathers did not allow them to get married, because of their personal grudge.

One day Thanchhingi had a suitor, namely Subedar Lalzarliana, an Indian Army Officer. Taivela, father of Chhingi favoured him to be his son-in-law and compelled her to marry this military officer.

Lalsawma joined the Dibrugarh Medical School (College); he had passed the LMP degree after completing his studies for four years with many hardships, and he received an appointment order from Shillong to work in Mizoram. When he joined the post of Doctor, the public praised and speak highly of him for his treatment of different patients, proficiency of public relation and administering his staff. Due to his good performance, his parents, Pastor Tlangkhuma and his wife were now popular and many of the wealthy families as well as who have a virtuous maiden tried to get on good term with them.

Once, there was an epidemic of small pox and cholera in Aizawl; Lalsawma was appointed to shoulder the responsibility of preventive works for the said epidemic due to his proficiency of public deal. Day by day many people and students from different schools came to the Hospital to take preventive immunisation. One day, Lalsawma saw one attractive young girl; he asked many questions about her background. The girl named Hmingthansiami, daughter of Pastor Laltawna, a student of class ten, also plainly replied all his questions. On the same evening, Lalsawma told his faithful friend Pa Denga about the girl. Pa Denga then got the address of Hmingthansiami who lived in the house of her aunt. Lalsawma and Pa Denga visited her one night, and they had fallen in love with each other.

When Hmingthansiami completed her matriculation examination, she returned to their village where her parents live. It was only about

10 miles away from Aizawl. Lalsawma always used to visit her on Sundays. Their fathers, Pastor Tlangkhuma and Laltawna have known each other and they were intimate friends while they studied in the Cherra Theological School. Lalsawma asked Hmingthansiami to marry him and before the end of the year, the two lovers were happily married and lived a happy married life; many people said, *'they are a God appointed partner in wedlock.'*

But they could not escape from strife. After they had four children, they always quarrelled with each other due to financial problems. At the sametime, Lalsawma got the transfer order to rural village which was very far from Aizawl. Lalsawma went alone to join his new post due to the incompleteness of their children's school session. One day, he attended the wedding ceremony with his staff. Due to warm weather, he entered the garden to get fresh air.

Unexpectedly he met his old girl-friend Thanchhingi, who now became a widow because her husband Subedar Lalzarliana was killed in the war of Kashmir. And she came to this village to join her aunt's family. So, the two old lovers always met each other and renewed their love. When an old Pastor Tlangkhuma heard about the news of their way of life, he sent a letter to Lalsawma and sternly rebuked him. He also asked the higher authority to post his son Lalsawma at Aizawl again consequent upon their family constraints. So, before the completion of one year, Lalsawma was transferred back to Aizawl.

However, when his wife Hmingthansiami read his diary in which he recorded how he spend the day and night with Thanchhingi, Hmingthansiami was very angry upon her husband and that stirred up strife between them. At first, Lalsawma apologized to his wife, but Siami could not control her anger upon him. Then Lalsawma could no longer tolerate the angry wife, he beat her

up and divorced her. So, Hmingthansiami returned to her parent's home with her youngest daughter Lalduhkimi.

One day Hmingthansiami brought her daughter Lalduhkimi to Aizawl Hospital, when Lalsawma checked her, he found out his youngest daughter had suffered the diphtheria disease. The other doctors came to help Lalsawma, they gave an Anti-diphtheria Toxin injection and other treatment. The doctors and nurses tried to save her life with all their efforts, but after giving medical treatment for two days, Lalduhkimi passed away in the hand of her father. Lalsawma could not justify himself because he could not save the life of his own daughter while he saved many other children who suffered from the same disease. He brought home the body of his daughter as traditionally practiced by the Mizos.

One Sunday evening, Lalsawma visited the grave of his daughter; he thought that the cause of the death of his daughter was his own fault. His uncontrolled anger made him to expel his wife and daughter. He said to himself he should die for his sins but not his daughter. While he stood thoughtfully, he saw the Cross which was planted upon the grave of his daughter; he became aware that the righteous man died for the sinners. Then he knelt near the Cross, he confessed his sins to God and asked his forgiveness. He also said to God that he had sinned upon him and requested him to create a clean heart and renew a steadfast spirit within him. When he finished his prayer, he heard somebody saying 'Amen' from behind. When he looked behind, he saw his wife Hmingthansiami who was standing with tears. Without saying anything, he hugged her and apologized to her. In turn, his wife Hmingthansiami also apologized and asserted that she was responsible for the death of their daughter. Then Lalsawma asked her to return to their home where their children eagerly awaited for them. By this way, the separated

couple was reunited near the Cross which was planted upon the grave of their daughter.

The novel, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* is written by Zikpuii-pa (K.C. Lalvunga), and the novel is his masterpiece. The story of the novel started from the conference-cum-competition of Sunday schools' children of Zopui Pastorate at Sihzawl Church, near the village of Zopui. The name of their Pastor was Lianzuala B.Th., who was bright and talented to motivate the younger ones. In the individual item, Ngurthansangi (called Nguri, who is to be the heroine of this novel) got the highest position and received two first prizes: Holy Bible and Shield. She was the daughter of an old village Chief Khawvelthanga.

The name of the hero in the novel, Chhuanvawra Renthlei (who was nicknamed Taimama) was the son of Doctor Selthuama Renthlei. During the Second World War, Dr Selthuama worked amongst the Army and he was promoted to the rank of Captain. The British authority gave him retirement benefit by conferring Honorary Civil Surgeon. When they came out to Mizoram, they settled in the village of Zopui and he opened a drug store and dispensary for the public. The mother of Chhuanvawra was originated from Sailo clan, a descendant of Rolura Sailo and was a close relative of the old chief Khawvelthanga. When the new village administrative system called Village Council was introduced in Mizoram, the Zopui village had elected their old chief Khawvelthanga as their first President of Village Council for his efficient administration, but he refused the second term.

Chhuanvawra (called Chhuana) was a bright young boy. He appeared the examination of Matriculation in 1963, his batchmates and he were the first to appear in the said examination from their school and he passed in a very good grade. After passing matriculation, he proceeded to Shillong for higher studies.

At the sametime, there was a new political movement in Mizoram, namely the Mizo National Front, it intensified its activities and they recruited volunteers for their party to fight for the freedom of Mizoram, or Independence from India. The new party had greatly influenced the young boys and girls in Mizoram. All the young people of Zopui village also joined the new party when Chhuana returned to their village during the winter vacation, and the volunteers had already set-up the Zopui Battalion under the command of the villager middle aged man Ngurtawna, self-styled as the rank of Lt. Colonel.

Chhuana joined again the college at Shillong. One day he got a letter from Ngurthansangi, in which she used the word, '*Dearest*' to address him. Chhuana also replied her by using the same word, '*Dearest*' but merely for a close relative word. In her second letter, Ngurthansangi could not control herself and confessed that she had fallen in love with him. After this, they always sent letter to each other.

After passing II PUC in the first division, Chhuana came out to Mizoram to avail summer vacation in their village. During his stay at their village Zopui, Chhuana and Ngurthansangi had happily spent the days and nights, and shared their love to each other. Chhuana made a request to Ngurthansangi to wait for the completion of his studies and Ngurthansangi also promised him that she will always remain faithful to him.

Then Chhuana went to Shillong to resume his studies and he was admitted in the I B.A. After he had arrived at Shillong, a great political disturbance broke-out in Mizoram. All the District Offices, including the Office of Deputy Commissioner, Treasury Office and the Headquarters of Assam Rifle has been captured by the Mizo National Army. Mizoram was separated from India for sometime. The Government of India also immediately sent a number of Army

Battalions to Mizoram to keep law and order. They recaptured Aizawl capital from the hands of MNF; they burnt down the Aizawl main Bazar and they looted valuable properties from the unburnt houses which they found. Not only in Aizawl but throughout Mizoram, raping of women and other deplorable activities became common. So, many students at Shillong went to East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh) and they came out from there to help the desperated people of Mizoram.

Chhuana was shocked when he heard from his father many had fled to Shillong for their life and that all the houses of Zopui village were burnt down and Ngurthansangi had been taken away by an Indian Army as prisoner. If she was lucky, she might be married by an Army Officer. When he heard the sad news, he was very angry. So, without taking prior permission from higher authority, Chhuana came out to Mizoram to help his poor lover Ngurthansangi. But before he reached his destiny, he was arrested by the Army, and he was imprisoned for three months somewhere in their camp. Then he was released and sent back to Shillong because he was the son of a retired Senior Officer of Indian Army and a younger brother of Chhuankima, an IFAS Officer.

Fortunately, their College Principal requested him to resume his studies and he allowed him to be admitted in the II B.A. class without appearing the examination of Ist Year B.A. When he joined the college, the students were preparing for the Inter-College Debate at St. Anthony College Hall, and the Governor of Assam has kindly consented to attend the said Debate Competition. Chhuana was elected to be the Leading Speaker and house leader. Their topic was, 'In the idea of this meeting, morality is more important than the subject of Arts and Science for the goodness and development of the world.' Under his leadership, they defeated many other Colleges, and St. Anthony College was to be their rival in the final competition.

On the final day, not only the college students, but all the important officials including the Governor of Assam attended to hear the debate. The Governor was accompanied by Maj. General Randhawa. Then Chhuana, the leading speaker from St. Edmund College skilfully moved their main topic. He not only convinced the audience, but also the Governor and the Maj. General. When the debate was over, their Principal brought him before the Governor and introduced him. Then the Governor called Maj. General Randhawa and introduced Chhuana to be acquainted with one another. Major General also promised to review his case and to help him as far as possible.

After sometime, the Maj. General had granted him a visit his old village Zopui to bring his lover Ngurthansangi to Shillong with the escort of the Army. He also provided him an Army Helicopter and a vehicle for his journey. When Chhuana reached Zopui, his maternal-uncle Khawvelthanga, father of Ngurthansangi, plainly told him that his beloved Nguri had been forcefully married by an Army Officer, Capt. Renade by name. Chhuana was very angry but could not do anything for Nguri. After spending two weeks, he returned to Shillong with the escort of an Army vehicle.

Chhuana passed B.A. with Distinction and the next year he passed B.A. (Honours) Economics in the first class. After completion of his graduation course, he appeared the examination under UPSC and then they called him to appear before the Interview Board. He was recommended to be appointed for IPS group as his choice. After a short time he got an appointment letter for the said post and they informed him to immediately join the National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie. When he joined the Academy, he found new friends who were also IPS Officers. After completing their course, they were sent to the Police Officer's Training Center, Mount Abu, in Maharashtra State. There he tried to find out Capt. Ranede, but in vain. After the completion of

their training course, they were sent out to visit different parts of India and they came to Chandigarh.

One day while they were staying in Chandigarh, one of his companions, K.D. Sharma told him that he found a high class prostitute probably Mizo young girl, the prostitute called herself as Rita Moonlight Belle. Then Chhuana and his friends made a plan to verify. Chhuana disguised himself as a Sikh (Sardarji) recently coming from Canada, then they went to Prithviraj Restaurant where Rita Moonlight Belle worked. Unexpectedly Chhuana found his lover Ngurthansangi. They were surprised when they met each other. On the same night, with the help of DIG Sharma (elder brother of K.D. Sharma) and IGP, Ngurthansangi was rescued and they immediately left Chandigarh for their hometown, Zopui.

When they reached Zopui, Chhuana's maternal uncle Khawvelthanga seemed to be unhappy with him. Then Chhuana plainly told him how he found and rescued Ngurthansangi from the place of her prostitution. Then his uncle was happy upon him and agreed to give his daughter for his wife.

Then Chhuana and Nguri met their old Pastor Lianzuala, they told him about all their problems. Pastor Lianzuala pondered upon their problems and agreed to organise a wedding function under the Church court. Thus the two lovers were happily married and they enjoyed their married life.

The novel, *Zawlpala Thlan tlang*, a Christian love story is written by Khawlkungi. A Padma Shri Awardee Khawlkungi was born on 14th Sept., 1927 to become the first and the only women novelist so far among the Mizos. During the II World War, she stayed in the Missionary quarters with Lady Missionary, Kattie Hughes (known as Pi Zaii) to undergo teachers' training for two years, i.e. in 1940 — 41. During the year 1944-46, she had also served as

G.D. Clerk, Air Force Unit, Calcutta in the Women Auxiliary Corps. She started writing stories (including translation from English novels) from the year 1946 while she was only 19 years old. She wrote a few plays and stories, but they were not published.

In 1977, the Central Kristian Thalai Pawl, Aizawl organised the Christian love story writing competition and the first-prize winning story was *Zawlpala Thlan tlang*. Khawlkungi was awarded Padma Shri by the President of India, in the year 1987.⁸ Some women had distinguished themselves as poet and novelists, Khawlkungi is among the greatest names in Mizo literature. With great opportunities of education in the late 20th Century, it was inevitable that more and more women should compete with men in the popular field of fiction.

Zawlpala Thlan tlang, the title of the fictional Christian love story signifies the place where the corpse of Zawlpala a lover and husband of Tualvungi, a story of one Mizo folk-tales was laid down. Hence the title of this novel arises.

The story began with the heroine Vanlalremi, who looked-after her dying father, Upa Liana, by name. The father, Upa Liana, knowing that he was dying at any moment instructed and consoled his only daughter. He refused to take food or milk and he sat up to read the Bible. He read the Bible i.e. John 14:1 and he ensured her that God will be with her throughout her life. He also added that Remi should maintain her innocence and chastity and he asked her not to get married to any person who used to drink wine. Vanlalremi eagerly accepted her father's last words and cried when the ailing father passed away. The Pastor and the elder of the local Church, Upa Huala visited him but he already passed away. A young drunkard Lalmuana who was attracted to Remi's beauty stepped in while Remi was quite busy arranging things in the house, to ask Remi's favour but when he saw Pastor and Upa Huala, he escaped and told the neighbours. The village young boys and girls, including Malsawma (who is to

be the hero in this story) who came to this village alongwith Pastor also spent the night without sleep. He took a great pity upon Vanlalremi (called Remi)

Vanlalremi was all alone after her father's death. She was taken to her paternal uncle Rochhinga, who was addicted to drinking alcohol. There she was badly treated and life became unbearable for Vanlalremi, as a god-fearing girl, in this indigenious family. Besides, Rochhinga proposed that Vanlalremi should marry Lalmuana, so that he could get hold of Lalmuana's double-barrelled breach leading gun. Vanlalremi strongly protested, but she had no other choice but to flee from her uncle. She then left the family and village secretly for Aizawl, but for fearing she may be searched, she went first to Sialsuk village to meet the Pastor. The Pastor was at home and his sister namely Biakkungi, who later became her true friend, received her warmly. With the help of this kind lady, Remi was known to the Lady Missionary Miss Kattie Hughes (called as Pi Zaii) who allowed her to stay at Women's Hostel. During her stay here, she learned stitching, sewing and all other domestic works including reading and writing under the guidance of the missionary.

Not long after she adjusted herself with a new life, Vanlalremi met Malsawma, a Mission School Teacher and leader of the Boys Scout. Then they were acquainted and fell in love with each other.

In the meantime, due to economic problems brought on by the Second World War, Pi Zaii could not afford to keep the trainees and Remi also decided to go to Reiek village in search of her maternal uncle Kawla, a Church Elder. Meanwhile, Malsawma was also transferred to Reiek to be the Headmaster of M.E. School there, because the Boys M.E. School was occupied by the Army.

On the day Vanlalremi left Aizawl for Reiek, Malsawma also proceeded to Reiek and he was stung by a green viper, while he was entering the old farm

hut. Due to heavy rain, Remi also entered the same old hut, there she found Malsawma, who slept in the corner with pain. She therefore gave the first aid and she spent the night in the hut with Malsawma. On the next day, with the help of Vanlalremi, Malsawma reached Reiek with hardship, and Remi asked him to stay in her uncle's house for the time being in Reiek.

Malsawma had assumed the Headmaster Office in Reiek and he became deeply in love with Remi. The beauty and modesty of Vanlalremi had already developed a strong attraction to Malsawma. When the two lovers exchanged their feeling and deep regards for each other, they developed pure romantic love which led to a secret engagement. In the same village, there was a beautiful girl namely Lalkhawthangi who had shamelessly tried to win Malsawma's love with her best. But Malsawma refused to show his love; just to vex him, Lalkhawthangi had affairs with Naik Vanthanga IAMC of Indian Army who availed leave in Reiek and unfortunately she conceived. Her elder brother Lalngura blindly accused Malsawma as her partner without ascertaining from her. Though Malsawma won the case in the village court, the Mission authority put him under suspension following the letter submitted by Lalngura against Malsawma.

Thus, Malsawma left his job and he cancelled the marriage proposal with Remi. Fortunately, he joined the Army as the Indian Commissioned Officer. At home, due to bitterness of heart, Remi could not live happily in Reiek, and she went to Aizawl with the help of her intimate friend Biakkungi to spend Christmas. She stayed again in the missionary's house as requested by Pi Zaii to help her in the domestic work and preparation of Sunday School lessons.

After completion of the training course, Malsawma has availed leave and came out to Mizoram as Second Lieutenant and married Vanlalremi who had faithfully waited for him. They were blessed with a son and they live a happy

married life. The climax of their love was reached when the happy couple made a function of memorial stone erection on the grave of Remi's father at Zawlpala Thlan tlang. On the contrary, the fate of Lalkhawthangi became worse. Vanthanga married another girl just next to Lalkhawthangi's house at Kanghmun, to annoy her for denying him, and making his own son fatherless.

Mrs. Khawlkungi is a talented story writer, she also wrote a number of other stories like *Sangi Rinawmna, A Tlai Lutuk Ta, Pasal Duhthlan, Fahrah Nun and Thawnthu Min Hrilh Rawh* etc. and some drama (plays). *Zawlpala Thlan tlang* novel is her masterpiece.

From the above story outlines, one can see the new way of life of Mizos and the new thinking brought on by Christianity. These stories have clearly reflected Christianity as an agent of social change and reforms. The following will therefore be an attempt to trace how Christianity had influenced the Mizo fictions in the narrative art and characterisation to focus the social changes brought on by Christianity in all aspects of the Mizo community life.

Before elaborating the changes brought on by Christianity, let me explain the meaning of social change. Change is the law of nature to society, family and religion cannot remain the same for long. With the passage of time, every society, family and religions must change. Change is natural for every society and even if any society makes any attempt to stall social change, therefore, this would mean observable differences in any social phenomena over any period of time.

According to Jones, "Social change is a term used to describe variations in, or modifications or social organisation"⁹ Merrill and Andies have observed, 'social change means that large number of persons are engaging in activities that differ from those in which they or their immediate forefather engaged in

sometime before”¹⁰

MacIver says, “It is soon apparent that social changes in the man made conditions of living, to change in the attitudes and beliefs of man and to change that go beyond human control to the biological and physical nature of things”¹¹

H.T. Mazumdar also said, “Social change may be defined as a new fashion or mode, either modifying or replacing the old, in the life of a people or in the operation of a society.”¹²

From the above definitions, one can summarise that the social change on the whole will change the way of life, pattern of behaviour and the very set up of the society. It does not refer to the change in the life of an individual or the life pattern of several individuals. It is a change which occurs in the life of the entire community.

At the sametime, social change cannot be studied in isolation and as already said each change is only a link in the series of changes which have occurred or are likely to occur. It is not only the present form or of an incident of the present alone, but it is connected with the past. Besides, social change may be broadly categorised as modifications or replacements. It may be modifications of social relationships, ideas about women’s right, religion etc.

Now, let me explain the changes brought about by the Christianity in the Mizo society from the narrative arts and characteristics of the selected novels. The following areas of changes will be particularly taken into consideration.

I Changes in Religious Life :

Change of religion in Mizoram is brought on by Christianity. Before the advent of the Christian missionaries, the religion of Mizos was known as

‘Animistic.’ However, when the Christian missionaries came to Mizoram and preached the Gospel, the traditional beliefs and practices were replaced by Christianity within fifty years of their work, and all the practices of the traditional religion had disappeared.

On June 25, 1899, the first two Lushais namely Khuma and Khara made formal confession of their Christian faith and took baptism under the Welsh Presbyterian missionary. Records indicated that in 1901 the total number of persons belonging to animistic religion in Mizoram was 78,657 out of the total population numbering 82,434. It was however, not Christianity alone that covered the difference. The difference included Hindus, Muslims, Buddhist and Christians etc. But there appeared only 45 Mizo - Christians in the whole Mizoram in 1901. In 1921, Mizoram had a population of 98,400 of which 65,689 were animists and 27,720 were Christians.¹³ In 1931, the population of Mizoram rose to 1,24,404 of which 59,123 were Christians and the remaining 65,281 belonged to Animistic, Hindu, Muslims etc. The percentage of Christian population therefore stood at 47.52 in 1931. In 1941, the population of Mizoram rose to 1,52,786 of which 98,108 were Christians stood at 64.21 percent.¹⁴

As being seen from the selected novels, Christianity has prevailed throughout Mizoram. Everywhere in the villages of Mizoram, the Church had been stably planted by the Christians and now all non-Christian festivals, i.e. *Chapchar Kut*, *Mim Kut* and *Pawl Kut* have disappeared. There was no sign of indigenous religious rites, like *Kelmei* charm (tuff of the tail of sacrificed goat which was worn around the neck) was surrendered. In place of paganism now Christian elements were introduced. These included observance of Sunday, corporate worship in the Church from the Saturday night to Sunday night, Sunday School; celebration of Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter

Sunday etc.¹⁵ In the story of Lali, we see that the Christians have a worship service from Saturday night to Sunday night. Here we read as follows :

*“Chawlhni zingah chuan a dan pangngaiin zingah a tho va, a nu rawngbawl chhung chuan an Sande Sikul zir turte chu a chhiar a. Chumi nia an zir tur chu Pathian hmangaihna thu a ni a. Naupangte zirtir dan turte chu a han chhiar a, an chang thlan, ‘Pathianin khawvel a hmangaih em em a, chutichuan a fapa mal neihchhun a pe a’ tih thu te chu a ngaihtuah a”*¹⁶

*“Chumi zan chuan mikhualin thu a sawi dawn a, inkhawm pawh an tha hle mai a. Chu mikhualpa chuan zinga naupang lamte a tlawh avang emaw ni hmangaihna thu, Pathian hmangaihna thu hi a sawi ta a. A chang thlan chu Johana Bung 3 chang 16-na tak kha a ni ve nghe nghe a. Amaherawhchu Korinth thawn khat Bung 13 thu te, Rom Bung 8 tawp lam thu te kha a chhiar bawk a”*¹⁷

(As an usual practice she get up early on Sunday morning. While her mother prepared the breakfast, she prepared and read the Sunday School text for the day. The topic of the day was about God’s love. She read the guidelines for teaching and the Bible reference — “For God so loved the world, so he gave his only begotten son...” and she thought deeply about the meaning.

On the same night there was a guest speaker in their Church and the Church’s attendance was good. In the morning he had spoken on the love of God, so he chooses ‘God’s love’ for his topic. He read the scriptures from the Gospel of St. John 3:16, First Corinthians chapter 13 and the latter half of Romans chapter 8. Then he preached God’s love, the responsibilities and duties of the believers toward their neighbours convincingly. His sermon has much influence on the audience)

In *Thla hleinga Zan* novel, it can be seen that the entire community life and their social structure was completely transformed by Christianity. By being a Christian, the author Dokhuma has reflected the society of the time and described the social condition in his story as follows :

“Chutih hun lai chu Mizoram pum nawm lai tak a ni awm e. Kristiannain rampum a hneh tawh a, sechhun khuangchawi leh kutni vangthla hlim-hlawpna te pawhin mual a liam zo tawhin chawn leh lam, inthawina puithu leh biak dan atthlak tak takte leh lal intainate pawh hmanlai an chang zo tawh a. Khawvel sum par lawrin mi an la tlan rih si lovin Mizo hnam tlawmngaihna leh aia upa zah thiamnate chuan khawtlang a la tinuam em em a..... Mi rethei leh hakchham te, piangsual leh kut-tualhleichham te, fahrah leh ramtuileilo leh tanpui ngai apiangte chu an in chhawmdawlin an inpeizawn tel tel thin a ni.”¹⁸

“Kohhran lamah nise, pawl hrang hrang a la awm mumal lo va...nula leh tlangval lahin Kohhran hruaitute beng hriatah lah hla lenglawng sa ngam lo khawpin Kohhran enkawltute an zahawm em em a ni”¹⁹

(Perhaps, it was the best time in Mizoram. Christianity prevailed all over the whole land, the old religious ceremonies and festivals – Sechhun, Khuangchawi (the name of public feast given by chief or a wealthy family for Religious ceremony) and all superstitions, offering sacrifices, the hatred between the chiefs were now gone. People do not run for materialism. The Mizo etiquette like Tlawmngaihna and due respect of elders was well adapted and maintained by the society....The poor and needy, the physically handicapped, disabled persons and orphans were given necessary help...

In the Church, there is no different denominations, the Church leaders were highly respected by the Society, so that the young people did not dare to sing

worldly song (a song peculiar to no special occasion) to be heard by the Church Elders)

Unlike the traditional religious customs, there were no priest to offer the sacrifices to God and the sacrifices yielded place to Church and prayers. The transformation is so complete by now that none of the rituals were practised any more. The local Church members elected the Church Elders from among themselves to look after their respective Church. In *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* novel, there were two Church Elders (Upa) in Phulpui Church i.e. Upa Liana (father of Vanlalremi, the heroine) and Upa Huala. Upa Kawla, a Church Elder of Reiek was also a maternal uncle of Vanlalremi.

Besides, some Mizos (graduated from Cherra Theological College) were ordained for Pastor. The first Mizo native Pastor Chhuakhama was ordained by Rev. J.H. Lorrain in 1913 at the autumn session of the Presbytery and in 1914, another four evangelists were ordained for Pastor. They were posted at different districts (Pastorates) to look after the Church within the specified district. In *Zawlpala Thlan tlang* novel, Pastor Nikhama was seen as a Pastor-incharge of Sialsuk district/Pastorate and in the story of *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, Pastor Tlangkhuma, the father of Lalsawma was probably the Pastor-incharge of Aizawl district and Pastor Laltawna, father of Hmingthansiami was the Pastor-incharge of the near villages of Aizawl town. In the story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Pastor Lianzuala, a brilliant Pastor, was incharge of Zopui district.

In the beginning, the new religion, Christianity was normally accepted by the youth and they also took up the evangelical works. In his book, J.M. Lloyd has remarked the involvement of Mizos youngmen in the evangelical works as follows :

“It was begun by young Lushai men, in fact they were no more than lads, for their average age was somewhere in the region of fourteen to sixteen. In the Lushai Hills, it was nearly always young who came first to Christ, it was the elders who formed the caucus of opposition. John taught the young people, trained them and took them with him on his journeys and when he was confident they could be relied on, he sent them on their own to preach”.²⁰

As we have seen from the story of *Lali*, and *Thla Hleinga Zan*, the Mizo youth not only accepted the new religion but they took up a harbinger work in their local Church. In the story of *Lali*, Biakmawia, Lali and Thani were Sunday School teachers. There were several elderly people, like Lali’s father, who were not converted into Christianity, who were habitually intoxicated drunkards. But fortunately, they do not form a caucus of opposition. In the story of *Thla Hleinga Zan*, Thankimi, one of the characters, was a devoted Christian girl and a Sunday School teacher. As Lali has fervently prayed for the conversion of her father, Thankimi also fervently prayed for her lover, Liankhuma. They not only foresook their old religion later, but they became a witness of Christ. Unlike the traditional religion, even the children played an important role in the soul winning for Christ; they won the hardest heart of the father of Lali, by singing a Christian song.

With the spread of Christianity a belief in all the multifarious spirit and in the efficacy of appeasement was replaced by the new faith.²¹ In the story of Lali, there was not any offering sacrifices to *huais* (demons) to appease them when Zuala, younger brother of Lali was in the sick-bed and very critical, though the father was not a convert. Instead, when Zuala, on the verge of death asked the three important questions about life beyond death, a good Christian youngman Biakmawia assured him that he (Zuala) will go to heaven.

In the story of *Thla Hleinga Zan*, a girl named Chhingpuii, the close relative of Rozami was one day carried away by the spirit of ‘*Khawmu*,’

Kapthuama had found her after he spent four days searching for her and he brought her home alive, but she died very soon. There was not any sacrificial offered to 'huais' for appeasement. Besides, when Rozami was very critical and called the name of her lover Kapthuama on the verge of death, they sent messengers to call Kapthuama with the permission of her father.

When Kapthuama came with the messenger, they heard the cry of Rozami before they enter the village of Rozami; then Kapthuama called loudly by her name without fear. The spirit also come home alongwith Kapthuama, and she began to recover when they reached the house of (or the spirit reached the body of Rozami) Rozami. In that time also, there was not any sacrificial offering to 'huais' for appeasement. Before they joined Christian community, Mizos believed that sickness is somehow connected with evil spirit, and this opinion dies hard.²² The early Mizo Christians believed that Jesus was stronger than demons and that they desired deliverance from costly and complicated sacrifices and the burdensome taboos connected with sacrifices to demons. As we have seen, most of the sacrifices were offered to get healing from physical illness, so it was only natural that many peoples were inclined to become, and many actually became Christian because they could get physical healing without the costly sacrifices.

In other novels, i.e. *Zawlpala Thlan tlang*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Christianity has been seen as already spreading throughout Mizoram. Nearly all the Mizos had embraced Christianity, putting behind them old religious practices. There was hardly a Mizo who was not a member of the Church. The young generations do not know even about the indigenious faith and the old religious customs. Unlike under the old religion, the Mizo people could get joy and peace from their new religion when they accepted Jesus Christ as their God. Example can be given from our novels as follows :

In the story of *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, the loving couple, Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami (the main characters) was separated as a consequence of the loose character of Lalsawma, and the jealous character of Hmingthansiami broke the family. The family life became depressing in such a situation. In the meantime, their youngest daughter Lalduhkimi died due to diphtheria disease. The house of Pastor Tlangkhuma, the so called paradise on earth, was now filled with mourning and sorrow. Lalsawma was now aware that life is nothing without God. So, while he visited the grave of his daughter, he knelt before the Cross which is planted in the grave, he then confessed his sins to God and asked his forgiveness. At the same time, his wife Hmingthansiami was silently standing behind him and at the end of the prayer of her husband, she said 'Amen.' When Lalsawma saw his wife, he instantly hugged her and confessed his sin; Hmingthansiami also replied that it was not his fault but hers.. So, the couple regains the joy and peace of the Lord and there is reunion before that Cross.

In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the heroine Ngurthansangi was sold by her husband (Capt. Ranede) to be a prostitute. When her lover Chhuanvawra discovered her, she already forgot the name of God and she lived without a religion. Unexpectedly she was rescued by her lover Chhuanvawra with the help of the police authority in Chandigarh and she was brought home in their old village. There they decided to get married.

Before they get married, they met their old Pastor, Lianzuala for seeking his permission to solemnise the nuptial function under the Church court. While Ngurthansangi confessed all her problems and iniquity, the kind Pastor Lianzuala has comforted her that God can forgive those who accepted themselves as sinners and guilty before God. Then, he prayed for them by putting his hand upon them. Thus, Ngurthansangi regained the peace and joy of the Lord which she had lost for a long time.

At the sametime, one can see from the character of Lalkhawthangi that fearlessness of God only brought humiliation and shame, as St. Paul's portrayed in his Epistle to Galatians as follows: "*Be not deceived, God is not mocked; For whatsoever a man soweth, but shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*"²³

Khawlkungi, the author of *Zawlpala Thlan tlang* has clearly depicted this Bible verse in the life of Lalkhawthangi, one of her characters. She tried her best shamelessly to win Malsawma, the Headmaster of their village. But she can't win Malsawma's love and she was refused. Just to vex Malsawma, she had an affair with Vanthanga, an Indian Army Naik who availed leave, and unfortunately she conceived. But her elder brother Lalngura, a man without common sense blindly accused Malsawma as being the child's father. Lalkhawthangi also denied Vanthanga as being her child's father due to fear of her elder brother. In order to vex her for doing so, Vanthanga married Lalchhungi, a next door neighbour of Lalkhawthangi to annoy her for denying him his fatherhood, and making his own son fatherless. Thus, Lalkhawthangi reaped the humiliation which she soweth to her flesh without fear of the Lord.

Further, the new religion also brought in a new song for worship and praise of God. Here in the story of *Lali*, the children sung a new Christian song to console the bereaved family of their friend Zuala :

*Van engah khian naupangte tan thian tha pakhat a awm,
A thatna dang thei lo leh a hmangaih dai ngai lo;
Khawvel thiante erawh chu kum angin an dang thin,
He thian rinawm tak hianin hming duhawm tak a pu.*

Meaning : (There is a friend for little children above the bright blue sky,
 A friend who never changed whose love can never die;
 Unlike our friends by nature who changes with changing year,
 This friend is always worthy, the precious name he bear.)²⁴

It is very quite different from the Mizo folk songs. Before conversion to Christianity, the Mizos believed in life after death, but they believed in the suffering at *Mitthi Khua* (abode of the dead). This belief might have caused the Mizo poets to be touched deeply by death. When her beloved son died, Darpawngi, (one of the Mizo poets) burst out with the following verse:

Awmlai lengin tlang tin dung rawn zui,
Vanduai runah ser ang cham na e;
*Ka tuai chawnbanah kai e.*²⁵

Meaning ; (Fate visiting every village on her way,
 It couldn't pass over our luckless home;
 Take away my son by laid his arm.)

Before their conversion into Christianity, children were not given much importance in the family; and parents did not pay attention to their children, because they were always busy in their daily works. When parents came home from the field, they were too tired to offer a warm attention to their children. Whenever children played in their home in the presence of their parents, the father would say, 'go out, play with your friends'. When a child died, they would say, 'a child and a small gourd could come forth every year'. Thus, children just grew without parental care and concern. Mealtime was the best time for the family as well as children for receiving the education from parents.²⁶ Besides, children played no important role in the religious life. Actually home should be the religious training center for children, and they need to be taught religious values by parents.

But, with the advent of Christianity, children were given the central part in the Church. Sunday School is also organised for bringing -up children in the teaching of Christian life and admonition of the Lord. The Church always organised a Conference-cum-competition for children in the Pastorate level. Several children's hymns were also composed as we read in the novel of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, where it is seen that the Sunday School children singing the following hymns for young people:(p.3)

*Isu, zaidam leh nunnem,
Naupangte min enkawl la;
Ka atna min ngaidam la,
I hnenah min kaltir rawh.*

Meaning: (Gentle Jesus, meak and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to Thee)²⁷

And they also sang enthusiastically from the Children's hymnal song :(p.4.)

*Naupang tete chhandamna thuhritu an ni thei ang'
Kan Tlantu leh a Kros put chu an hril ve thei ang.
Hla taka mi tam takte rilru chu tilawm turin,
Pathian tan thilpek pein Baibul an thawn thei a ni.*

Meaning: (Little children may be heralds of the great salvation,
They may tell of our Redeemer and the Cross He bore;
By their grateful Sabath off-rings they can send the Bible;
That will cheerfull the hearts of many on a far off shore)²⁸

Before 1920, Mizo Christian songs were mostly translations and adaptations from the Khasi and English hymns. One such popular hymn composed by Liangkhaia, with adaptation of Welsh Tune (WTB 240) goes like this :

*Thisen hlu, thisen hlu, Thing Kross chung a luang kha,
Sual lakah min tlanin, Misual thiam min chantir;
Misual dum ber a varna chu,
Kalvari thisen hlu a ni (2)*

Meaning : (Precious blood, precious blood, That flows from wooden Cross;
Redeeming us from sin, Justified us criminals,
Cleanser, the foulest sinner;
It's the precious blood from Calvary (2))²⁹

When the great revival broke out in 1919, a few Mizo compositions were set to the existing tunes or the traditional way. The first and fore-runner of this movement, **Patea** (1894-1950) composed his first hymn—***Ka Ropuina tur leh ka Himna Hmun*** (*There lies my safety and glory*). C.Z. Huala (1902-1994), followed him, and he composed his first hymn- '***Lily parmawi Lal Isua ka nei***' (I've Jesus the beautiful Lily).³⁰ The third and great poet of Mizo Christian hymns was R.L. Kamlala, who composed sixty one religious hymns and other secular songs. His song, *Aw Ropui ber, Haleluiah, Kan fak a che, Immanuel* (Oh, the Greatest Immanuel, We do praise Thee, Haleluiah,) was one of the greatest and popular lyrics among the Mizo Christians. Normally, the early Mizo native Christian songs were composed in the genre of Elegy. Elegy is popular as a poetic genre among the Mizos because of the social practice of those days at the time of death.³¹

It is noted that the years between 1920 and 1940 saw the abundant harvest of native Christian hymns. The Mizo Christians also sung new songs which were composed in the way of traditional songs. But these songs differed from the traditional songs because they have a pictorial quality; good melancholy notes and focusses on heaven or *pialral*. They reflect to a great extent the life and sufferings of the people, as well as their hopes in this life and beyond death. That is why the Mizo Christians enthusiastically sung the new (Christian) songs in their Church services and fellowships; this is reflected by the story of ***Thla Hleinga Zan***. In this novel, we read the Presbytery meeting

in the village of Rozami was seen to have a fellowship after worship service and they enthusiastically sung the new (Christian) songs.

II: Education :

The introduction of modern education by the missionaries ushered in a modern worldview among the Mizo society. As already discussed in Chapter I (Introduction), the pioneer missionaries namely Rev. J.H. Lorrain (Pu Buanga) and Rev. F.W. Savidge (Sap Upa) reduced the Mizo language into writing and they composed the Mizo alphabet in Huntarian system. The two pioneer missionaries opened the first Mizo school at their residence but closed down when they left Mizoram in 1897. The Welsh Mission missionary Rev. D.E. Jones reopened in Feb., 1898. When he was joined by another missionary namely Rev. Edwin Rowlands, a musician and experienced teacher, all the charge of school was undertaken by Rowlands. In spite of many hurdles in the beginning the school continued to progress. Lloyd traced the growth of school thus :

The school began to produce teachers as well as scholars and thus the foundations of the present Lushai Primary School system was began to laid. The Lushais were ever ready to pass on what they had learnt however little. Many who had learnts only the alphabet succeeded in passing on that knowledge to others. Many of the youth who came to that school at Aijal were found to have that facility of expression and felicity of illustration which mark the born teacher. And very soon were sent on fairly lengthy visit to various villages. They brought rudiments of education to people who had seen book. In a little over a generation the Lushai Hills had a higher percentage of people able to read and write than any other part of India.³²

These Christian teachers spread the gospel alongwith education throughout the district. Sir Bamfield Fuller, the Chief Commissioner of Assam, was suitably impressed by the superior performance of the missionary school

during his visit to Aizawl in 1903. He ordered the amalgamation of the Government school with the missionary school and directed that all primary education would henceforth be in the charge of the mission who would be given grant for this purpose.³³ Then the whole system of education in Mizoram was in the hands of the Christian missionaries during the Pre-Independence period of India.

Before India achieved her Independence, the missionaries aimed at giving mass education, and thus, they opened educational institutions upto Middle school standard. Records indicate that there were as many as 200 primary schools and 4 Middle schools in Mizoram in Pre-Independence period, of which about 120 Primary Schools and 2 Middle Schools belonged to the Presbyterian Mission in the North Mizoram and the rest belonged to the Baptist mission in South Mizoram.³⁴

Besides, as mentioned in the first chapter, the pioneer missionaries started their evangelical work with a Sunday School. The Welsh Mission continued the Sunday School works and wherever a church was founded, a Sunday School was simultaneously established by the early missionaries. It has been a centre of learning from the beginning to the present day, and occupies an important place in the development of literacy as well as literature.

When the two pioneer missionaries, came out again to the South Mizoram as Baptist Mission Society missionaries, they put great emphasis on Sunday School from the beginning. The annual report of Mr. Lorrain gave us some ideas of Sunday School: "The Sunday School, where we taught the scriptures and they study Christians and others are Lushai Primer, in order that they may be able to read God's word for themselves, are still a most useful adjunct to the work in these hills....There is no age limit to these attending our Sunday Schools. All the one hundred and twenty two baptism during the year were

from these schools. Seventy eight Christian ‘Boys’ and forty three Christian ‘Girls’ have finished the Primer since our last report and are now able to read the Printed Gospel...”³⁵

The primary aims of the early Sunday School were to make Christian, and to make these Christians able to read the scriptures and the hymn book for themselves. The purpose of conducting Sunday Schools was to teach everyone to read and write. According to Lalhmuaka, ‘upto the year 1922, Sunday School became useful centre for learning reading and writing, because there was no day school in every place. Where a day school existed, women had learnt reading and writing from Sunday School because they could not attend the day school.’³⁶ Every member of the Church is expected to be able to read for their knowledge of the Bible. The gospel, as they were published were the only reading materials available to the Lushai people.³⁷

According to Downs, Mission schools served two basic functions: first, it broke down the barrier of ‘superstition’ that prevented people from hearing and responding to the Gospel. Secondly, it provided a means of Christian instruction and access to the Christian scriptures and other forms of Christian literature. This served both an immediate evangelistic purpose and longer term objectives of building up indigenous Christian community.³⁸ My own father also tell me that he had learnt how to read and write in their village Sunday School, because there was no day school.

Besides, anyone who learned to read, they also learned the story of Jesus and many became Christians. The result was that the first converts developed the good habit of Bible reading. This habit was passed on to the second and some of the third generation Christians, even though much other reading materials are now available in Mizoram.³⁹ The Sunday School, thus helped tremendously the early Mizo Christians to grow in their Christian life by

enabling them to read God's word and Christian hymns and other useful literature for themselves as well as for others who could not read. As a result, the growth of percentage of literacy in Mizoram became more rapid than other parts of India.

In the novel of *Lali*, the writer did not depict the existence of a daily school in the village of Lali, but the main characters, Lali and Biakmawia were able to read and write, and they were Sunday School teachers in the Junior Department. Besides, Thani, one of the village Christian young girls was also a Sunday School teacher in Primary Department. Like this, in *Thla Hleinga Zan*, one of the characters Thankimi was also a Sunday School teacher; and all other characters, Kapthuama, Rozami and Liankhuma were able to read and write. But we do not see that there was a daily school in the villages of Lali, Kapthuama, or Rozami. Probably the characters of these novels had learned from their village Sunday School.

In the novel of *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, Upa Liana, father of Vanlalremi could read the Bible, whereas his young daughter Vanlalremi was illiterate. She learned reading and writing while she stayed at the missionary quarters. According to Lalhmuaka, the missionaries sent out three teachers in 1901, namely Thanga, Chawnga, and Tawka to open school at an experimental basis for about three months: Thanga at Khawrihnim, Chawnga at Phulpui, and Tawka at Chhingchhip. They conducted the school experimentally for three months and Chawnga was pulled back to Aizawl to help the missionaries.⁴⁰ Perhaps Upa Liana had learnt reading and writing while the school had been opened in their village. In this story, it is seen that there was not only Primary School but Boys' Middle English School at Aizawl which the missionaries have looked after. The Girls' school was also started by the missionaries and made progress under Mrs. D.E. Jones and Miss K. Hughes (Pi Zaii), where

Vanlalremi learnt reading and writing. The missionaries also opened a school at Reiek and they appointed Malsawma to be the Headmaster.

In the novel of *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, there was a High School at Aizawl. The heroine Hmingthansiami was one of the students of Class Ten, and who had passed matriculation from this High School. In the early twenties, there was no High School in Mizoram, there was a definite pressure put on opening of a High School in Mizoram. In the opinion of missionaries, those working in the Government Offices in Aizawl and P.W.D. were usually from Plains and of Bengali stocks. It was inevitable that Mizos should covet positions in the Government offices. Education was the only means to enable them to qualify for these offices which were already beginning to proliferate in Aizawl, so that there was a deep desire for university education. But the Government saw no need for a High School and was not interested. Rev. Sandy might have been interested but he saw the need for extensive Primary education was much more important. The dream of a Mizo High School was not to be realised for many years.⁴¹

When Mr. A.R.H. Macdonald was appointed a new Superintendent of Mizoram (1943-47), he had a keen interest in education; he soon made a plot of land available for constructing a High School and he encouraged the project in 1944.⁴² The first High School in Mizoram was thus started in 1944 with public contribution. The Welsh Mission provided a Headmaster.⁴³ The School was provincialised in 1950.⁴⁴

There were some Mizos who get higher education in general subjects, Theology and Medicine. As mentioned above, several Mizo Theologians were ordained for Pastor to look after the specified district/ Pastorate. We have seen that Pastor Tlangkhuma and Pastor Laltawna, father of Lalsawma and Hmingthansiami respectively, had completed their Theological studies from the

Cherra Theological College and the protagonist Lalsawma also completed his medical course - LMP degree from the Dibrugarh Medical College and he got an appointment order from the Government for the post of Doctor at Aizawl Civil Hospital.

In the story of *Nunna kawngthuam Puiah*, we had seen that Zopui village was a developed village among the rural areas. There was not only Middle School, but High School also existed. It was opened in the year 1959 just before the year famine broke-out in Mizoram. Thanthianga, B.A. (Hons) by name was Headmaster. The Government also opened a Community Development Block and the Headquarters (Office) was located between Zopui and Sihzawl. There was a plan to open another office and Hospital in this area; therefore the area has been cleared for the purpose.

The protagonist Chhuanvawra was one of the students in the first batch to appear the matriculation examination from this High School in the year 1963. The heroine Ngurthansangi was also admitted to Class-VII in the same year. We have also seen that College has existed at Aizawl and the parents of Chhuanvawra were likely to send him to Aizawl to study higher education-P.U.C.; but his elder brother Chhuankima, IFAS who have a competitive mind compelled him to go to Shillong, because it was more advanced than Aizawl. Thus Chhuanvawra proceeded to Shillong and there he got an admission in St. Edmund's College for P.U.C. class. There were several Mizos students doing higher education in Shillong.

It has been mentioned that the origin of literacy and education of the Mizos was initiated by Christian missionaries directly and indirectly. The British administration turned over to the Missions almost complete responsibilities for education, because of their direct involvement in the work for development of literacy and education,. The increase of literacy percentage from zero percent was solely achieved by the Christian Missions, more

probably by the Presbyterian Church and Baptist Mission till 1941. Before the advent of Christianity the number of literate and literacy percentage was Zero. But in 1901, the literacy percentage was 0.93%, 6.28% in 1921, 10.45% in 1931, then rose to 19.50% in the year 1941. In 1951, the literacy percentage rose to 36.23%, and then up to 44% in 1961.⁴⁵ The steps taken by the Government and Christian Missions resulted in the increase of literacy percentage between 1941 to 1961.

Besides, the introduction of literature by Christian missionaries too played a central role in creating a new culture. In Mizoram, the missionaries chose the Duhlian dialects for the purpose of writing Mizo language, this in effect gave a single language to the entire tribe, giving a sense of common identity to the groups that had been previously dialectically divided.

III: Change in Women Status :

Like other tribal societies, men concentrated themselves on defence and hunting, leaving all domestic works to women. For women, there were no holidays. She had to get up at dawn to bring water and to cook morning meal, she pounded paddy to deshusk rice and continued working unceasingly far into night. She was not supposed to go to bed till men folk retired. She would sit to cook pig's food for the next day, and spin cotton for cloth. She was responsible for all the works in the house. Women carried the entire burden up and down the hill, wood, water, rice, ginger etc. The women folk staggered with heavy burden, while the men moved with empty handed or with dao, ostensibly protecting them from enemies or wild animals. That is why missionaries and the administrators of Mizoram accused the Mizo men as very lazy. Major Cole, the then Superintendent of Lushai Hills asserted that, "The Lushai method of agriculture is very primitive. The work is done almost entirely by the Mizo

women. The men are very lazy. A single young man hardly ever does any work. There was once some excuse for arrangement. The men watch lest their enemies should come upon them unexpectedly and the women worked in the field.”⁴⁶

Besides, early Lushai women had no personal privileges or rights. From birth to death her body, mind and spirit belonged to her father, brother or husband. Men folk could treat their women as they liked and a man who did not beat his wife was scorned by his friends as a coward. A woman possessed nothing, not even the new clothes she wear. She was not allowed to wear anything new. Her clothes had just to worn by her men folk.⁴⁷

The Mizo women were not the only ones who were contemptued but attitude towards women in almost every culture of the world have been harmful. A Jewish woman had no say in the choice of her marriage partner. In a contractual arrangement of ownership she passed from father to husband, without inheritance or any legal rights to land or personal finances. A woman ought to obey her husband in all matters, and to show him respect by standing behind him while he ate. Josephus, the famous Jewish historian argued, “The woman, says the laws, is in all things inferior to the man. Let her accordingly be submissive, not for her humiliation, but that she may be directed; for the authority has been given to the man.”⁴⁸ Even, Tertulian, the early Church father, seems to have been considerate of his own wife, as he wrote her a letter charging her not to marry a pagan if he should die.⁴⁹ The Koran, religious book of Islam also says that women are created inferior to men and that it is permissible to flog a wife under certain circumstances.⁵⁰

Like the Jewish women, the Mizo women had no say in the choice of her marriage partner. She has to get married to a husband chosen by her parents and her market price depends on her beauty and industry.⁵¹ The parents of the girl usually forced their daughter to marry a boy who could offer an attractive

sum of money for their daughter's price. When Christianity is embraced, the new religion Christianity brings freedom to the men as well as to the women. But emancipation is taking place slowly.

Knowing the historical barriers women had faced, Biakliana, the author of *Lali*, cried out for the emancipation of women against their menfolk. Here is the account of the novelist on the prevailing social convention and practice in the matter of marriage and the status of women in the then Mizo society :

“Sapte anga mahni hmangaih zawng leh duh zawng thlanga damchhung a intanpui leh inhnem tawn tur ni awm renga duh taka innehte hi chu khawvela thil duhawm ber pakhat chu ni fo awm a ni. Mahse hnamdang kan nih lohva Mizo kan nih miau avang leh tunlai kan ram hi a nih ang hi a nih rih si avangin, Mizo hmeichhiate, kan farnute tam tak tan chuan chutiang hun lo thleng chu thil huphurhawm ber mai, mittui tla leh lungchhe chung a hman a ni fo thin. Bawngte ang mai bawkin kan hralh a, ran leituin a ran lei tur chak awm leh awm loh a en ang maiin, a taihmak leh a tha kan en a, a neitu a nu leh a pa, a u leh naute lah chuan a man pe tam thei thei kan leitir mai a. Bungrua ang maiin kan hralh a, kan innep a, kan lei hnu pawhin, ‘Hmeichhia leh palchhia chu thlak ngai a lawm’ te kan ti a. Kan duh leh kan vel a, kan duh leh kan ma a. Hmanlai khawvel anchhe ropui ber pakhat bawih inhralh an chin lai chuan an inlei dawna an inenna ber chu hna a thawk thei em, a chak em? tih a ni a. Tunlai kan ram hmeichhia te pawh hi chutiang chuan kan enkawl vek ti ilar, a dik kher lo pawh a ni thei e. engpawh nise, a tam zawk chu an ni. Bawih inhralh dan rapthlak tak chu mi tha tak tak te, Kristian fel tak tak ten an sum leh pai, an nunna leh chakna, an awka leh an thiamnate ui lova theihtawp an chhuah avangin a lo bo ta a. Aw, Zoram bawihthe hi chhuah tirtu an awm ve lawm ni?”⁵²

(It is very desirable for Mizo women to marry their own choice as the women in the advanced European countries are free to marry their own choice. But in Mizoram, women are sold like cattle or properties. We sold them to the highest bidder, the parents and her brother usually forced her to marry the boy who could offer an attractive sum of money. Therefore, our women have to spend their wedding day with tears. The buyers look her health and strength to work. Even after possessing them, the saying, ‘women and old fences are but disposable!’ still hold good. We beat or divorce them as we please. The greatest

curse on earth and the dreaded habit of slavery was abolished due to the painstaking efforts of Christians and other noble hearted men who invested time, labour, money and talent for the cause. Is there any person who shall lead Mizoram's enslaved women into the light of freedom ?)

Lali too fell prey to the curse society had inflicted upon women. Rozika, the son of an influential man wanted to marry her. Lali did not want to marry him for his arrogant and conceited character. She knew that Rozika was quite a scoundrel; he'd loiter around during church services. He was prime suspect in various anti-social activities, in fact, believed to be the ring leader. However, Lali's father wanted to give his daughter to Rozika and considered himself fortunate. So he tried to force his daughter to marry Rozika.

Meanwhile, Lali was very sorry and she wept a lot. When her maternal uncle Manga tried to convince her father to reconsider his decision, the father wanted so much to get the possession of Rozika in return from the marriage, so he could not change his decision. Lali also told her mother all she had known about the character of Rozika and she convinced her not to force her anymore. But her mother would not dare to go against the father's decision. If there was any quarelling between husband and wife, the husband used to order the wife to shut up, otherwise, she was beaten and divorced by the husband.

Lali's mother defended her daughter and pleaded her husband not to force their daughter to marry such a loose character whom she (Lali) does not love at all. But the father threatened the wife and daughter to be beaten up and he drove them out from his house.

He did not spare even his young son who did not comply with his order immediately and he threw a stick of firewood at his son that hit on the head of his son (Zuala). Then he fell on the floor. While rising up her son from the floor, the mother scolded the father for his cruel action against his son, but the angry father has beaten up his wife. For the sake of her life and her daughter,

Lali's mother left the house under the cover of darkness. She came back to their home only when Zuala was in a critical condition.

In the meantime, one fine Christian youngman namely, Biakmawia, a regular sleeper in their home spared himself to help the family for tender caring of their ailing son. Before his death, Zuala asked his father three important questions about death and life beyond death; none of which his father could answer. But that questions reached the father's heart and it completely changed him, whom even a good preacher could not reach. From that night he became a new man and his views are completely changed. Then the marriage proposal was cancelled and he allowed giving Lali in marriage to a fine Christian young man Biakmawia, who is her choice.

Here the author L.Biakliana portrayed beautifully the picture of the suppressed and low status of women from the light of Christianity by introducing a family where all members except the father were Christians. As already stated, the story of *Lali* was written in the year 1937. By this time the new religion Christianity has been accepted by most of the Mizos and it helped to change the society to a great extend but Lali's father who is a non-convert did not accept the change. In his opinion, women are only like animals to be bought or sold for the pleasure of men. But when he was converted, his opinion and attitudes towards women are changed and allowed his daughter, Lali to marry Biakmawia, her own choice.

In another novel *Thla Hleinga Zan*, Rozami had a suitor but his name is not mentioned. The father forced his daughter to marry such a wealthy young man. But Rozami replied to her father that she would not marry whom she did not love. She said, 'their favour for her only means providing poisonous food to enemy'. Her father detested that reply, he then threatened his daughter with the following speech, which showed his attitudes towards his daughter:

“E, e, e.....i mi han tawngkhum duh dan chuh. I nu leh pa hi maw Hmelma nena min tehkhin, mihurnu, i san Kapthuama zawng i nei hlek lo ang e. Chaw seh sawma ka chawm lenin maw ‘I nu leh pa thu ka hnial e’ i han tih chu. Ani khawte lal zalen mitha satliah fapa ringawt zawngin palai kawn khar pawh rawn tir mah se, se sawm pawhin ka hralh chai hlei lawng che. Han tawng leh teh dek, hmui hlei hmai hlei pu lovin ka hlap chiam bei bui mai tur che asin”⁵³

In his abusive language, the father said that it is the parents who fed and look after her and she is not to be against her parents in every respect. Then by calling her as ‘concupiscence,’ he bluntly told her that he would not sell her to Kapthuama even if he offers ten mithuns for her price. He further threatened to torture her if she goes against her parents anymore.

The father of Rozami was milder and more considerate than the father of Lali; perhaps he was influenced by the social changes brought about by Christianity. His refusal of Kapthuama for his son-in-law was not because of his suppression of women but due to a personal grudge with Kapthuama’s father. When Kapthuama saved the life of Rozami, the father also changed his mind and agreed to give his daughter in marriage.

However, when he got the news that Kapthuama was arrested and probably killed by the Japanese soldiers while he had gone to the Indo-Burma border area on business, he took the advantage and forced his daughter again to marry another suitor, Thanseia, Havildar of the Indian Army. Rozami wanted to wait for Kapthuama for sometime and pleaded accordingly to her father. But her father could not listen to her anymore; instead he forced her to marry the man and said: ‘We have spent many days as you like, but now I will not listen to you. It is my will. Don’t try to delay anymore’ (p.237)

Unfortunately Rozami was divorced by her husband for no fault of hers and her husband married another girl. She then returned to her father's house. Now her father also realised his mistake and repented. (In the second part of *Thla Hleinga Zan* novel, we read Kapthuama and Rozami were happily married.)

At the sametime, the anonymous father of Thankimi was a good father and a good Christian. He was the helper and took care for the happiness of his daughter. Whenever his daughter Thankimi told him about her problems with Liankhuma in their love affairs, he helped her and gave an effective counselling from the Bible. He also prayed to God asking his blessing and guidance for his daughter. He also asked the Lord to deliver his daughter from the temptation as well as to reveal himself in the heart of Liankhuma. At last, Liankhuma was born again and Thankimi could happily get married to Liankhuma, her lover and her own choice.

In this novel, we encounter with a father who would not take care for the hapiness of his daughter and not trying to understand the problems of his own daughter but only fulfill his desire, which had spoiled the life of his daughter on the one hand; and the good Christian father, who took care of the happiness of his daughter, and who never provoked his daughter but brought her up in the nurture of the Biblical teaching, which brought the happiness of his daughter. Anyhow, we see that social change had taken place in the entire society of this novel and women were given some freedom to choose their husband.

In the religious life, the old Mizos before the advent of Christianity used to say that 'women and crabs have no religion' which means a women simply follows the religion of her husband or her father and could have no religion of her own. This means that the women were of no value and the ideas of women do not count. This saying proved clearly that women were placed on the same

level of the crabs and animals and that they had no power or authority in the community or society.⁵⁴

With the advent of Christianity in Mizoram, the religious life of Mizos was totally shaken; with the spread of Christianity in Mizoram, the discrimination against the women in Mizo society has gradually died out. Christianity brings with it real freedom and equality among the Mizo society, and one of the most marked changes is in the position of women in the society.

When Christianity first spread in Lushai Hills, it seemed that women folk might have little or no place in it. But the message of Christian religion made a strong appeal to them and a number of them embraced it. At first, they were discouraged by their menfolk; many of them considered that women were incapable of understanding the teachings, hymns and prayers. Even after many women had been baptised and been accepted into the fellowship, it did not occur to their men folk that they might have a valuable contribution to make to the church.⁵⁵

The day soon came when the Christian women in Lushai Hills (Mizoram) decided that they must ask for a recognized place in the Church. They wrote to the Church Secretary, requesting that one of them be allowed to address the General Assembly, at its session. Prejudice against women taking prominent parts in the public life as well as in the Christian life is dying out. It is found that women evangelists perform generally better than men among completely non-Christian elements. They can get into the heart of families sooner, and where male workers are persecuted women rarely suffer due to natural chivalry. Since, many women and young girls were appointed for Sunday School teachers, their influence and contribution for the consolidation of the church was unaccountable.

The girls' school started by the missionaries made eminent progress under the missionary ladies like Miss E.Chapman and Miss M.Clark in the South and by Mrs. D.E.Jones, Miss K.Huges and Miss G.R.Roberts etc. in the North Lushai Hills. In his report for the year 1902, Rev. D.E.Jones said that, "For a part of the year we had over 40 females on the register, but they have ceased coming to a great extent, the parents generally being indifferent. The school however, has a fair proportion of this element – some of them various ages attending tolerably regularly and the progress of some of them is very pleasing and we look for good service from them in the future."⁵⁶

A few years ago education was practically barred for girl because when she attained school going age she had to look-after her younger brothers or sisters or baby-sit all day while her parents went to work. The more understanding teachers persuaded the girls to attend class with their babies strapped in their backs. Thus parents now realized that their girls must also get education in order that the whole nation might march together.⁵⁷

In the novel of *Lali*, Lali and Thani were Sunday school teachers in the departments of Junior and Primary respectively in their local church. Lali was not only a Sunday School teacher, but was a respected teacher for the young boys; she always warned the young boys to abstain from drinking alcohol. She also felt a deep burden for her father, for she wanted him to accept the love of God. Her unceasing prayer for the conversion of her father was finally answered. Likewise, in the novel of *Thla hleinga Zan*, Thankimi, one of the characters was a Sunday School teacher in their local church. She was a convicted Christian and she always prayed to God for the conversion of her lover, Liankhuma. At last, Liankhuma was fully converted and they were happily married.

Further, after Rozami had married Thanseia with the compulsion of her father, Kapthuama has married another girl, Hmingdailovi, a devoted Christian like Thankimi. But, Hmingdailovi was sorry, for her husband Kapthuama has neglected the church service or God. So, she tried to bring him to God with her best efforts and she succeeded at last. One Wednesday night, Hmingdailovi urged him to accompany her in the church because she was to be the Bible reader of the service. So, as requested by his wife, he reluctantly attended the church. His wife Hmingdailovi read the Bible from Epistle to Philippians 2:5-11, 'Let the mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.....' and she chose a song to be sung together:

*“Aw hmangaihna sawi thiam ila,
Nazaret Isua ngei kha.....*

(I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene)

When they sung the second stanza, '*A tan a lungngai a ni lo, ka tan a thisen a far*' (He had no tears for His own griefs, But sweat drops of blood for me) Kapthuama burst out with a broken heart, thus he was fully converted.

In *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, Rochhinga, a maternal uncle of Vanlalremi was addicted to drinking alcohol. While Vanlalremi was living among their family, he tried to force her to marry Lalmuana because he wanted to get Lalmuana's double barrel gun as a bride price; therefore Vanlalremi left their family secretly. When Vanlalremi visited their old village Phulpui after some years with her new friend Biakkungi, she also paid a visit to him who is still a drunkard and addicted to alcohol. They used to tell him God's word or the way of salvation. Rochhinga could not believe that God could forgive a sinner like him. But the good and devoted Christian young girl Biakkungi read the story of Zachaeus from the Bible, and she used to tell him that 'Zachaeus was the chief

tax collector and he was hated by his own men. But the Lord Jesus loved him and he was willing to be the guest of a man (Zachaeus) that is a sinner. Then Zachaeus also confessed his sins and accepted Jesus as his Lord. Thus he got the salvation of the Lord. Likewise, Jesus loves you so much and he would not let you perish eternally.’ Then, Rochhinga also confessed his sins and he accepted Jesus as his saviour. The converted father brought a new atmosphere in the family life.

As mentioned above, since the spread of Christianity in Mizoram, the womenfolk have freedom and their burden were lightened in various aspects of their lives, and prejudices against women taking prominent parts in the public life is dying out. By reading the novels, we see that the women perform generally better than men among completely non-Christian elements. They get into the heart of families sooner and God uses them for soul winners.

IV: Change in Village Administration and Political Development:

In pre-Independent Mizoram, each village had an autonomous indigenous institution for administration of local or village affairs. These institutions were running independently under the autocratic hereditary Chief, who had immense local standing. The Chief and the council of elders discussed all matters connected with the village, asked the villagers to render voluntary services and also executed the orders and directions of the British Superintendent heading the district. It also functioned as the village court to decide all types of cases, except murder and rape and disputes between people of the village according to the customs of the Mizos. The cases of murder and rape were reported to the British Superintendent of the district for a trial.⁵⁸

After India attained Independence, a new scheme of administration for the Hill Districts of Assam was incorporated in part ‘A’ of the Sixth Schedule of

the Indian Constitution.⁵⁹ As a result, the District Council for the Mizos was set up in 1952. In the first elections of the District Council, the Mizo Union had captured power in the District Council. Holding the rein of the District Council, the Party ultimately abolished chieftainship by a Resolution in the Autonomous District Council, and the Resolution to that effect was approved by the Legislative Assembly of Assam to be enforced with effect from the 16th Aug., 1954.⁶⁰

In the novels of *Lali*, *Thla Hleinga Zan* and *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, one can see that the villages were ruled by the chiefs. In *Thla Hleinga Zan* Kapthuama's father was one of the elders of the chief (Zalen- freedman in cultivation) and in *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, the litigation between Malsawma and Lalkhawthangi was tried by the village chief's court. In the novel of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the new village administrative system called Village Council had already been introduced in Mizoram. The members of the Village Council were elected with the modern system of adult franchise. Zopui village elected their old chief Khawvelthanga as the President of the Village Council for two terms due to his efficient administration.

In this novel, we also reads the existence of two political parties in Mizoram, i.e. Mizo Union and Mizo National Front (MNF). The birth of a political party in Mizoram originated from the Second World War and the broke-out of a political disturbance in Mizoram.

The novels, *Thla Hleinga Zan* and *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, gave some account of Second World War - like the coming of British Army to Aizawl and the occupation of Boys' M.E. School, the bombing of the Dispensary in N.Vanlaiphai by the Japanese plane that injured one compounder, and the formation of a regular Army Brigade by the British authority at Aizawl under the name of "Lushai Brigade". In addition to this, *Thla Hleinga Zan* narrated

that the British authority also formed Lushai Scout and a force of local levies, 'Pasaltha Pawl' (Guerilla Guild) known as 'V' Force, and the lowest rank Labour Corps in Mizoram.⁶¹

During the war, a great number of Mizo young men were enlisted in the Army or scouts and Labour corps. Liankhuma, one of the characters in this novel also joined Labour Corps and Mrs. Khawlkungi, the author of *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* also served as G/D Clerk in the Air Force Unit, Women Auxiliary Corps, Calcutta during the year 1944-46.⁶² She mentioned the various places in her novel (like Asansol, Barrackpore, Calcutta with its Howrah Railway Station, Sealdah Station, Artillery Club and New Market etc.) which she visited while she was working there.⁶³

Before the outbreak of war, the British rule under the administration of Superintendent formed a Chief Council with 22 selected representatives of the Chiefs in it. The Mizos, who had joined the different services and had the opportunity to mix and contact with other nations and states of India during the war, played a very active part in the political awakening of the Mizos.⁶⁴ Besides, the growth of Church and spread of education in the Mizo society had gradually brought about a lot of political awareness and awakening in Mizoram.

At the end of the Second World War, rumour spread that the British Government was expected to leave the whole India soon. The Mizos remained for a while in a dilemma, for they had no contact with Indian nation nor did they like the idea of the British handing over to the 'Chief's Councils' and they wanted to be part and parcel of the Union of India and to enjoy all the privilege enjoyed by the people of other provinces. So the Mizo youths wanted to organise themselves into a political party.⁶⁵ As a result of this prevailing idea among the educated elites, the first political party, the Mizo Union, was formed

in April 9, 1946⁶⁶ with the permission of A.R.H. Macdonald, the Superintendent of Mizoram.⁶⁷

In 1960, a welfare organisation called the Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF) was formed and it earned a good name. But on Oct. 22, 1961, the MNF dropped the word 'Famine' from its name, became the Mizo National Front (MNF) and came up as a political party with the object of creating an Independent and sovereign state of Mizoram,⁶⁸ and the integration of all the Mizo ethnic groups under one Government possessing the highest degree of freedom, upgradation of the status, and the development of the economic condition of the Mizo people, and the safeguard of the Christian Religion.⁶⁹ The Mizo Union stood alone as a party in opposition to the MNF and as an anti-MNF party. But the MNF movement had influenced many ex-servicemen, educated people, students and professionals.

Many successful Government servants and promising youth and students left their careers and joined the movement with some peculiar enthusiasm. In *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the aspiration for Independence haunted the minds of many young Mizos, the MNF party enjoyed the admiration of the youth sections, and it was a shameful thing not to be an MNF volunteer. Chhuanvawra was advised by his relatives to separate himself from the MNF volunteers, while nearly all the young people of Zopui including the friends of Chhuanvawra joined the volunteer. Rohluta, one of an intimate friends of Chhuanvawra was one of the leaders under the command of the village middle aged-man Ngurtawna, self-styled Lt. Colonel.

Thus the MNF declared Mizoram as a sovereign and Independent state with effect from March 1.1966 and they began to attack the important government installations and security camps at various places. On March 2, 1966, the Government of Assam declared the Mizo District as a 'disturbed area' with

immediate effect under the Assam Disturbed Act 1955.⁷⁰ On the evening of March 6, 1966, troops reached Aizawl by clearing obstacles on the way and the main market area of Aizawl was in flames after heavy strafing from the IAF Hunter Jet Fighters. The MNF and all its subsidiary organisations were declared unlawful under Rules 32 of the Defence of India Rules 1962 on the ground that the MNF was an organisation indulging in activities prejudicial to the security of Mizo District and the adjoining areas.⁷¹

Consequently the villages in Mizo hill were reorganised after the insurrection, giving the name of “Protected and Progressive Village” (PPV). Grouping of the villages was done on voluntary and compulsory basis. The objectives of the reorganisation were to contain the rebel activities of the MNF and also to accelerate economic development of the District. These circumstances led to the decision of the Government to shift the population of the inferior villages to some selected places on the road side and also to regroup the small road side villages into compact and big units. This task of shifting the population from the old villages to the new group centres was carried out by the army authorities at a very short notice which indeed involved a lot of suffering, tortures, atrocities, loss of properties and compulsion.⁷² The novel, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* also depicted Zopui, the old village of the protagonist Chhuanvawra and his lover Ngurthansangi was seemingly a voluntary grouping centre because it was a suitable road-side village for the surrounding villages.⁷³

Here, the author had clearly reflected how the Indian military personnel inflicted the atrocious activities on the innocent Mizo people. The military personnel not only harassed and suppressed the Mizo people, but they raped the women, killed the civilians and burned down the villages. When the Indian military personnel came to Mizoram to take steps to end all underground activities and to ensure return of civil life and generally to help in the process

of restoration of normalcy, they called out the village people in some villages and paraded them at a ground or a particular spot; they told some middle aged men or young men and young girls to come out. They pushed them around regardless of men or women. They were told to come to a particular spot on a hill-slope. They were made to lay down with their faces on the ground and they were beaten up for no rhyme or reason. The protagonist, Chhuanvawra and other young men or young girls were also detained and imprisoned at Tawitaw camp, Silchar road. They were severely beaten up by the military personnel and the young girls were raped.⁷⁴ Chhuanvawra was somehow released by the military because he was a son of Doctor Capt. Selthuama Renthlei.

When Chhuanvawra visited his old village, Zopui under the escort of the military, his old maternal uncle Khawvelthanga told him that he had suffered at the hands of military personnels; he could not walk properly even inside their home due to their severe beating. He also told Chhuanvawra that his lover Ngurthansangi was also taken away by the military in their camp and that she was raped. The family also agreed to give her to Capt. Ranade for his wife to avoid more harassment from the military, and that she was not fit for his (Chhuanvawra) wife because she had already lost her virginity or dignity.

The Indian military also shot dead not only men or women but also children carried by their mothers. The MNF made mistakes and deplorable activities committed resulting in the dwindling popularity of the MNF among the masses. But the atrocious activities of the military personnels like burning the houses, forcible taking away of properties, large-scale killings, rape and harassment of innocent people and other tragic and deplorable activities were seen as stimulants to group cohesion and it minimized MNF mistakes.

Some of the Indian military officers also blamed the white Christian missionaries who came to Mizoram. They alleged that the missionaries taught

the Mizos about separatism and that they instigated them to break-out the revolt against India.

But the author denied it. By using the mouth of his protagonist Chhuanvawra, he said that, the causes of the break-out of revolt in Mizoram was not the influence of Christian missionaries, but the hypocrisy, unscrupulousness and arrogance of the Indian people upon the Mizos that led to revolt against them. Such hypocrisy and atrocious activities aroused the tribal suspicion and drew them together in an increasing enmity with the plain people. The Christian missionaries taught only the Gospel of salvation, love and peaceful living but not separatism. The concept of peace subsequently invaded the value system of the Mizos, and the people learned that living in peace with one another is better than fighting. This again was reinforced by the Christian teachings that people should love one another; that peace is better than war; that love is better than hatred; and that doing good to enemies is better than killing them. If the Indians showed morality towards the people as well as to the North East India, there will not be any discontentment among the Mizos and Nagas. Morality is more important than the economic and scientific development.⁷⁵

The growth of political parties in Mizoram shows that the political parties and the Church primarily played the role of independent variables in the process of development and change in Mizoram. The story of the conversion of the people of Mizoram to Christianity and the introduction of education is significant because it is also in a way the story of the political and administrative development of the people of the region.

V: Change in Socio-Economic life:

From these novels, we read the traditional economy of the Mizo society was by and large agricultural and rural. Cultivation was the main occupation of

the people. Actually the Mizo economy in olden days was basically primitive and rural and was simply to meet the demands of the basic needs of day to day life. Shifting cultivation or jhumming was the common practice and permanent landholding was not known as such.⁷⁶ The economic progress was limited to the extent of their simple living and livelihood.⁷⁷

Before the British invasion of Mizoram, the only system of trade prevailing was barter economy by which people exchanged their properties. But with the coming of the British and the introduction of money, people began to use money as well as earning it through selling their goods especially to the English and the traders who were mostly Bengalis. The development of the economic condition of the Mizos was found in trade as promoted by the British administration through the opening of more trade marts within and outside the land.⁷⁸

Again after the British invasion of Mizoram, there had occurred an influx of Christian missionaries who introduced formal education in the Mizo society. Those who received formal education were absorbed in teaching, they held offices and posts in high or low grades according to one's capability and those people were economically more stable compared to others. The Mizos gradually became inclined towards leading a sophisticated way of life. They began using shoes, soap, match and other consumer goods that are necessary for an average modern family. The author of *Lali* did not specifically mention the economic condition of the Mizos, because it was not his purview. But he clearly depicted that there were traders at Aizawl because Taia, elder brother of Lali, who went to Aizawl for shopping bought a pair of shoe possession of which was his ardent desire.

At the sametime, from the story of *Thla Hleinga Zan* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, we read that agriculture still plays a role in the social and economic life of Mizos in the interior villages. There were not much economic changes. Mizos still depended very much on bare sustenance from their land. The author of *Thla Hleinga Zan* had clearly reflected the social condition as follows:

Perhaps this was the best era in Mizoram. Christianity has already spread all over the whole land. People have not run for materialism. The beautiful social etiquette like *tlawmngaihna* and due respect for the elders decorated the social life. People are largely economically equal, there was no gap of distinction between the rich and the poor.⁷⁹

But in the last part of this novel, the author reflected the beneficial effects of the Second World War on the economic development of Mizoram. During the war, many Mizo youngmen were enlisted in different services like Army, Lushai Scouts, V.Force and Labour Corps. Hence the opportunity of employment increased with the supply of money in Mizoram.

The author of *Lali* did not mention the socio-economic condition for the time being because it was not his purview. At the sametime from the novels of *Lali* and *Thla Hleinga Zan*, the main Mizo economy was cultivation and rural. In the novels of *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, *Kraws Bulah Chuan* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, we read that the principal Mizo economy depend on agriculture, but there was a great change in the economic system. These stories had clearly reflected that economic diversification was taking place and consequently the working forces were pulled out from agricultural sector to the other sector of economy with the introduction of modern education.

It is believed that Christian people were aware of the importance of social, economical and political change. Many of the Mizos who received

formal education were appointed in the post of teachers, different services in Office posts in higher or lower grade according to their capability and qualification. Some were enlisted in the Army and Police forces, and there were a number of Clergymen among the Mizos.

As Aizawl is the administrative headquarters of Mizo District, several developmental offices were opened. The Civil Hospital and Dispensary were also set up at Aizawl and rural areas respectively. As we read from the story of *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, several Mizo youngmen including Lalsawma (the protagonist), who completed the Medical course, were appointed to work at Aizawl Civil Hospital and Rural areas where dispensaries were opened. So, many educated persons frowned the agriculture works.

The money-economy raised an aspiration in the people for economic development and agriculture began dwindling among the educated persons. Small scale cottage industries have been started at villages and town levels after educational development. The story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* also depicted that the old chief Khawvelthanga, the maternal uncle of Chhuanvawra, has opened a cottage shop at Zopui village to foster the daily essential commodities of the catchment area villages. Dr. Selthuama, father of Chhuanvawra also opened a cottage drugs store. By engaging in these cottage industries or shop, a large number of Mizo people earn their living.

Besides, there was a good communication or jeepable road between Aizawl to Silchar, Aizawl to Lunglei and Aizawl to Champhai etc. The road between Aizawl to Lunglei, 128 miles long has started to widen in the year 1950 during the regime of S.Barkataki, Deputy Commissioner of Mizo District. In consonance with the development of road, people could now get essential commodities at a cheaper rate and it also provided marketing facilities to the people living at Aizawl, the District Headquarters; and it ensured better

transportation of articles from outside to inside or different places of Mizoram. Hence the development of communication increased the supply of money in Mizoram.

Side by side with the development of good communication, the author of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* did not oversee the introduction of postal service. The Head Office under the administration of Superintendent was opened at Aizawl and Asst. Superintendent Office was opened at Lunglei to see the running of the mails in Mizoram Division.⁸⁰ Before the introduction of this postal service, letters were sent by hand-post and there were some barriers for the exchange of correspondence.

When this postal service was introduced in Mizoram, it was not only used by the Government and businessmen for official and business matters respectively, boys and girls used it for express their love. When a boy and a girl fall in love, as we have seen the secret of love between Kaptluanga and Chhingpuii in the story of Chhingpuii, their shy tempera-ment prevented them from conveying their feelings to each other. The boy would resolve, ‘the next time I meet her I shall surely convey my feelings’ but the moment they met, all that was on his mind would take a flight. We also read in the story of *Lali* that Biakmawia could not say anything about his love or feelings to Lali. And it was same with Lali. She stole a glance at Biakmawia and realized that he was gazing at her ardently. When Biakmawia asked, ‘Lali, are you crying?’ Lali looked at him. In that split second, time stood still and an emotion that could not be conveyed by a thousand words dawned on them. Words failed Lali.

But in the story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, Ngurthansangi has sent a love letter to Chhuanvawra, who resumed his study at Shillong. In her first letter, she used the words, ‘*Dearest U Chhuana*’ but it was just like a letter between intimate friend. Chhuana has plainly replied her and used to call her

as, ‘*Dearest ka nau, Ngurthan.*’ In her second letter, Ngurthansangi confessed that she had loved him by using the same- ‘*Dearest U Chhuana*’. She used a letter for conveying her feeling to Chhuana which she would not be able to say in the presence of Chhuana. Henceforth, the two lovers exchanged their love by sending a letter to each other through Postal Service.

Here we can say that the introduction of Postal Service in Mizoram helped the development of literature as well as the art of letter writing among the Mizos. Besides, the establishment of Communication with the outside world or state played a meaningful role in bringing about change in the social behaviour of the Mizos as a whole.⁸¹

Further, there were other social changes in the Mizo society. In the novels whose settings were pre-Christianity era, one has seen that there was a *Zawlbuk* (Bachelor’s dormitory). With the introduction of Christianity to Mizoram, the importance of *Zawlbuk* inevitably decreased and it was abandoned, so we have not seen the existence of *Zawlbuk* in the novels with post-Christianity era settings.

However, since “some of the European missionaries have themselves been aware of the harm which can be done by an irresponsible abandonment of social practice, and in the case of the *Zawlbuk*, a conscientious effort has been made to encourage its preservation under a different organisation, called the Young Lushai Association (now Young Mizo Association) originally initiated by Rev. David Edwards B.A.”⁸² Some accounts of the activities of YMA have been recorded by the novels like *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*.

The new association tried to inculcate the spirit of Mizo *tlawmngaihna* in the society and it also inspired its members with many instances of

Tlawmngaihna. The members of YMA have therefore adapted the values of *tlawmngaihna* on the corporate level. The practice of digging graves, comforting the bereaved family and helping the poor, widows and family facing hardship have been refined by the teaching of Christianity.

The nomadic habitation replaced by permanence was another social change in Mizoram. Before the advent of British Government, the Mizos were traditionally nomads who used to change their habitat very often. When the British has control over all Mizoram, the Government put a stop to the Mizos' brutal raids, attacks and war; in turn it brought security to the life of Mizos.

Again, the Government gradually began to introduce new processes of cultivation and provide employment facilities in Government offices and other spheres. Among the missionaries there were agriculture experts, skilled technicians, and specialists with practical knowledge in poultry, tanning work, printing etc. Owing to this type of preaching combined with practical work, Christians in the Lushai Hill were relatively in a better position than the non-Christian Lushais.⁸³

Beside, the Christian missionaries introduced education and enlightened the Mizos through education and they helped the Mizos in their life and also in adopting a settled mode of living; and the growth of a Church in every village made the Mizos to settle there permanently. Houses are built clean and more airy, cook houses reports. As we read in the novels, Mizos are nomads no longer, and they lived in a permanent village before the outbreak of disturbance, and grouping of villages took place at suitable villages or nearby to the road.⁸⁴

There is a modification of the existing social phenomena in marriage system. A Mizo converts follow a Church marriage and they observe traditional

marriage customs side by side at certain levels. In the Mizo Christian marriage institution, many indigenous practices have been replaced and many are still continued and many things have been added. The Mizos in the past solemnised marriages with series of rites and ceremonies, offering sacrifices to both the evil and good spirits.⁸⁵ Now a Mizo marriage is solemnised in the Church by the Pastor or a designated Church Elder and the marriage tie is treated as a permanent, intrinsic bond between a man and woman which never dissolves.⁸⁶ In the novel of *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang*, the marriage function of Malsawma and Vanlalremi was conducted by Pastor Chhuahkhama, (he was the first Pastor among Mizos) at Mission Veng Church, and in the novel of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*, the marriage function was conducted by Pastor Lianzuala at Zopui Church. The stories of *Lali*, *Thla Hleinga Zan*, and *Kraws Bulah Chuan*, did not depict who conducted the marriage function of their characters. But we can say that their marriage function would be conducted following the Church marriage system. In the marriage ceremonies, the traditional items like Zu (local beer) have been replaced by tea, cakes or bread etc.

Furthermore, Christianity brought about a change of value systems. In pre-Christianity era, their social values were bravery or warrior and a successful hunter, which they called '*pasaltha*'. The chief also honoured a hunter if he had killed a specified number of wild animals by bestowing on him the title of *Thangchhuah*. Next to bravery, acts of decency and courtesy were considered to form norms of good conduct and as such were valued in the society.⁸⁷

But the introduction of British administration and arrival of Christian missionaries in the hills had brought about remarkable changes in the social and cultural life. The head hunting, brutal raids, attacks and war were stopped by the British rule and with the influence of Christianity, all superstitions on

unusual things, events and occurrences that grew out of their ignorances and animistic belief had totally disappeared.⁸⁸

Mizos gained education, modern way of living, and better jobs in Government or Mission offices with the advent of Christianity. Those who got a job in the offices were economically stable compared to others and they were highly respected by the society than the person who produced a large quantity of food-grains from agricultural field and self-sufficient family or a good hunter. So, many young people run for education and Government services but not for the agricultural field. As a result, a large number of Mizos who received education lost interest in agriculture.

At the sametime, one of the Mizo values, '*tlawmngaihna*' a code of conduct characterised by 'selflessness' 'othermindedness' or self sacrifice for others, and brotherhood and altruism are still exalted by the society.⁸⁸ In this regard, the new religion-Christianity also preached the same value and it did not bring about any major change in the value system of the people. The rapid change in the society as brought forth by various factors had a profound effect on the cultural life of the people.⁸⁹ So, many Mizo people do not know how to live in a transition between the primitive and changed society after the British regime.

Before concluding this chapter, I would like to mention that a study of novels, whose settings were post-Christianity era, reveals that it has a common feature. The plot of the stories, *Lali* by L. Biakliana, *Kros Bulah Chuan* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* by Zikpuii-Pa were coherent and well-knit. The characters and incidents were connected while the plot of *Thla Hleinga Zan* by James Dokhuma and *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* by Khawlkungi were generally loose and ill-constructed. In these stories, the characters and incidents are connected together loosely by an intrigue.

The author of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* has constructed a complex plot and it is a delightful novel. It is strong in the interest of the story. The novelist has adopted the indirect method of narration through the principal character, the plot is coherent and well-knit, and the story is gripping in its interest. The restoration of the entire family of Ngurthansangi to happiness has been conducted in a summary and ineffective manner. At the same time, the plot and characters of other novels are all conventional and their narratives are also straightforward.

L. Biakliana first introduced to the reading public the life of the low status of Mizo women, who were oppressed by their male-counterparts. He had a very marked sympathy for women and his appeal is to give freedom to marry their own choice. James Dokhuma also has clearly stressed that the Christian-fathers should take care of the happiness of their daughters in the nurture of Biblical teachings instead of forcing them to fulfill their own desire which can spoil the lives of their daughters. Both novelists have a special love for women in the Mizo society.

The novel of Khawlkungi, *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* is realistic and concrete in the presentation of her life in the Missionary quarters with Lady Missionary Kattie Hughes, Aizawl, Reiek village, the Airforce Unit, Calcutta and Military Training Centre, and Asansol which she had intimately known. This particular region, with its life and characters, comes to life in these novels. Khawlkungi freely took materials for her novel from her own experiences of life, from her personal memories and from the life and activities of her relatives and herself. In this way she showed that personal experience and memories could supply all the matters that a novelist needed. She is the first Mizo novelist who dared to make a woman who has reaped her own sowing or sin in sexual life, one of the heroine of her novel. Her plot was intended to follow not a standardised formula but what she conceived to be the logical development of that idea.

Zikpuii-Pa, the author of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* also indirectly tells us the truth about the contemporary society before the outbreak of disturbance of Mizoram. Generallizing from particular experience of his life, he gives to his readers a complete philosophy of life. His view of life is essentially moral and it is round a central code of conduct that he arranges disorderly facts of life. All his incidents and characters serve to bring about '*Morality is more important than the development in science*'.⁹⁰ The novel is also unsurpassable in description and dialogue. Natural scenes and sights have been described with great fidelity. The style is remarkable for its simplicity, grace and loveliness and the dialogue is witty, dramatic and to the point.

James Dokhuma, author of *Thla Hleinga Zan* also has clearly depicted the contemporary rural life of Mizoram before the out - break of Second World War, but he did not probe into the human souls which were found in other contemporary novels.

From all these, it can be concluded that the transition of Mizo society have been seen from these novels whose settings were post-Christianity era. As reflected by these novels, the new religion, Christianity is an agent of social reforms and social changes in all aspects of Mizo society by introducing educational system, new marriage system, observing Sunday, bringing a new pattern of living, like regular bath, keeping oneself otherwise clean, wearing washed and pressed clothes, especially in Church service days (Sunday) etc. were gently inculcated in the people and it became a part of the routine. The influences of Christianity in religious life as well as socio-cultural life of the Mizos are remarkable.

Christianity was also erasing the Mizo fear and superstitions that arose out of their indigenous religious concept. The Christian missionaries, beside conversion have helped Mizos to lead a civilized way of life in numerous ways.

The spread of education among the Mizo initiated by the Christian missionaries and the introduction of Sunday School have helped and developed the Mizo Christian life and socio-cultural life. Rejection of the religious element in the old life did not in any way alienate or result in the loss of the people identity because the traditional religious element had not contributed to that in the first place. In fact, it was in the new form of religious life that tribal identity was strengthened because the practices and structures of the Church operated at the ethnic rather than sub-ethnic level.

Besides, the Mizo tribe had traditionally been divided into numerous dialectical groups. Some of these dialects were unintelligible even to the immediate neighbours of the Mizos. The Lusei dialect which was adopted by the missionaries the standard language was understood by the large number of Mizos people. So, the missionaries' policy of using a single standard language for the Lushai Hills contributed to the unification of Mizo people.

The impact of the Christian teaching on the Mizo society is much greater than in any Christian areas in India. It brought changes in all sphere of social development, better employment in the Government offices, education and in the Church office etc., socio-political and socio-economic development. This has led Ray to state that, 'Nowhere else in India religion has so much influence on social, political and other temporal aspects of life.'⁹¹ In short, Christianity is the seed of social changes in the Mizo society in most cases. The Mizo society as we see today is the outcome of the social change brought on by the Christianity.

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84. Laithanzauva, Op. cit. p. 102.
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87. Sangkima, Op.cit. p. 93.
88. Ibid. p. 102.
89. Mc Call, Op. cit. p. 212.
90. *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah*. p. 96.
91. A.Ray, Op. cit. p. 62.

CHAPTER - IV

SETTING OF MIZO FICTION: PRESENT DAY

Introduction

In this chapter, I will attempt to trace not only the influence of Christianity and social changes brought about by Christianity, but the negative and darkside of Mizo society, social evils among the Mizos which are indirectly caused by the Church or Christianity. The Mizo fictions with the present day as their settings tend to be more complex, frank and intimate in their scrutiny of themes, and even characters. The focus of the works have also shifted from that of traditional story-telling and changes brought on by Christianity, but the realm of the negative aspects of the Mizos' progress in socio-economic and socio-political development of present society. Much of the fictions which are set in present day also highlighted the social evils among the Mizo society such as drunkenness, drug-abuse, sexual-abuse, prostitution, corruption and misuse of the administrative powers. The following six (6) Mizo fictions whose settings are of present day have been selected i.e., *Hmangaihzuali* by C. Laizawna, *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* by Zothansangi-Pa (the teknonymy of B. Pawlthanga), *Hlimni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* by H.P. Lalremtuanga, *Khualzin Nula* by Lalhriata, *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* and *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* by H. Lallungmuana.

Again these novels had not only highlighted the religious aspects of the Mizos, but all the spheres of Mizo social life including socio-political and socio-economic development of Mizo society were highlighted. The purpose of

the present day novels has widened and deepened than its predeceasing novels. The main object of the present day novel, which is of telling a story, is becoming obscured. Often the interest in a novel is psychological and social reform; that is, the books set out to describe and analyse the mental processes upon which all physical action must be based. Again, the present day novels have a didactical purpose, of a nature, much more developed than their ancestors; they embarked upon a close and detailed discussion of social and other problems. They have not only set out the fact but dissect and discuss the religious aspects and social life of the Mizos in the later part of the twentieth century, how certain church leaders readily accept large donations from obviously corrupt officials, and how the church became an indirect agent and perpetuator of many evils in the society.

The novel, *Hmangaihzuali* is written by C.Laizawna and it was published in 1990. The Mizo Academy of Letters (MAL)¹ has selected it as the best book published during the year and has awarded the 'Book of the Year Award' for 1990.² When it was awarded for the Book of the Year, citation was as follows:

“The author of this novel has built the plot by himself, he clearly portrayed the beauty of love between the faithful Mizo youngman and an innocent Mizo young girl which entangled amidst many complicated situation, and he tells us the pleasant to hear that -combined of purest and faithfulness has produced an attraction full-bloom’ So, we opined that this HMANGAIHZUALI has deserved to get this valuable Award for the Book of the Year 1990.

The author C. Laizawna, son of Manvela and Lalduhi was born on Jan. 10, 1959. He has completed Matriculation in 1981 and PUC in 1983. He joined journalism as News Editor of Zoeng Weekly Journal in 1983. From 1982, he started story writing works. He is one of the best Mizo writers; he is a novelist,

a dramatist, an essayist, a story teller and a translator. He has written 19 fictions like, *Thuruk*, *Hmangaihzuali*, *Lei theih loh Ruali*, *Hmaithinghawn*, *K.S. Minti maw?*, *Ka phal lo*, *Hmangaihziri*, *Ka Thlang Zawh* and *Anita* etc. and two Biblical love story; one drama play- *Kan Tiam Tawh Si*. He has also written 16 Detective Story and 7 social concerned books and translated several fairy-tales. Among his novels, *Hmangaihzuali* and *Anita* were selected and awarded for Book of the Year in 1990 and 1998 respectively by the Mizo Academy of Letters.³ The twin selection for the Book of the Year has clearly indicated his efficiency in story writing works.

The story begins with Dinga (Laldingliana) visiting his lover Zuali (Hmangaihzuali), daughter of Hrangkiauva and Laldawngliani of Champhai Vengsang at their home before he left Champhai for Burma (Myanmar). Dinga hugged Zuali and kissed her lips; Zuali has no objection but did not respond. On the next day, Dinga left Champhai for Burma to smuggle out from India medicines, called Phensydyl. On the second day of journey, he reached Tahan where his paternal relative Chaldailova and some Mizo families are living.

While he spent the night at this village, one girl namely Laldawngliani, one of his lovers from Tahan set a trap to catch or noose Dinga to enable her to marry him. Wrongfully she told the Tahan village authority that Dinga has raped her by providing alcohol. So, the village authority did not allow Dinga to return to Mizoram unless he marries her. Thus he becomes entangled in the trap of Dawngi. But, luckily, after he sold his smuggling goods to Rangoon and bought some goods to be sold at Aizawl, he secretly escaped from the trap of Dawngi and safely reached Champhai.

In the meantime, Zuali had other suitors, namely, Lalhmingliana, son of a wealthy man of Aizawl, and Rinawma, MCS, an Administrative Officer (A.O.); but they did not win her heart. When Dinga reached Champhai, he used to visit

Zuali, he explained how he had been entangled in the trap of Dawngi and how he had escaped from her. He also said that he would not marry another girl but only she. This word pleased Zuali and they renewed their love. So, Dinga returned to Aizawl with easy feeling and he resumed his studies at Hrangbana College.

When the result of HSLC examination was declared, Zuali also passed in the Second division. As requested by Dinga, she came to Aizawl to join higher studies at Hrangbana College. She stayed or lived with the family of her aunt, namely Liani. Zuali always visited Dinga at his residence.

One night, Lalhmingliana beguiled Zuali by taking prior permission from Zuali's aunt Liani by pretending to go to the night entertainment; she was given a cup of squash mingled with a kind of drugs. After a short time, she became unconscious. Then Lalhmingliana took her away to one hotel room, there he raped her. When Zuali has recovered, she realised that she had been defiled and become unfit to be the wife of her lover Dinga. So, she requested Hminga to take her at their home for his wife, but he refused for the time being. In the meantime, her mother Laldawngliani and Rinawma have arrived at the house of her aunt Liani. When Zuali saw Rinawma, one of her suitors, she plainly confessed she had been defiled and is now unfit to be his wife, but Rinawma said he still love her and did not reject her. When Dinga heard the bad news, it hurted his feelings and made him very angry upon her.

After a few days, Zuali and her mother returned to their home-town alongwith Rinawma. Soon after they reached their home, Rinawma sent his mediator to Zuali's parents for marriage proposal; Zuali also agreed to marry him because she thought Dinga might reject her. Thus, Rinawma and Zuali were married under the Church Court. But after one year, Rinawma had divorced her and she returned to her parents' home.

After sometime, Zuali was sent by her parents to take care of her younger brother Liansanga who appeared for the examination. Amazingly, Liansanga has occupied the old room of Laldingliana that makes longing memory recollection for Zuali. One morning, Dinga saw Zuali on the street while he has a morning walk exercise; he secretly followed her till she reached his old room. Before Zuali opens the door, Dinga calls her to wait for him and asks if she live lives at his old room, Zuali could not reply and she nearly fall to the ground. Dinga helped her to open the door and led her inside the room. When they made known to each other that they were not in wedlock or have no spouse; then Dinga invited her to renew their love by forgetting their bygone days, because the world is not round as they wish. Zuali also happily accepted the invitation of Dinga.

The novel, *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* is written by Zothansangi-Pa (B. Pawlthanga) in the year 1995. This novel is one of the biggest Mizo novels. The author B. Pawlthanga, son of Khuanga and Hrangzingi was born on May 1, 1945 at Saitual village. He passed B.A. from Pachhunga Memorial College, Aizawl under Gauhati University in 1971 and B.Ed. from Mizoram Institute of Education under NEHU in 1979. He joined Middle School at Kawlkulh in 1963 as the Asst. Teacher, and then became the Headmaster of Kawlkulh High School in 1972. He also wrote another fiction called *Inneih Dar Ri*.⁴

The story begins with the disturbance of Mizoram and the birth of Rokunga, an elder brother of Zothanpari, the heroine of this novel. After two years of the birth of Rokunga, the happy couple Thanzuala and his wife had another child, named Zothanpari, to beautify the capital of Mizoram. In the same year, Thanzuala was elected to be a Church Elder and became ordained for Zohlun Presbyterian Church.

Unfortunately, their mother (her name was not mentioned by author) died just after Rokunga had completed his matriculation examination. Rokunga had passed HSLC in First Division but he joined the Mizo National Army (MNA) without pursuing his study. Within two years, he was promoted to the rank of Captain. However, he committed suicide by shooting himself at his forehead for the sake of Mizo National Army, and his Mizo counterpart from Indian Army who, is to be executed unless he persuades Rokunga to join the Indian Army. All the information about the death of Rokunga was brought to the family by Lalrosanga (called Sangpuia), the hero of this novel, who also handed over Rs. 13,000/- and lady sweater for Pari which was sent by Rokunga before he died.

Sangpuia stayed several days in the house of Pari to comfort and to help them. During his stay here he has had fallen in love with Pari. Sangpuia said that if he passed B.A. in Distinction, one Minister would help him to undergo training for Industry Officer under Industrial Development Scheme. He also requested her to wait until he complete the said training course.

In the meantime, Lalthatluangi an intimate friend of Pari persuaded Pari's father to marry one widow by name Lalhlunchhungi, daughter of Lalphunga; this widow is a Church activist and a well-known figure in the Pastorate and at the Synod level. Thus the nuptial function of Thanzuala and Lalhlunchhungi was solemnised in their church. Lalhlunchhungi tried to be a good stepmother for Pari because she had been influenced by the seminar paper, i.e. **'Women in tribal area'** which was presented by the Teacher from Jorhat Bible School where she attended the seminar on *'Women Liberation'* organised at Haflong by the Presbyterian Churches of North East India.

Sangpuia was selected by the Government to undergo a training course for the post of Development Officer and he left Mizoram for Delhi. After one

month, they were sent to Hongkong for training at Far-East Industrial Development Centre (FEIDC). Unluckily, he was kidnapped by a member of South Asia Continental Organisation (SACO). Hongkong Police had chased the kidnappers to rescue Sangpuia, but all their efforts were in vain.

At home, the Government of Mizoram selected Zohlun village for the Agriculture Development Centre and the Government opened the Agriculture Office, having the strength of 8 staff headed by an Agriculture Extension Officer (AEO). The first AEO, Ramchhuanmawia, B.Sc. (Agri), a bright young man, was hard-working and devoted in his duties. Soon after he joined his new post, he used to visit the individual farms and selected several families to receive a grant-in-aid. The Minister in-charge and the villagers also praised him for his hard works.

Ramchhuanmawia has fallen in love with Pari and he sent his mediators to Pari's parents for marital proposal. The parents also favoured him to be their son-in-law but Pari refused to marry him for the sake of Sangpuia. Another suitor, Zoramchhana, an old friend of Sangpuia, the Industrial Development Officer, also sent his mediator to Pari's parents but they rejected him again by making an excuse, for she aspired to pursue higher studies. At the sametime, her parents promised to Chhuana's mediator that the marital proposal will be discussed again after she completes her studies.

Soon after she completed her study and her results being declared, Zoramchhana sent again his mediator to Pari's parents to discuss again the marital proposal, Pari's parents also agreed to give their daughter to Ramchhana because Pari did not dare to make any problem. Pari was reluctant indeed to marry Ramchhana because she expected to see again her lover Sangpuia. When she told her mother about her problems, her mother Chhungi also has pitied her and she made arrangement for Pari to escape from their

home to elude the marital function. She advised her to go to Hmunmawi village where her unknown aunt Lalsiami, younger sister Pari's father lived. Opportunely, her father went to Aizawl, to collect the Grant-in-aid from Government of Mizoram for their local Sugarcane Growers' association. Thus, while her father was away at Aizawl, Pari left their home for Hmunmawi village.

Surprisingly enough, while Pari stayed at her aunt's home, Sangpuia arrived at Hmunmawi. Sangpuia then brought Pari to their village Zohlun and after a short time, he sent his mediator for marital proposal as usually practised by Mizo society. Thus, Sangpuia has married Zothanpari, who waited him faithfully and then they returned to their SACO headquarters.

The novel called, *Khualzin Nula* is written by Lalhriata, in the year 1995. The author Lalhriata was born on 8.8.1948 between Kapdaia and Kaptluangi in the village of Chhippui. He passed HSLC in 1975 and B.A. in 1985, B.Ed. in 1990 from Mizoram Insitute of Education, under NEHU. He joined the Synod Home Mission Board in the year 1982 as an Evangelist Teacher. He was later promoted and posted to be the Headmaster of Synod Home Mission School, Marpara.

The story begins with the normal family life of Jane Lalrinthangi of Buangpui village. She was known as Jane. Her father Saingura was a Church Elder while her mother Thanzuali was a Church activist. She was brought up by her parents as well as her paternal grandmother in the teaching of Christian life and admonition of the Lord.

Jane has had an unknown twin sister. Their names are same. They were secretly separated by their aunt Darsailovi, a staff nurse of Aizawl Civil Hospital, while they slept together in a cradle of the Hospital, because her cousin Suakngura's wife Lianthangi lost her child. Jane Lalrinthangi (called

Rinthangi) was brought up on the worldly life. She never received a good teaching or instruction from her parents unlike her twin-sister Jane. She spent her life in lustful manner. But since her appearance and body structure are more or less same with her unknown twin sister Jane Lalrinthangi (Jane), many people failed to identify them, and even their aunt Dari also made a secret sign to recognise them.

Jane was fallen in love with Lalnunmawia, one of the counsellors of the Gospel Witness Team who have had a programme at their local Buangpui Church but Mawia rejected her due to a mis-identification with her unknown twin-sister. Then she had found another lover, namely Biakmawia, son of Tawnluaia, Senior Health Worker, who just returned to their village after he completed his M.A. examination; he also rejected her due to misunderstanding from the photo of her unknown twin sister, which he got from his friend. The strange photo, which they called 'photo's tiger', embarrassed the two lovers and they were separated till they uncovered the secret of aunt Darsailovi.

At the sametime, Jane heard the calling from God, she announced among her family that the Lord called her to preach the Gospel among the unsaved people and she decided to be a missionary for the Lord. Fortunately, after a short time, Synod Office selected her to go to Tripura Mission Field to help the Field workers. Thus, Jane joined her new post with enthusiasm.

In the home, before Jane returned to their home as she got a calling letter to appear before the Synod Mission Board, a hunter found Jane (Rinthangi) who is asleep in the road-side and brought her to the house of Elder Saingura. They said that one drunkard claimed her to be his wife. But after one week, while they take care of Jane Rinthangi, their daughter Jane had reached their home. The family of Saingura and all the local people were greatly surprised. The two Janes were also wonderstruck to see each other.

At the sametime, a special messenger from Aizawl reached the house of Saingura on the death of Dari and they also handed over him a letter from Dari. Without delay, Saingura opened the letter and read out the top secret of Dari before the visitors.

In her secret, she clearly stated that the two Jane Lalrinthangis were twin daughter of Thanzuali wife of Saingura. Due to pity on Lianthangi, wife of S. Ngura, her cousin who lost her newly born child, she secretly changed with one child of Thanzuali and the dead body of Lianthangi's child while they were fully asleep. She also invented Jane Lalrinthangi for the name of the two children without clearly informing the two parents, but requested them to call their child as 'Jane.' The characters of these twin-sisters were very different. While Jane was brought up by her parents in the teaching of Christian life and admonition of the Lord, Rinthangi was brought up by her parents in the worldly life. Jane always suffered the consequence of the sin of her sister Rinthangi. These contrasting characters have clearly depicted that the nature of life is not purely generated from the parents or mother, but character is built by the environment of family life as well as social life. So, the Mizo usage, '*the tiger begat tiger*' be read as '*tiger brought up the tiger.*' Anyway, due to her (Dari) misdeed, one Jane became a sinner and pitiful girl while other Jane lost her reputation and prestige.

When the visitors heard the secret of Darsailovi, they marvelled. Biakmawia, lover of Jane was much regretted for his rejection of Jane's love. Now, Jane did not seem to marry a husband, she has had already dedicated her life to be a missionary. At the sametime, the Synod Mission Board appointed her to work at Arunachal Field. Soon after she left her parents for Arunachal, there she propagated the Good News of Jesus Christ among the non-Christian people and she became a successful soul-winning missionary. She always sent her achievement report to Buangpui Church and it was read out before the

congregation. Her report had won over the heart of Biakmawia and he also left their village to work in Mission field near Guwahati.

Unfortunately, Jane was abducted by a group of gangsters with her companion. Police found the body of her companion but not hers. But luckily, Biakmawia, the lover of Jane found and rescued her from the hands of a group of gangs and brought her in their hometown safely.

When they reached their home and after staying one week, Biakmawia and Jane decided to marry, thus their nuptial ceremony was solemnised at Buangpui Church. After several days, the new couple left their family for their new post at Manipur to beget more children for the Lord. The author Lalhriata also wrote another novel—*Hmangaihna Zunzam* and he composed several Gospel songs.

The novel called *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* is written by H.P. Lalremtlunga. It is the biggest Mizo novel. The author, H.P. Lalremtlunga was born on 3.4.1973 between the couple of H. Lalhnawla and Nunovi in the village of Pangzawl. He is a bright youngman; he passed HSLC in 1989 from Pangzawl High School, B.Sc in 1993 and M.Sc. in 1998 from NEHU. He is now a Principal of Millenium English School, Pangzawl. He wrote his first story *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* in 1993 and was published by Synod Publication Board in 1994. He also wrote another novel, *Hmangaih Tlak Ka Ni Tawh Lo*, Part-I in 1997 and Part-II in 2000, both were published in printed form. He also wrote several short plays and directed the two Mizo films called *House No. 109* and *Mission*. He got Lelte Award 2004 on Best Supporting Actor in his **Mission** film.⁵

The story begins with the death of Hminga, the father of Zuala (Lalthanzuala). After the death of his father, Zuala appeared at the HSLC

examination; fortunately he passed in the Second Division. Zuala pursued higher studies at Aizawl by residing among the family of their relative-uncle Rama while his friends Sangtea and Hminga were sent to Shillong by their parents.

Zuala had done his first year PUC admission at Pachhunga University College. After three months, he found new friends namely L.C. and Puia (the author concealed their full name). L.C. came from a rural village to join the college at Aizawl while Puia was from a wealthy family of Aizawl city. Due to ill-treatment from Sawmi, wife of Uncle Rama, Zuala had occasionally shared his friends Puia and L.C. to drink alcohol to relieve his depressed mind. But by remembering the message of his father to avoid alcohol which ruined many promising students, he tried to refrain from drinking alcohol.

But one evening, he accompanied again his two friends in the local liquor shop; unfortunately, while they were on their way to return, he was struck by a taxi, he got a severe wound in his head and body. He was nursed at Aizawl Civil Hospital for several days.

When he was released from the Hospital, he got the sad news from their home that his mother was fully unconscious. So, his uncle Rama and his wife Sawmi brought him to visit his mother in their private car; but before their arrival, a good mother Muani had already left her children to her eternal abode in heaven. Zuala knew his mother had suffered and lost her life for his own guilt; he regretted very much but it was fruitless. He prayed to God and asked him to forgive his sins. He also made a commitment that he will remain faithful to Him. Thus, he found a new life on the eve of his mother's burial.

Now, Zuala made up his mind to devote in his studies to get a good result in the examination, to enable him to join the Engineering College to achieve his

ardent desire an Engineer. When he returned to Aizawl to resume his studies, he found a new friend, namely Vanlalrova called Marova, a good Christian youngman and a helpful person.

Zuala had passed PUC (Sc.) in the Second Division. As advised by his uncle Rama, he applied the different training programmes for job under different Departments, but no Department selected him. His entire dream for joining the Engineering College was in vain. His newly good friend Marova advised him to resume his study in the B.Sc. class which may be God's plan for him. His uncle Rama also advised him to join B.Sc. class. Thus, he has done his B.Sc. admission while his friend Marova was admitted for B.A. class.

After two years, Zuala has completed B.Sc. in a bright colour, as his uncle Rama advised him, he joined the B.Sc.(Honours) class. Now the couple of Rama and Sawmi get a spiritual regeneration and they experience a joy of the Lord in their heart that brought complete change to the atmosphere of family life. Besides, he got good news from his younger sister that their paternal uncle was born again and there was a new family life in their home.

When Zuala completed his B.Sc. Honours, he was selected to undergo training for a job, and he went to the training centre at Guwahati. After two years, he completed his training course and returned to Aizawl. Luckily, he was appointed for a post of Technical Officer. However, Zuala has joined the family of Siana, a close relative of uncle Rama, since his uncle Rama was transferred to Shillong, After a short time, Zuala and Lalnunsangi (called Mapuui) daughter of Siana had fallen in love with each other. At the sametime, another suitor namely, Ramliana, (called Ramtea) B.E., SDO had sent his mediators to Mapuui's parents for marriage proposal. The parents also agreed to give their daughter to Ramtea. But Mapuui plainly told her mother about all her affairs with Zuala. Then Engi, mother of Mapuui told her husband; thus the

marriage proposal with Ramtea was cancelled. Siama and Engi agreed to give their daughter to Zuala, whom they look as their son. Siama also presented a new Maruti Car to Zuala as a wedding present. Thus, Zuala and Mapuii got married and started a happy marriage life.

The story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* and *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* were written by Dr. H. Lallungmuana, Lecturer & later Principal (2006-2008), Pachhunga University College published in 1995 and 1996 respectively. The story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* was selected and awarded 'Book of the Year' for 1995.⁶ The author, H. Lallungmuana, son of Lalkhawsiana and Lianghinglovi was born on 9.1.1944 at Biate village. He was a bright student and passed matriculation in 1964 from Eastern High School, Biate.

He resumed higher studies at St. Anthony College, Shillong, but he was arrested and imprisoned due to the outbreak of insurgency in Mizoram in 1966; even though he did not join the MNF movement. He then appeared at the final examination of B.A. from the District Jail, Shillong, and fortunately passed the examination (Economic Honours) in II Class. After about two years of imprisonment, he was released, and continued the P.G. studies at Gauhati University and got the M.A. (Eco) in 1972. He joined the post of Lecturer in Mizo Department at Pachhunga Memorial Government College, Aizawl (now Pachhunga University College) in 1974. He pursued higher education and completed his Doctorate Degree in 1989 from NEHU. His Thesis was *Themes and Techniques of Mizo Novel*. In 1998, he was elected for Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) from Mizoram state.

The main theme of the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* is '*Self-sufficiency or Self-reliance through hard work.*' The author tried to inculcate to his readers the passage of memory from scripture — '**In all labour there is profit.**' The story begins with a conflict between Rohluta and his wife Mawitei (Lalnunmawii). Rohluta, a teacher of Zawlnuam College turned into a contractor under PWD and lived in a rented house at Aizawl; he had beaten up

his wife Lalnunmawii upto a bleeding in her face, and he expelled her with their son Lalramchhuana. Mawitei came to Pastor quarters for seeking help. Pastor Malsawma and his wife brought her back to their (Mawitei and Rohluta) home to settle the difference between them, but Rohluta refused to accept her again and he announced that he had already divorced her. Pastor and his wife could not convince Rohluta to make reconciliation with his wife. All their efforts were in vain. Therefore, Mawitei returned to her hometown to live with her parents. Then after two years, her younger brother got married, and he misbehaved upon his sister. So, Mawitei left her parents' home to live in a rented house with her son Lalramchhuana, who is only four years of age.

Lalramchhuana (called Chhuana) was a bright student and he passed HSLC in Second Division. As advised by their Headmaster, Chhuana decided to join higher studies at Aizawl and he got admission at Government Aizawl College. Luckily, he got to work for daily wages under one PWD Officer, namely Sawmkima. By earning his daily needs, he attended the class regularly and has passed PUC in First Division. He joined I B.A. in the same College. In the meantime, this kind Officer Sawmkima has enrolled him as the Work-charge employee under PWD.

One day, while he participated in the Mizoram Zone Inter-College Sports at Ist A.R Ground, he found a beautiful young girl called Jennie Vanlalhrauii, (called Jennie) who was studying PUC (Sc) at Pachhunga University College. With the help of his friend Rama, they had a tea party at Ritz Hotel and the young boy and girl were acquainted and fallen in love with each other.

In the meantime, Jennie was sent by her parents to study B.V.Sc. course at another state. She sent a letter to her lover Chhuana, she said that she still love him. Chhuana also replied her and committed himself to remain faithful to her.

Unfortunately, Chhuana was arrested by the police while helping a stranger women and her son who were badly teased by two toxicated young men Ramlawma, son of Lalliana, MLA, and Nunsanga son of Rochangliana. The punishment was inflicted upon Lalramchhuana and he was detained by the police in their custody without proper charge-sheet while the two assailants were rescued by their fathers. He was released on bail after several days.

From what had happened, Chhuana made up his mind not to join any Government job but to attain self sufficiency through hard-works. As soon as he completed his examination of final year B.A., he returned to their hometown, he cleared the jungle and started a piggery farm by rearing several pigs. He also harvested a large quantity of rice from his farm. He made a signboard near the farm with a scripture passage of memory: **In all labour there is profit.**

One night while he visited Aizawl, he hugged one girl by mistaking her as his lover Jennie, but the girl angrily protested. Chhuana was arrested by the police and was sent to the Central Jail by making a charge-sheet for rape case. Luckily there he found new friends, namely Zoramchhana, Zohmangaiha and Zoramtiana. His new friends promised to help him at any time. when Jennie came back to Aizawl after one week, she rescued him from Jail with the help of Rama. Then Chhuana and Jennie discussed about the marriage proposal, but Chhuana had asked Jennie to wait for sometime. Then he left Aizawl for their village to resume his farm works.

One day, Jennie got a mediator from her fellow staff at Selesih farm, namely Dr. Lalrinliana, son of a wealthy man of Aizawl without getting any signal from Jennie. Jennie instantly rushed to meet Chhuana at his farm by hiring a taxi. When she reached Chhuana's farm, she requested him to send his mediator immediately. So, Chhuana sent his mediators to Jennie's parents for marriage proposal. The parents agreed to give their daughter to Chhuana, B.A., a farmer, as desired by their daughter.

After a few days, the marriage function was solemnised and celebrated at Chhuana's farm house. Now Jennie also resigned from the Government service to devote herself in her husband's farm to attain self-sufficiency through hard-work.

In the home of Jennie's parents, her sister Julie Lalhruaitluangi has got approval letter from one Professor of Bangalore University on her application for Research works (Ph.D.). So, she left her family for Bangalore to pursue her study. But the parents got sad news from her only after three months, that she had married a Muslim youngman, namely H.H. Alfanasi, son of Ghazif Alfanasi from Saudi Arabia. After a short time, they heard again she had been converted into her husband's religion - Islam. The angry father could not read fully the letter of his daughter and threw in the hearthfire. However, unluckily, Julie was divorced by her husband; the kind old parents of her husband helped her to return to her parents' home in pregnancy.

The new couple, Lalramchhuana and Jennie had run their farm successfully. They always received grant-in-aids from the Government and they utilized such grants for further improvement. One day, Chhuana got a letter from his father who was being hospitalised at Civil Hospital, Aizawl. In his letter, Rohluta had confessed his sin against his old wife and son, and he asked their forgiveness. He also said that he had given his mansion which he built at Khatla Street to his unknown son and he also enclosed a legal written **Will** for his son. Thus, Chhuana and Jennie rushed to Civil Hospital. When they reached there, Rohluta from the verge of death asked forgiveness of his son; Chhuana also said that his mother and he had already forgiven him. Then Rohluta died peacefully. The family of Chhuana had decided that the rent they received from their father's house be used for the propagation of the Gospel among Muslims.

The story of *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* began with the arrival of Hmangaih Zoramthangi (called Ngaihzovi) in the nightfall to Aizawl to which she was

unfamiliar with. By hiring a taxi, she approached her uncle Lunghnema's house at Mission Vengthlang. When she reached, she knocked the door again and again. But no one responded her. Meanwhile, she was surrounded by a group of men who called themselves as VDP duty with stick. She was terrified. When they inquired about her, she plainly told that she was from Lunglei and come here to join the family of her uncle Lunghnema. But they told her that the family of Lunghnema had already moved to another street of Aizawl town. Then Ngaihzovi left the house and go to the main road. At last she sat on the traffic point near Mission Veng Church.

She was found by a young girl namely K. Siamliani, daughter of Hranga, and she brought her to their home. Siami was a student of Iyr. B.A. at Government Aizawl College; she has a slovenly character. By pretending to her parents as to attend the class, she always spent night time with a Government Officer at some places. One night, Siami brought Ngaihzovi to one hotel room; she introduced one young man and left them for sometime. But the youngman could not convince her to have a sexual relationship. Siami was angry upon her. She always tried to misguide her to be a K.S. (K.S. meaning - call girl).

One night, she brought her again to one hotel room and introduced her to a man called Rosanga, First Class Contractor, and left them in the room. Then Rosanga gave her a new shirt and Rs. 1000/- which she badly needed to manage herself. By sympathetically speaking and promising to marry her, Rosanga had convinced her and have a sexual relation with her. Thus, Ngaihzovi used her body to get money.

After a few days, Ngaihzovi got a job at Pi Dari tea stall and lived among the family of her new mistress. Fortunately her new mistress Pi Dari sent her to the family of her sister to be their house-maid. The new family members consisted of only three: father Lalsanga, mother Lianchhungi and their only son Lalthlamuana, an Officer in the Government Office. The new family was kind

to her and they treated her with care. The Father requested her to be their daughter-in-law and their son Lalthlamuana (called) Muana also asked her to marry him and she also accepted it with gratitude.

In the meantime, a Gospel Crusade was organised by the Church, which Muana and his parents are belonging to. Muana also spared himself to be one of the counsellors as their Pastor requested him. In his counselling class one night, a girl called Siamtei, a secret call girl (K.S) was converted and she confessed her sins before Muana. She also confessed that she was very much regretted for she has misguided Ngaihzovi, their house-maid to become a K.S. When Muana heard Ngaihzovi was a one-time K.S., his heart was hurt by the bad news.

One night, Muana told Ngaihzovi about the conversation of her old friend Siamtei and her testimony. Ngaihzovi thought that Siamtei had disclosed all her bygone days, and she was very ashamed of this. So, she secretly left the family in the early morning by leaving a piece of letter. Muana always tried to find her within Aizawl and Lunglei town, but in vain. Fortunately, he found out his lover Ngaihzovi while he visited Guwahati on an official duty. He discovered that one Mizo contractor namely Rosanga sold her to one Hotel Manager P.C.Hazarika to be his servant or concubine. Muana rescued her from the hand of Hazarika with the help of the Liaison Officer, Mizoram House, and the IGP (Inspector General of Police) namely B.N. Singh, IPS.

On the way to Aizawl, Muana counselled Ngaihzovi about the love of God and the way of salvation. Thus, Ngaihzovi also got spiritual regeneration and she experienced the love and power of God. When they reached Muana's home, his parents had clearly understood that their son still love Ngaihzovi, the father did not have any objection if his son still love her while the mother disapproved her for their daughter-in-law.

As ill-luck would have it, Muana's mother need to receive blood donation due to suffering from severe colic. Some of their relatives including Ngaihzovi and Siamtei had volunteered to give their blood; Siami, who had already relapsed to her old life tried to ruin Ngaihzovi's life again. Siamtei secretly changed her blood and Ngaihzovi blood while they were busy for blood test. Doctor declared the HIV positive was found in the blood of Ngaihzovi. This sad news hurt the two lovers' heart like a piercing. So, Muana could not marry Ngaihzovi before his mother's death, as desired and urged by his mother.

But after sometime, the Pastor and Muana visited Siamtei, who was laid in the sick-bed. When they reached her, from the verge of death, Siamtei confessed her sin upon Ngaihzovi. She told him that the blood of Ngaihzovi was pure and free from AIDS, but it was her blood from which they found HIV positive. Then Siami died. Muana and Pastor told Ngaihzovi that she was free from AIDS. So, as suggested by the Pastor, the blood of Ngaihzovi was tested again at Civil Hospital and it was declared pure and free from HIV positive.

In the meantime, some relatives urged Muana not to marry Ngaihzovi, a one time K.S. In their opinion, she did not deserve to marry Muana, a good Christian and a Senior Officer. But Muana argued that her life will be regenerated by giving a good care. So, after a few days, the wedding ceremony of Lalthlamuana and Hmangaih Zoramthangi was solemnised at their Church and they began to enjoy a happy married life.

From the above story outlines, one can see that the present day fictions are more than a tale-tell Christian story, but an intimate presentation of today's social life. Focus is on all the spheres of social developments of Mizo society in the field of socio-economic and political development, social reforms and the subtle changes of the Mizo social life, value systems etc. and how the Church witnessed Christ and spread the Good news among the non-Christian people.

At the sametime, they also reflected that social evils like, prostitution, misuse of money and political power, corruption etc. were rampant in Mizoram which are indirectly caused by politicians as well as by the Church.

Some readers may not accept the view of our novelists in their attempt to portray the social evils among the Mizo society were which were directly caused by the Church. As Walter Allens rightly stated '*the novelist's job is simply to be a convincing liar. If he does not convince, he is a bad novelist.*'⁷ So, the readers must have '*willing suspension of disbelief which constituted poetic faith.*'⁸ The novelist always exploited what they discovered about life in the course of living through their characters and stories. Of course, different novelists have different theories about their art: they write, they think, for all sort of reasons to reform the moral of the age.⁹ They frequently believed that they are reformers of the society and deep thinkers.

Anyhow writers of the present time novels are still influenced by Christianity in their attempt to focus the social problems and tendentiousness of social reforms. So, let me elaborate the impacts of Christianity in our present day fictions which we have seen from these selected novels.

I: Socio - Political Development :

As it has already been mentioned in Chapter III (d), the armed rebellion for Independence in Mizoram by the underground MNF broke-out in 1966. Many promising students joined the underground movement. Even in the present day fiction, we read some young men and promising students still joining the underground movement before the Peace-settlement was signed by the Centre and Laldenga's MNF. In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* Rokunga, an elder brother of Zothanpari also joined the Mizo National Army soon after he passed HSLC, but he committed suicide by shooting himself in

his forehead for the sake of MNA as well as for his counterpart - one Mizo youngman of an Indian Army personnel.

From the beginning of insurgency, the leaders of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church took initiative towards bringing the MNF and the Government of India to the negotiating table. By forming the Christian Peace Committee, later revived under the name of Zoram Kohhran Hruaitute Committee (Joint Churches Leader's Committee of Mizoram), they acted as a peace envoy between the MNF and the Centre. At the initiative of the Church leaders, all political leaders have signed joint appeal, requesting the Centre Government and MNF to hold a political dialogue for restoration of peace in Mizoram. After three spells of political dialogues, an accord was at last signed between the Centre and Laldenga's MNF on June 30, 1986; The signing of the Peace Accord was flashed¹⁰ by Doordarshan on that night and many Mizo people watched from Television. In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, Zothanpari and Lalthansanga (an old friend of Sangpuia) also watched the signing of Peace Accord from Sanga's T.V. by sitting together in the chairs.¹¹

Many Mizo people jubilantly celebrated the Peace Accord. Following the Peace Accord, the MNF personnel called *Hnam Sipai* came out from their headquarters with their arms, ammunition and equipment to take steps to end all underground activities and to ensure return to civil life and generally to help in the process of restoration of normalcy. So, many Mizo people welcome them while the parents of Pari were away in their field to avoid seeing the jubilation of the people because their son Rokunga would not return.

In these fictions set in present day, we found the political development and Church-State relationship in Mizoram. In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, the General Assembly election was held in Mizoram. The author commented the election as follows:

“There are 133 candidates, the Mizo Union and Mizo Peace Forum Party does not get even a single seat and all the 18 candidates from Mizo Union lost their deposit while only one candidate gets back his deposit out of 13 candidates from MPF party. Out of 18 Independent candidates, one was elected and 15 candidates lost their deposit. The Mizo Convention bagged only one seat out of 28 candidates and other 21 candidates lost their deposit. From the Congress party, 19 candidates were elected out of 29 candidates while the Rulling Party P.C. bagged only 8 seats out of 27 candidates.

This is the first time for the National Party had won the Mizoram Assembly election. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi also used to visit three times for election campaign in Mizoram. It was the first time of using the video tape and audio-cassette for election campaign and killing a candidate.¹²

This General Assembly election seemed to be the last election in the erstwhile of Union Territory of Mizoram which was held in the year 1984. On the Recommendation of the United Mizo Parliamentary Party (UMPP) of the Mizo District Council in its session held in April 14, 1971, Mizoram was elevated to Union Territory status in the year 1972. The UMPP resolution runs as:

“In order to put all Mizo tribes under one set up of administration including those living in our neighbourhood, the house consider lasting peace and tranquility and statehood as of imperative necessity and decided to bring this to the notice of the Central Government as soon as possible.”¹³

The story of *Khualzin Nula* mentioned that the Union Territory of Mizoram was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India in 1972. There were General Assembly elections for four times (including one bye election) in the erstwhile Union Territory. Soon after the Peace Accord was signed between the Indian Government and MNF, Mizoram was elevated to statehood and it was inaugurated in Feb. 20, 1987. In the first election of Mizoram State Legislative Assembly, MNF party was elected to power in Mizoram, but MNF lost its

solidarity as an organisation, mainly over the question of liberalised issue of liquor permits, which the Churches are opposing strongly. The Congress Party was elected to power in 1989 followed by an allegation of corruption in politics, which was difficult to establish. The party had promised the electorate a Christian society in Mizoram.¹⁴

Since Mizoram became Union Territory and particularly after to attainment of full-fledged state of Indian Union in 1987 and uptill date, there was a misuse of political power, corruption and unfair means of election. Some MLAs and Ministers were greedy, dishonest and extravagant, intermingled with sex and alcohol. They always interfered in the judicial matter. In the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, one MLA namely Lalliana has rescued from the hand of the police his son Ramlawma and friend Nunsanga, son of Rochangliana, who assaulted the stranger women in the street and striken Ramchhuana to bleeding from his nose. The policemen did not dare to speak against him, but make charge-sheet upon Ramchhuana, rescuer of stranger woman from the hands of the said two youngmen. He was imprisoned at the direction of the said MLA without proper investigation (p.41). There was a perversion of justice.

Corruption is also rampant among the rulers and Government officials. In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, the grant-in-aids for the poor farmers never reached the target groups, because it was muddled and monopolized by a few officials. That is why the farmers could not produce a large quantity of food-grains in commensurate with the Government which sanctioned a lot of money for the upliftment of farmers. One of the minor characters has suggested the Church should play a vital role for the transformation of the Mizoram political system.

There was a great debate among the Church's members as well as the politicians regarding the interference of the Church in political system or the inter Church-State relationship. '*The Church should steer clear of politics*' people cry. And '*religion and politics don't mix.*'¹⁵ In the mid-1980's, the Synod Executive Committee met the members of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram. In the meeting one of the Cabinet Ministers stated very emphatically that, '*The Church should confine herself to spiritual matters and not get involved in politics and state concerns.*'¹⁶

In the late eighties, the then Prime Minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi emphasized the need to separate religion and politics. One main reason behind this could be the problem of religious communalism which has been rampant since at least post independent period.¹⁷ With conforming the idea of the above Minister, many Mizo Christian politicians opined that the Church should not interfere in the politics because the duty and responsibility of the Church is only spiritual matter for her members; so, she should be kept away from the political and administrative system. Thus, the 'non-interference' policy has been popular among the Mizo people. The Church and the State are two separate kingdoms, however the Church can criticise the state policy usually through an indirect manner.

Many God's servants in the past like George Mueller, D.L. Moody, Scofield and many others taught that God's people should abstain from politics.¹⁸ We also read the idea on non-interference in the politics for a good Christians from our novel. For instance, in the story of *Hmangaihzuali* one minor character, Khuanga, the father of Rinawma MCS has opined that the Church and politics are not to be in pairs or coupled together, so he kept himself away from politics while he was invited to join the party (p.114).

In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, one minor character, Thanchhunga, a Church Elder was closely known by the Minister and Government top officials, he was also very popular in their locality. The local people always requested him to join a political party for contesting in the General Assembly election from their constituency; yet he declined. In his opinion the political party system must be transformed from outside but not from within. If he joins the party, he felt that he would lose his reputation and he shall defile himself in the dirty politics (p.120).

Again, in the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, a group of Mizo educated young men were not fully satisfied in the action taken by the Church for transformation of political movement and administrative system in Mizoram while she played a key role for bringing a clean administration at her level best. So, they formed a special squad of the action force under the name of 'RSR' (the author concealed the full meaning) to check the misuse of political power and corruption which prevailed among the rulers and Government officials. (p.62) The author himself opined that the Church must not interfere in the politics as well as in the Government administrative system, but she should give an effective advice in the policy making, plan and working programmes etc.

The Great Reformer of the Church, Martin Luther also argued that all Christians belong to two kingdoms—The Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of World, to which outward allegiance is given. The Church's role is to preach salvation through the Cross of Christ and leave the organisation to the state to secular authorities. So, Luther sought to separate the jurisdiction of the two realms, so that the '*Church might be the Church and the State might be the State.*' The spiritual government is to produce Christians and righteous people under Christ, whereas the temporal government is obliged to maintain peace.¹⁹

At the sametime, a Great Reformer, John Calvin was willing to permit the intervention of the Church, if and when the Government did something contrary to faith. For Calvin, the task of the civil authority was to support external worship, defend the Church constitution and to promote civil justice, peace and the duties of humanity and civility. For him, politics was the affairs of God and, as such, it was the obligation of the Church to discern and ensure the enactment of God's laws in the Society.²⁰

As Mizoram is called a Christian state, the Christian Church does have socio-political responsibilities. To perform these responsibilities all individual Christians should be politically active in the sense that, as conscientious citizens, they will vote in elections, uniform themselves about contemporary issue share in the public debate, and perhaps write to a newspaper, lobby their member of parliament or take part in demonstration. Further, some individuals are called by God to give their lives to political service, in either local or national Government. Therefore the Church must teach both the law and the Gospel of God. This is the duty of the Church's Pastors, teachers and other leaders.²¹ If the Church neglected the politics and not accepted her responsibilities for reformation of the political system, there will not be a sound planning for development.²²

Reading the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, the all powerful Churches in Mizoram had warned their respective member voters in upcoming elections to ignore candidates tainted by sexual misconduct, alcoholism or drug abuse for bringing clean administrative system in Mizoram. The Presbyterian Church Synod which represents about 58 percent of Christians in Mizoram has issued a set of election guidelines, read out at Churches and warned of 'exemplary punishment' if it is violated by voters or political parties. Guidelines included an appeal for low-key electioneering, refraining from 'slander campaigns' not

using children in the election process, not making poll promises that cannot be fulfilled etc.²³

Again, in the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, Elder Chhunga nevertheless declined to join a political party, but he always gave an effective advice to the Government for economic development programme. In his opinion, until the Mizo Christians wake-up in the awareness of economical development, no political party would bring economic development and self-sufficiency. There will be unfavourable bias among the Government officials, perversion of justice and destruction of the morale of Government employees. So, the Church must take initiative action to curb and eradicate these undesirable things in the administrative system.

Besides, the protagonist Lalrosanga (Sangpuia) also expressed the necessity of the Church taking initiative action for the reformation of the political movement in Mizoram by introducing Liberation Theology. The theologians or the Church Leaders should play the key role for the liberation of the poor, as they were the salt for the earth and the light of the world (p.313).

As mentioned above, the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* also indicated that the Church always takes on the role of community watchdog and issued a guideline for upcoming election to bring a clean administrative system in Mizoram. But sometime, due to want of more fund, they do not take some preventive steps as expected by the people.

Anyhow, since the inception of political party in Mizoram, the Church has played a vital role for the development of political movement, political settlement between the Central Government and MNF underground, teaching togetherness among the people to bring a communal harmony and national integration. The Church also criticised the State policies contrary to the

Christian faith, for instance the Church strong voiced opposition to the state policy on the control of liquor and promulgation of the Excise Act in the mid-1980s and state lottery policy in the mid-1990s.

II. Socio - Economic Development :

The novelist is allowed to remember and to understand everything, if it suited him. He knows all the hidden life.²⁴ While many English novelists dealt with love, sex and marriage and love is enormously bulk in their novels,²⁵ our Mizo novelists dealt not only with love and sex, but also the socio-economic development of the Mizo society.

As mentioned in the Third Chapter (e), agriculture has been the main basis of economy in Mizo society. The system of cultivation and rural life is but the most primitive and unprofitable one. This 'slash-and-burnt shifting cultivation' devastated human environment as well as the fertility of the soil. The prolonged practice of jhumming, with its lack of technological know-how and improvement, has not spared anything for the future. So, the productivity of land particularly by jhum system is diminishing at present.

The Agriculture Department is introducing the system of Wet Rice Cultivation (WRC) by irrigation. In the year 1989-90, the total area of land covered by jhum system was 38,349 hectares and the production of rice was 34993 metric tons whereas the total land cultivated in that year under the system of WRC was 14427 hectares with the production of 24000 metric tons of rice.²⁶ The total production of rice which is the main staple food of the region is very less for the total population of Mizoram.

Consequently, a big amount of rice (called *vaibuh*) and other essential commodities like sugar and wheat are imported from other parts of the country.

A reading from the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* revealed that the Mizo families who are purely depending on agriculture can hardly produce for their half year, so they have to depend on the imported food cereal on payment through Government.

At the same time, the people of Aizawl have a business consciousness. The increasing pressure of economic hardship as a result of influx of population and the decline of agriculture products forces the town dwellers as well as the villagers to enter a mad race for economic supremacy. Daily market supply of the towns in consumption goods come from the vicinity of the towns. However, agricultural workers in Mizoram fail to meet the consumption need of the people and goods have to be invariably imported from Cachar.

Mizoram has 9 Community Development Blocks before attaining the status of Union Territory. In 1974, the existing Community Development Blocks were remarcated into 20 blocks to perform the following functions: Removal of poverty, to create self-reliance among the rural people, and to uplift the day to day living standard of the backward community in the rural areas, etc.²⁷ Mizoram directly shared the National Plan allocations when it attained the status of Union Territory as well as the process of building the infrastructure.²⁸ Thus there is a huge inflow of money to Mizoram from Central Government and the heavy influx of money from Central Government for various development works have changed the economic system of Mizoram and it also brought on a new social living conditions.

In the contemporary present day era fictions, we have seen rapid changes of the economic system of Mizoram. The old agrarian economic system has become less productive and it has been weakened. Meanwhile a new alternative stable economy has not yet been developed.²⁹

In the meantime the heavy influx of easy money from the Central Government for various development works invaded the minds of Mizo people and brought about a spirit of individualism. Those who were able to grasp such money become richer and richer in terms of money whereas great majorities of the people were suffering from absolute poverty.³⁰ Therefore many families owning a multi-storeyed building fitted with the latest technological comforter and lives in a consumeristic lifestyle.³¹

In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, we have seen Aizawl town as more like towns and cities elsewhere. The town dwellers have taken to western style of life and fashion in a big way. They are among the most fashion conscious people in India and the youth of the emerging class are no different from the modern generation in towns and cities of India. A number of wealthy families in Aizawl have a television set and luxury cars. The protagonist of this story, Laldinglana also used to visit Rangoon three or four times to bring television and other foreign goods by smuggling because many Mizo rich families could find an easy way of spending money on purchasing foreign goods.

And there were numerous luxury cars, like Ambassador Car, Gypsy and Maruti car etc. in the Aizawl town. We read the characters like Lalhminglana and the main character Dinga in *Hmangaihzuali* also have Ambassador car and Maruti car, respectively. Lalthansanga, the minor character in *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, an Industrial Development Officer, Ramliana and Siamliana, the employees in the Government Office in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* also have good buildings fitted with the latest technology like television, VCR, a comfortable living room and luxury car. Moreover, Siamliana, who seemed to be a subordinate Departmental Officer, has presented a new Maruti car to Lalthanzuala, who is to be his son-in-law, beyond the usual practice in the Mizo society.

With fast growth socio-economic development, new horizons of employment were open up for the young men and girl in the Government and private offices. In the erstwhile District Council, there were a few Government employees, normally teachers in different schools, some field staff in the development agencies and other District Council's office staff.

But when Mizoram was elevated to the status of Union Territory, most of the District offices were upgraded to the Directorate level and several new Departmental offices were set up. To meet the requirement of skilled and technical manpower in various sectoral development programmes, a number of brilliant students were sent to study at different Engineering Colleges and Industrial Training Institutes. In these novels, we have seen that Lalrosanga, the protagonist of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* and his friends Zoramchhana and Lalthansanga were selected to undergo training under Industrial Centre, New Delhi. We also read some youngmen originated from wealthy families were selected to study subjects like Engineering, Medical, and Agriculture Science etc. at different parts of Indian States while Zuala, a protagonist of *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* a bright and promising student but originated from poor family could not get the sponsorship from the Government to study at an Engineering College due to lack of favour from the higher authority. But, fortunately he was selected to undergo training for a job after he completed his B.Sc.(Hons). Jennie Vanlalhruii, the heroine of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* was also sent to study Veterinary Science at Gauhati.

In the erstwhile Union Territory, almost the students who have completed or graduated from technical education were appointed for field officers in various sectoral development departments. Example can be given from the stories. In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, we read that Ramchhuanmawia was appointed in the post of Agriculture Extension Officer, posted at Agriculture Development Centre, Zohlun, when he has completed his

B.Sc. (Agri) from Madhya Pradesh; Zoramchhana and Lalthansanga were appointed in the posts of Industrial Development Officer after they completed their Industrial training programme. Ramtea, the minor character in the story *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* was appointed in the post of SDO just after completing his B.E. course and Lalthanzuala was also appointed to be an Officer in the Government Office after he completed his training course. Again, Jennie Vanlalhruii, the heroine of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* was appointed in the post of Veterinary Doctor under the Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department. She was posted at Selesih Veterinary Farm.

Besides these, new vehicles were provided by their respective Department to all those newly appointed officers; they always use them not only for bringing to and back from office but as their private car. They were highly esteemed by the society. So, many parents want to educate their children to get a good salary from the Government.

Besides, many families left their village for Aizawl due to the sudden increase of Mizoram budget and development leaping forward, in order to search after better opportunity of occupation. Some educated persons and middle aged men turned to become contractors and became an active member of the political parties. In the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, we read Rohluta, father of Lalramchhuana was a Lecturer in Zawlnuam College but he turned into a Contractor due to easy money. We also read that Rosanga, one of the characters in the novel of *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* was a Class I contractor but he was a lover of money and girls. Thus he became a drunkard, addicted alcohol and he ruined himself very soon.

It is true that there is a good scope to seek employment in the construction activity for some more years to come with increased economic development; the Mizo people, however, do not like to work as a labour force in the

construction of roads and building. Many families have abandoned the traditional practices of shifting cultivation due to unproductivity. This has led Mizoram Christians to become dependant peoples economically. Where more than 80% of the total population is made up of Christians belonging to different walks including business people, politicians, government servants, officers etc, we all have become a dependant people.³²

In such a socio-economic context, the Church itself encourages her members to strive for economic development through various programmes and people were being taught and made aware that God wanted us to work hard and maintain economic stability. The Synod Social Front (a sub-committee under Synod Executive Committee) has carried out extensive awareness campaign to raise the economic condition of the people; and the Economic cell under the Social Front organised workshops and Seminars in various places. The main teaching of this cell is to make common people aware of the need for hard work and economic stability for Christians.³³

In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, the Pastorate level Seminar on awareness of economic stability has been seen as organized by the Presbyterian Church at Zohlun Village under the auspices of Synod Moderator. The resource person Upa Thanchhunga (probably a Committee member of Synod Social Front) asserted:

“Keini Kristian ringtute kan thanharh hma loh chuan eng party mah hian kan ram economic dinhmun hi an chawikang tak tak dawn lo. Induhsakna chi hrang hrangin ro a rel a. Kristiante kan thanharh vat loh chuan nakin lawkah, hausa leh rethei kar chu zawm rual lohvin a inhlat tawh ang’ tihte hi a ni thin.”

(Meaning: ‘Unless, we the believers aware the need for hard work to attain economic stability, no political party would bring the upliftment of our economic conditions. Now, the favouritism prevailed in our society

and if we the Christians do not wake up, the gulf between the rich and the poor may be wider and wider very soon.’)³⁴

This story can be nicknamed ‘a pro-Synod Social Front economic programme fiction’, because the author, being an Elder in the Presbyterian Church has tried to inculcate in the mind of his readers that the need of Mizo Christians is economic stability through hard work. By using the mouth of some minor characters like Thanzuala (father of Zothanpari) and Pastor Ramtharnghaka, he preached the sermon on the responsibilities of Christians for the transformation of the economic condition of Mizo society. By preaching the Christian work ethics, he argued, ‘*a good Christian should not be slotful but self-sufficient through hard work, and they should not weary in well-doing*’ (p.92). He also reiterated the duty of Christians as ‘a good Christian must be actively involved in the social reformation as he is the light of the world and the salt of the earth’ (p.188)

As mentioned above, the local production of food and foodgrains is not sufficient to meet the needs and demands of the people; almost all essential commodities and goods, not only rice, are imported from other Indian states. So, the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* tells us that the Government of Mizoram has introduced New Land Use Policy, a major initiative in order to eradicate the traditional practices of shifting cultivation. This new major initiative has been launched with effect from the year 1990-91, under the label of New Land Use Policy (NLUP).³⁵

The NLUP is designed to wean the jhumia families away from shifting cultivation by providing them with alternative land based occupations.³⁶ The NLUP has three objectives, like to put an end to the practice of shifting cultivation, to induce jhumia families to take up alternative occupation under either agriculture, industry or animal husbandry sectors, to take up WRC in all the potential flat lands in order to promote self-sufficiency in food production.

The target group under NLUP was jhumia families who depended upon shifting cultivation to their livelihood, yet consisting of able-bodied members capable of undertaking physical labour.³⁷

In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, one reads that Zohlun village was selected for the commencement of NLUP which the author labeled as 'Special Scheme.' The village families also selected different trades like WRC and sugarcane cultivation etc. Thanzuala, father of Zothanpari, opted to grow sugarcane and he was selected to be the Chairman of Sugarcane Growers' Association of Zohlun village. Farmers were given a technical guidance by an energetic Agriculture Extension Officer, Ramchhuanmawia; and financial assistance was given for their achievement.

Besides, the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* tells that the village council of the selected villages have provided a land for the selected families in pursuance of this policy. There were, however, obviously irregularities in the selection of beneficiary. And the grant-in-aid did not reach the target group on the exact time. At the sametime, most of the beneficiaries have misused the said fund, for they spent it for domestic purposes. That is why the author of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* urged the readers of his novel or the Church members to take initiative for the upliftment of the economic status of Mizoram.

Here, the two novelists tried to inculcate to their readers that dependence on Government assistance or such economic activities has been initiated against the principle of self-reliance, which is not the same as self-sufficiency. A spirit of self-reliance will give the people self-respect and dignity. Fundamentally, the principle of self-reliance emphasises that development must be need-based and non-exploitative in character, helping people to use simple skills and locally grown raw-materials. Self-reliance will prevent the evil of

parasitism in which the wealthy are depending on the working class, cities on the village, and industrial nations on the agriculture nations.³³

Apart from the economic development, the settings of our novels today have clearly reflected the rapid development of road and transport systems. The maiden roads and transport systems of Mizoram in the erstwhile District Council were normally of jeepable roads. There was no proper link between the rural villages and towns; no passenger bus was available in Mizoram. People travelled in the convenient public carriers, mostly light vehicles. But, when Mizoram attained the status of U.T., most of the main roads were modernised, widened and black-topped. The road between Silchar to Aizawl-Lunglei-Saiha was upgraded as the National Highway No.54.

The Mizoram State Transport operates passenger buses in different routes. We read some characters like Laldingliana in *Hmangaihzuoli*, Zothanpari in *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, Jane Lalrinthangi in *Khualzin Nula*, Lalthanzuala in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* and Hmangaih Zoramthangi in *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* have used the Mizoram State Transport bus for travelling. Zuala and his mother also used private passenger bus travelling to Aizawl, and many wealthy families travelled by their own (luxury) car.

Due to improvement and smoothness of the road, travelling is now very easy. Muana and Ngaihzovi had spent only one day for Shillong to Aizawl while Chhuanvawra, the protagonist of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* (as mentioned in the previous chapter) has spent several days for Shillong to Aizawl. Reading the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, the development of road, transport, and communication contributed to a great extent towards building up of the necessary economic infrastructure of the Mizoram economy as well as the rural areas.

III. Social Development :

By reading novels whose settings are present days, one can see a considerable progress under the social service programmes after the formation of Union Territory since 1972. Among these social services, education is one of the most important means depicting social features of Mizoram. As already elaborated in the III Chapter, a number of educational Institutions like Primary, Middle and High Schools were established in Mizoram. At the time when Mizoram became U.T. in 1972, there were 425 Primary Schools, 154 Middle Schools and 70 High Schools. The first undergraduate College was established in 1958, and there were only two colleges in Mizoram in 1972.³⁹

But according to the statistics provided by Directorate of Economics and statistics, Aizawl in 1993-94, there were 281 High Schools, 546 Middle Schools, and 1061 Primary Schools. There were 4 Government Colleges, 6 Aided Colleges, 7 un-aided ones and a Law College, College of Teacher Education and one Polytechnic Education. Apart from this, the NEHU Campus was started in Mizoram since 1979 and it offered Post-Graduate classes in Economics, English, Education, Psychology and Public Administration. The Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod has one Theological College that offers Bachelor of Divinity Course.⁴⁰

Now there are more facilities and opportunities in higher education for the new generation. The literacy percentage is also rapidly increasing. As mentioned in Chapter III, the literacy percentage of Mizoram in 1961 was 44% and which raised to 53.79 in 1971.⁴¹ It then jumped to 74.1% in 1981.⁴² The literacy percentage in Mizoram further rose to 82.27% in 1991 census, and in 1996(August) it is 89.94%.⁴³ Enrolment of students at various stages of

education has considerably increased. Many people run a race in education to get a better employment. At the sametime, many rural parents sent their children to join higher studies at Aizawl or to other states without having any ultimate objects, but only for getting salaried job.

In these selected stories, most of the protagonists were seen as College students. For instance, Dinga and Zuali in *Hmangaihzuali*, Zuala and Lalnunsangi in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?*, Lalramchhuana and Jenie Vanlalhruii in *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, Jane Lalrinthangi in *Khualzin Nula*, and Lalrosanga and Zothanpari in *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, were college students. Among these, Zuali, Lalthanzuala, Lalramchhuana, Jane Lalrinthangi and Zothanpari joined College at Aizawl from rural villages. Lalthanzuala in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* and Lalramchhuana in *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* were who studied with having a supreme aims while Zuali, Jane Lalrinthangi and Zothanpari studied without having any ambition but merely to get higher qualification.

Apart from educational development, the social status of women is uplifted. There is no gender discrimination in education and employment. When the education for girls was introduced by the women missionaries, public opinion was against it; but parents now realized that their girls must also get education in order that the whole nation might march together.⁴⁴ Now women have been liberated by Christianity, and they are now coming up in almost every sphere of human activities. There were for instance, in the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, Zuali was sent by her parents to pursue higher education in Aizawl; whereas one of the minor characters Biaktei in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw ?* was sent to pursue higher education in Shillong. In the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, we read the main character Jennie Vanlalhruii was sent by her parents to study technical education — B.V.Sc. at other state while her younger sister Julie Lalhruiitluangi pursued her higher study in Shillong.

Christianity alongwith education gave women new opportunities and vision. The literacy percentage for girls in Mizoram is very high compared to other states of India. Many Mizo women have now played an integral role in the economic activities of the community by producing and sustaining life, and they became the earning members in their family, main organizers of their family life in such activities like cooking, clothing, health, and children's education. Most of them played crucial roles in the family decision making process alongwith their husbands or male members.

In the religious life, there is a highly organised Women organisation in the Church. This society organised some activities like, handful of rice collection, conference, seminar, campaigns on the Christian homes etc. In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, the North East level seminar on 'Women Liberation' was organised by the Presbyterian Church of North East India at Haflong; Lalhlunchhungi, who was now the wife of Elder Thanzuala, was one of the participants from Mizoram Presbyterian Church. This novel also reflected that Pastorate level Christian family campaign programme had been organised by Christian Women's Fellowship of Zohlun Pastorate, and Lalhlunchhungi was one of the speakers in this programme. We also read some minor characters like Sawmi, wife of Rama, Lalpari, wife of Enga in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?*, Thangzuali, wife of Elder Saingura in *Khualzin Nula*, and Siami's mother in *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* were activists in their respective local Churches.

Nevertheless, the women were not ordained for Pastor and Elder in the Church; they however have played a very significant role in their Church and there is an opportunity to serve the Lord in their respective Church. As we read from our stories, many young girls were appointed for teachers in Sunday School. For instance, Zuali in *Hmangaihzuali*, and Zothanpari in *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* and Jane Lalrinthangi in *Khualzin Nula* were Sunday School

teacher in their respective Churches. Beside, Jane Lalrinthangi was selected by the Synod Mission Board to be a Missionary at Tripura Mission Field and posted her again at Arunachal Pradesh Mission Field as a full-time Missionary. She became a great soul winner for the Lord. Now, the women are no longer the bondage of the menfolk but the roles of women are spiritual pillars in their family as well as in the Church.

Besides, women are given more freedom to marry their own choice. Father no longer used to force his daughter to marry their own choice or the son of a wealthy man, but he becomes helper and he takes care for the happiness of his daughter. For instance, Lalnunsangi (Mapuui) in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* has a suitor namely Ramtea B.E., SDO under PWD, grown from a wealthy family. The parents agreed to give their daughter to him and fixed the date for their marriage.

However, when they heard their daughter Mapuui did not like to marry Ramtea because she has fallen in love with Zuala, they cancelled the marital proposal and gave her to Zuala as desired by their daughter. Similarly, in the story of *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, we read Jennie Vanlalhrui had two suitors, namely Dr. Lalrinliana, son of a wealthy man in Aizawl and Lalramchhana, B.A., a farmer in the rural area. Not only her parents, but all members of their family favoured Dr. Lalrinliana and disapproved Lalramchhuana. But her father decided to give his daughter to Lalramchhuana, as Jennie's choice.

In the religious life, women are not given the same opportunity and acknowledgement as men in the Church administration, but they were given different assignment for the development of the Church activities for ministries. In other community activities like state forums, institutions, organisations and in the economical activities, an equal participation of women is no longer debated.

Further, there are rapidly social changes among the Mizo society after the formation of Union Territory and particularly after attainment of statehood. As we read from the story of *Ram leh I Tan Chauh*, the spread of western or other cultural influences based on different social and marriage customs is upsetting traditional customs. This makes people unsure and confused the meaning of marriage. Now, money has become the standard by which every activity is measured. And marriage and divorce are regarded as wholly secular matter. The development of higher education also weakens or destroys the authority of parents and relatives. At the sametime, the stories of *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* and *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, showed that Christian teachings have brought different standard of right and wrong to be observed in many aspects of life and in personal relationships in general, there is also different ideas about the purpose of marriage, and about the proper status of women both within the family and in the community.

IV. The Mizo Mission Movement :

Whenever Christians talked about the Mission of the Church, we very often go back to the Great commission of Lord Jesus Christ, such as: “And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, ‘...Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’”⁴⁵ and “... Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.....And these signs shall follow them that believe, in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly things, it shall not hurt them, they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover”⁴⁶ We also see other passages of the great commission of our Lord Jesus in the Bible: Luke 24:46-49, John 20:19-23 and Acts 1:8.

Missionary church planters in Mizoram and their sending societies hoped to achieve a rich harvest. Most of them had the joy of seeing the fulfillment of their dream, hope and prayer - the discipling of the whole Mizo tribe, and the coming of age of a Missionary Church which they have planted.⁴⁷ A commentator on Modern Missions, Patrick Johnstone writes, "Praise God for the dynamic missions movement that has blossomed (in Mizoram). No Nation on earth has sent out a higher proportion of their people as missionaries."⁴⁸

Now, the above Great Commission of Jesus Christ was carried out by the Church of Mizoram within Mizoram, in the countries around, and the remotest part of India. In a singular attitude of Mizo Christians, they believed firmly, from the time of their first faith in Almighty God, that 'the spirit has prepared them as one ethnic group to give out the Gospel.'⁴⁹ They are Mission-conscious and want to evangelise many other people in the North East region. They have drawn up plans for mission work and are already trying to send out workers and missionaries to different areas even outside their main areas of operation or to the Central part of India because they feel the compulsion of the Great Commission.

The earliest recorded mission venture outside Mizoram by members of the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram came in 1910, three youths namely Vanzika, Savawma and Thangchhingpuia, students of Aizawl theological school went to Senvawn, Manipur.⁵⁰ Then Mr. Hrangvunga of Buangmun village in Western Mizoram travelled to Tripura because of his burden for the lost souls there.⁵¹

A trend had started. Some families or individuals went as missionaries to neighbouring states. Many local Church members volunteered to donate a missionary fund in cash or in kind. The Pastorate level Kristian Thalai Pawl (Christian Youth Fellowship) or Kohhran Hmeichhia (Women Society) gave a

support for missionaries. It appears that Mizos used every possible resource to raise funds for missionary support. There is no end to their creative search for new ways to raise funds for missions. Some became prominent methods. The author of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* concluded his story with the family of Ramchhuana who decided that the house rent they received from his father's mansion be used for the propagation of Gospel among Muslims (p.127). Other Church projects seem almost insignificant in compare to mission works.

The growing missionary work became too much for the Synod Standing Committee to look after as a part time responsibility and the concerned people asked for a separate Committee for Mission within Presbyterian Church of Mizoram Synod. Consequently the Synod Mission Committee (SMC) was formed in 1953.⁵² which was elevated to the Mission Board in 1961, with the work growing rapidly and increased evangelistic fervour, The SMC was elevated to the Mission Board.⁵³

Since all the Mizo novelists are Christians and their life principles have been in line with the Christian ethics. They consider systematic observation of Church disciplines and practices as their duties. So, the characters they create are at once types of people who really lived on earth.

In *Khualzin Nula*, by Lalhriata, the religiousity of the heroine Jane Lalrinthangi can be easily noted. The author clearly portrayed the dedication of his character Jane as a Missionary as follows: Jane is the only daughter of Elder Saingura and his wife Thanzuali. She is brought up in the teaching of Christian life and admonition of the Lord by her parents as well as by her paternal grandmother. Her grandmother always admonished her to keep a good character amongst her friends. All the villagers also praised her. At the sametime, her unknown twin sister, Jane Lalrinthangi (called Rinthangi) was brought up by her parents in the worldly life and she never received a good

teaching for life from her parents. So, she spent her life in a lustful manner. But their appearance and body structure were same; so many people failed to recognise them. That was why Jane Lalrinthangi had always suffered the consequence of the sins of her unknown sister Rinthangi. Lalnunmawia, a counsellor of Gospel Witness Team rejected her due to failed recognition of Rinthangi. Her lover Biakmawia also rejected her because of the 'photo's tiger,' which he received from his friend Zuala. One stranger also accused her as stealing his wife's wrist-watch. So, her father Saingura paid Rs.3000/- for the price. Now the local people spoke against her. So, Jane was ashamed and depressed in her new situation. She also lost her reputation in their village as well as in their Church. Therefore, Jane brought all her problems to the Lord and the Lord also reminded her of the sufferings of Job, a righteous man in the Bible. She also heard the voice of the Lord telling her to propagate the Gospel among the non-Christian people. Then she heartily sang a song :

I hear thy welcome voice,
That calls me Lord to Thee
For cleansing in thy precious blood
That flow'd on Calvary.

and

O for a faith that will not shrink,
The' press'd by ev'ry foe
That will not tremble on the brink,
Of any earth by woe.

It was painstakingly listened by her parents and grandmother. Then she announced that the Lord called her to propagate the Gospel to the non-Christian people. Elder Saingura then asked her not to make any decision from emotional feeling. But Jane said she had admitted that God has commissioned her to go to an unknown people to follow the footsteps of Jesus; so she convinced her

father. She has not yet known where to go; she hoped the Lord will make arrangement for her. Fortunately she was selected by the Synod Mission Board to work at Tripura Mission field, as a helper of the teaching staff of the mission School. Thus, Jane joined her new post and worked in the Mission School with much zeal. She was miraculously saved by the Lord from the attack of a Gang (called Gundas) of robbers.

The author did not mention the exact place where Jane was posted, but there are two Mission Schools at Tripura, viz. Tuidu village, South Tripura and Noagang, the Headquarters of Tripura Mission Field. As strongly recommended by their Headmaster, Jane was later appointed by the Synod Mission Board to work at Arunachal Pradesh Mission Field as an Evangelist. When Jane joined her new post, she became a successful soul winning missionary. She saved many people from the fear of witchcraft. Some native people called her a 'young girl who is skilled in breaking off the spell of witchcraft.' When she sent her report to her hometown local church, and read out before the Church service, the heart of Biakmawia was won over and he went to join the Mission work near Guwahati.

At the same time, many local people of Arunachal Pradesh could not tolerate the ministry of Jane because she converted many people into Christianity. So, they kidnapped and killed her companions. Fortunately, her lover Biakmawia rescued her from the hands of the kidnappers. When they reached their hometown, the nuptial ceremony of the two lovers was solemnised. Later, the Synod Mission Board posted the new couple to Manipur Mission Field.

In this story, the four Mission Fields of Mizoram Presbyterian Church, namely Tripura Mission Field, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam (probably Karbi Anglong) and Manipur Mission Fields were clearly mentioned. As mentioned

earlier, Mr. Hrangvunga migrated to Tripura to proclaim the Gospel on his own initiative, planting some Churches. In the late 1970s, *Thlarau Bo Zawngtute* (The Seekers for Unsaved People) of Mizoram sent Missionaries to Tripura. The first mission school namely Calvary High School, Tuidu was started in 1976, purely on private basis. With the establishment of the Tripura Mission Field at Noagang in 1986, all the management of the school was taken over by the Mizo Synod Mission Board.⁵⁴

The Arunachal Pradesh and Assam Mission Field (East) with a Field Secretary in charge was inaugurated at Khasan in 1991.⁵⁵ There are several missionaries working. Education and medical ministries received rather encouraging response; they are effective and are being carried on with considerable enthusiasm. The school maintained English as a medium of Instruction.⁵⁶ Before the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram took up Arunachal Pradesh as Mission Field, some Mizo missionary societies sent their missionaries and led many souls to Christ. But in May 1978, the State Legislative Assembly passed the Arunachal Pradesh freedom of Indigenous Faith Bill and sent it for the President's assent. Clause 3 of this Act reads as follows :

“No person shall convert or attempt to convert, either directly or otherwise any person from indigenous faith by use of force or by inducement or by any fraudulent means nor shall any person abet such conversion”⁵⁷

Following this Bill, fifty churches were burnt down in Arunachal Pradesh. Christians are treated as second class citizens. Discrimination against Christians in matters of employment, promotion in Government services, economic benefits and facilities in education is becoming the policy of the administration. Christians are being denied the social and economic benefits which are within the reach of all others. After the Janata Government at the

central fell in July 1979, nothing more was done about the ‘Freedom of Religion Act’⁵⁸ But many local people would not tolerate Christian missionaries; some of them were arrested and kidnapped. Jane in the story of *Khualzin Nula* was also kidnapped by a group of gang on the request of some officials to put her away because she won many souls to Christ.

The Mizoram Synod Mission Board officially adopted mission work in Manipur, and the Board in partnership with the Tuithaphai Presbytery inaugura-
ted a School named Loktak Christian Model School (LCMS) at Moirang.⁵⁹ The Mizo Synod Mission Board sent several missionaries. The new couple in the story of *Khualzin Nula*, Biakmawia and Jane Lalrinthangi, were sent to Manipur Mission field by the Synod Mission Board. Here the author reflected the desire of the Mizos in the social status which has a deep impact still in the life of ministries. Missionaries are highly honoured and respected not only in the Church circle but across Mizo society; they are classed in a position of a very high social status.

Besides, the author also highlighted that the traditional or older view has always equated Mission with Evangelism; but now, the understanding of the word ‘mission’ has however gradually changed, the then extreme evangelicals no longer limit the word ‘mission’ to evangelistic work alone. People under the pressure of physical needs would not be prepared to listen to the Gospel message unless their physical needs were first met. That is why the Mizoram Presbyterian Mission Board set up schools in their mission fields; and missionaries like Jane Lalrinthangi saved people from fear of evil spirits. Bishop John Taylor rightly maintained, “A hungry man has no ears. If our enemy is hungry, our biblical mandate is not to evangelise him but to feed him.”⁶⁰

V. Social Evils :

The fiction set in the present day period focus on Mizo's progress in socio-economic and socio-political development of the present society. They also focussed on an outgrow of social evils such as drunkenness, drug-abuse etc. which have crept into the Mizo society. It is held that the Aizawl Capital is no longer a safe place to go about at night. Now, the Mizo youth are increasingly affected by alcoholism, and drugs are becoming a menace in Mizoram. As Robert Burton, the then famous writer of England looked with troubled eyes on the enormous complexity of his age, saying :

“I have new books every day, whole catalogue of volumes of all sorts. New paradoxes, opinions, heresies, controversies in philosophy and religion. Now come tidings of weddings, entertainments, jubilees, embassies, sports, plays, then again, as in a new-shipped scene treasons, tricks, robberies, enormous villainies, deaths, funerals, discoveries, expeditions. Now comicals, then tragical matters.”⁶¹

Viewed from this time-distance, social evils haunt individuals and society collectively to these days and many people act rebelliously against the Government.

The Mizo fictions whose settings are in the present day reflected the new paradoxes and social evils like drugs abuse, alcoholism, sexual abuse, prostitution and corruption which prevails among the present Mizo society. Often the Church is seen as perpetuating part of the corruption as some of its activists are indulging in evil practices too. That is why the authors of the present day fictions reflected the Church as an indirect agent and perpetuator of many social evils in the society.

Alcoholism or drunkenness is not a new social evil; it is inherited from our forefathers. In the pre-Christianity era, some old men used to get together for drinking bouts at someone's house quite regularly. The youngmen and young girls could participate on seasonal festivals and public feasts only. There were no addicted alcoholics heard among the young men. But today, there are many addicted alcoholics amongst young men and young girls. In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, we have seen Rinawma, MCS, A.O. had secretly drunk a cup of local beer which was offered by local people for asking him to provide them an employment scheme. So, he soon became addicted to alcohol. One educated young girl, namely Rinsangi, daughter of a prominent Church Elder, was secretly associated to him. Rinawma had divorced his wife Zuali and he ruined himself.

The story of *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* portrayed some minor characters like Mamuana, L.C. and Puia, college students as addicted alcoholics. L.C. and Puia always disturbed and fettered the protagonist Zuala, but fortunately Zuala gave up alcohol after the death of his mother while L.C. and Mamuana ruined themselves. In the story of *Khualzin Nula*, Jane Rinthangi was an alcoholic, she made alliance with and married different youngmen before she discovers her real parents and lives among them. Her so-called parents, S. Ngura and his wife were not a religious couple and they brought her up in the worldly life.

The author of *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* portrayed one of his characters namely K. Siamliani (called Siamtei), a young girl and a college student as an alcoholic and a secret prostitute called K.S. (call-girl). She associated herself with different persons in order to gain money, at last she suffered from a dreaded disease called HIV positive (AIDS) and she died very soon. Siami also brought Ngaihzovi, a pitiful young girl to a man called Rosanga, Class I Contractor, who was an alcoholic and sexually lust person. This is highlighted

in her (Siamtei) case, by her sexual lust and self-destructive traits which she wields as weapons over the persons she wishes to control, be it Hmangaih Zoramthangi. But, as Paul predicted in his Epistle to Galatians :

“Do not deceive yourselves, no one makes a fool of God. A person will reap exactly what he sows in the field of his natural desires, from it he will gather the harvest of death; if he sows in the field of the Spirit, from the spirit he will gather the harvest of eternal life” (Gal. 6:7,8).

Siamei has reaped exactly what she has sown over herself by her sexual lust. Anyhow, the authors of fictions of these present days had trace the moral degeneration of the youth to the neglect of their parents who give first priority to their Church as well as social obligation.

The sexual-abuse is rarely heard among women in the early Mizo life. Some lustful youngmen or men try to commit adultery or fornication with a woman or a young girl while the latter is asleep. But since the insurgency broke-out in Mizoram, many Indian Army personnels came out to Mizoram and in several headquarters of the forces they have cinema shows and other entertainments, non-Christian influence has been growing quite rapidly. These promises attracted many Christians and have a deteriorating influence on the Christian virtues of the Mizo people or in the sexual life. As the number of Mizos who have been outside Mizoram for studies and work rapidly increased, contact with other cultures grows. Other cultures have more influence on the Mizo people, some are good and some are bad.⁶²

In the story of *Hmangaihzuoli*, we read Lalhmingliana, son of a wealthy man of Aizawl, beguiled Zuoli by taking prior permission of Zuoli's aunt Liani by pretending to attend a night entertainment function. However, when they reached the place of night entertainment, he gave a cup of squash which he secretly mingled with a kind of drugs and shortly after, Zuoli become unconscious. Then Lalhmingliana brought her to one hotel room, there he raped

her. When Zuali requested him to bring her at their home for his wife, he refused to take her by making an excuse.

The author of *Khualzin Nula* depicted the life of some young girls of Buangpui village as immoral in sex life because they used their body to win the heart of whom their love. Many young girls including active members of *Kristian Thalai Pawl* Branch conceived illegal child. Ma-awmi, an intimate friend of Jane and one of a Committee member of *Kristian Thalai Pawl* Branch also conceived an illegal child of Vanlawma by offering her body to win his heart, but he rejected her (p.216).

Many Mizo young people ignored that faithful or fidelity in sexual relationship is important not only for the purpose of child-bearing, but also for mutual enjoyment, companionship and fun between husband and wife. A wrong use of sexual relationship outside marriage is only fornication and immorality. Selfish misuse of the gift of sex leads to quarreling, jealousy, cruelty, fear and shame.

Since the Mizos were converted into Christianity, the concept of marriage was changed (See Chapter I (VII)), it was accepted as a divine institution and marriage bond is treated as permanent. The first generation of Mizo Christians were very faithful to the literal message of Bible: “*What God had joined together let not man put asunder*” (Mark 10:9) and gave away the old saying which considered a wife to be a replaceable entity.

The change of their attitude to marriage also changed their attitude to divorce. Conflict in married life were always sought to be resolved by the Church. However, if the Church could not settle the problem then recourse was made to the Mizo Customary Laws of divorce.⁶³

However, as reflected by the novel of present day, many young men do not strictly adhered their marriage tie before the Church. Obviously, these marriages are under the covenantal commitment of ‘till death do us apart’ But many do not keep this covenant of fidelity. Rinawma, an MCS Officer in *Hmangaihzuali* and Rohluta, a College teacher turned to Contractor in *Ram leh I tan Chauh* have divorced their wife due to wrong use of sexual relationship outside as well as intoxicating alcohol. Rosanga, a Class I Contractor in *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* was divorced by his wife when she uncovered that he had a sexual relationship with another girl.

Our novelists reiterated that all these problems happened because the Church’s instruction for family education is quite superficial and ineffective. The church does its role in joining the couples in a Holy matrimony. Marriages are conducted with inadequate pre-marital counseling by the Pastor concern in one session. The newly couple lead their own way by trial and error without any post-marital supervision of their Pastor, and the Church did not take due responsibility in sustaining or dissolving it.

There is an idea of ‘*a Christian conviction of man’s inherent sinfulness.*’⁶⁴ This idea is reflected by an well-known English novelist William Golding in his novel *The Dark Beastie*. He preoccupies with evil and ‘the darkness of man’s heart’ because he tends to view the conflict of good and evil within one being; so, few of his characters realize that evils originates from within the human heart rather than from without.⁶⁵ But in the selected stories for this research, the authors emphasized that the inherent sinful nature and evil which originates from within the human heart can be controlled if there is a proper family guidance. In the story of *Khualzin Nula*, a staff nurse Dari, one of the minor characters, who secretly separated the twin sisters to different parents had realize that the evil doing is not generated only by sinful nature of human beings, but the character is built by the environment of family life and the

complex social characters. So, the Mizo usage, '*the tiger begat tiger*' could rather be read as '*the tiger brought up tiger*.' The two Janes, same parents, same blood, same body structure and appearance were very different in their character. Their contrasting characters were not originated from their parents, but it was generated from the place where they grew up. (p.123-124)

Besides, family problems always arise in the Mizo society because of Women's Liberation movements, as well as Christian teaching and the spread of school education for girls, which have brought great changes in the status of women and the sorts of occupation they can follow in other Indian states. This has upset people's ideas of the respective roles of men and women, while they were expected to make a happy home, it led to many problems in marriage and family relationships. In the story of *Khualzin Nula*, the author depicted the responsibility of women or wife for making a happy home. By referring from the scripture, "*Every wise woman buildeth her house....*" (Proverb 14:1), his character Jane said, 'a man built a good house by employing a carpenter (house builder) but our country needs a woman mistiri to build a happy home. Happy home is not made by the materials, but the dwelling place of Jesus Christ became a happy home.' (p.35)

Further, there is social disorder among the students who studied at Aizawl or other states. Many students neglected their studies and became drop-out or they fell into immoral activities by forgetting the sacrifices made by their parents. M. Panger Longchar has rightly stated:

"In our present condition, many of us could not afford to provide college education to our children. Yet, out of love for them, with dream of their 'great future,' we ventured to sell or mortgage our properties to raise money to send them to colleges. But away from parents and elders....squandered the money given to them at great cost. Hardly realising the sacrifices made by their parents, they wasted their money in time in fun

and frolic. Worse still, they neglected their studies wasting time in cinema house and other entertainment centres.⁶⁶

We also found the same problems among the Mizo youths from the characters like L.C., Mamuana, and Biaktei, daughter of Rama and Sawmi in *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?*, and Julie Lalhruaitluangi, younger sister of Jennie Vanlalhruaii in *Ram leh I tan Chauh*. L.C. and Mamuana always abstained from the class and they were influenced by the intoxicants, they sought thrill in all by drinking alcohol, but it was a disappointing delusion for them.

Regarding Biaktei and Julie, the authors did not mention about their characters or how they spent their daily life; but it is very clear that they squandered the money which they received from their parents, because Biaktei has conceived a child from a married man while Julie married a non-Christian, a Muslim. Both abandoned their studies. Anyway, it is clear that the authors of these selected novels have intended to reflect that the students who feared the Lord and who studied their course with a vision aim were successful while the students who neglected their studies and involved in immoral activities were unsuccessful.

By reading present day's fictions, we have seen that corruption in the financial matters become so widespread or rampant even in Mizoram like other Indian States, even though Mizoram is said to be having a Christian majority. Corruption, defined as dishonesty, accepting bribes, immoral (which means destruction of moral purity, debasement or defilement of moral)⁶⁷ has become so deep-rooted among the politicians and the Government officials who call themselves Christian and the government with its handlers who are also regular Church goers. It has now threatened our social, political, administrative, economic fabric and religious life. So, our proud identity, namely 'Christian State' has become questionable.⁶⁸

In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, the author blamed the leaders of the local church and YMA Branch persuading Mr. Rinawma MCS, A.O. to practice a corruption in his service. They asked him to provide them an employment scheme with a better earning for fund raising. He always needed to make a false expenditure statement and false report to the higher authority. That led him to practice a corruption. The novel, *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* also depicted the life of Rama, one of the minor character as a corrupted Government servant, who neglected attending the Church service and not properly perform his duty in the Church. Though he was rewarded a good position in the Church because he has contributed a large sum of money. (p.55). The story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* has clearly reflected that the Government had sanctioned a large sum of grant-in-aid or subsidies for rural agricultural development, but the rural farmers do not properly obtain which they are legitimately entitled, because some greedy disbursing officials obtained kickbacks. Subsidies and incentives for farmers are always abused. So, the poor farmers became poorer.

One of his characters, namely Ramchhuanmawia, AEO, a devoted Government official said, ‘we the Mizos being Christian and children of God should refrain from lying, corruption; we should rather be completely truthful (p.122). The story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*, did not specifically reflect any person who practices corruption, but it has depicted that corruption has been deep-rooted in the Mizo society. One of the minor characters, Zohmangaiha observed,

“When we calculated the money we received from the Central Government since we became U.T. in 1972, it is very hard to be satisfied in our present condition.....A step taken by the Church for anti-corruption is not enough because due to want of a large sum of money, the Church faced some problems to take any stern disciplinary action upon the obviously corrupted Church members. The Mizo usage - *Sem sem dam dam, ei bil thi thi*. (Equal share for all to live, curse to death

who greedily eating) - urging equal distribution become 'a greedily person acquired or possessed all.' A person who grasped the money or any opportunity became richer and richer in terms of money, whereas a great majority of the people was suffering from absolute poverty. Growing economic disparity have destroyed much of the once communitarian Mizo society and brought about spirit of individualism."⁶⁹

It is true that the flow of developmental funds increased the purchasing power of the people and it created new opportunities for petty businessmen, contractors and workers in occupations other than jhum cultivation. Unfortunately, however, the new economic impetus does not result in pecuniary savings. With the absence of traditional prescription to occupations and occupational differentiation, the new opportunities have been opened to all, and the temptation of making easy money is getting such a magnitude that corruption and corrupt practices in different forms become very common.⁶³

The author also portrayed Rohluta, father of Ramchhuana as a morally corrupted person. He quited the post of Lecturer, Zawlnuam College and became a contractor under PWD as a partner of one widow namely Ramlawmi, younger sister of a Minister of Mizoram due to a desire of more and easy money. But he destroyed himself by his moral corruption and love of money. He died after prolonged suffering from the dreaded disease - cancer.

Further, a rumour spreads that some local Church readily accepts large donations from obvious corrupt officials, and rewards them in the administration of the Church affairs as Elder, preacher, Sunday School teacher etc. So, many people blamed the Church as a partner in corrupt practices. In such instances, it can be seen how Christianity became an indirect agent and perpetuator of corruption in the Mizo society.

These can, however be treated as a view expressed by the extremists. The Church is not depended alone in the contribution in term of money. The Church always teaches their members to refrain from not only corruption but also from greediness or greed, dishonesty and lying.

The story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* has clearly reflected that the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram in particular has taken corruption issues seriously – condemning corrupt people openly since corruption affects individuals, community, family and spiritual life. The Church also declared the Anti-Corruption Year and has organised Seminars to resist corruption and to keep themselves away from corruption. Pastors, Elders and Evangelists always preached anti-corruption sermons from the pulpit of the Church.

Anyhow, while social, economic forces and the Church were regarded as direct and indirect causes of social evils, and people alone responding to environmental condition, in fact, social evil or crime is a matter of people choosing to do wrong. It is individual's moral failure. The nature of evil as formulated by mankind down the ages, the problem of evil, and the conflict of good and evil has always been a major preoccupation of man. In the words of Christ :

“It is what comes out a person that makes him unclean. For from the inside, from a person's heart, come the evil ideas which lead him to do immoral things, to rob, kill, commit adultery, be greedy and do all sorts of evil things; deceit, indecency, jealousy, slander, pride and folly-all these evil things come from inside a person and make him unclean” (Mark 7:20-23).

As a whole, Christianity or the Church have done immeasurable good to the Mizo not only as an individual, but also in the society. Without Christianity, the Mizos would never have become what they are today – a fast, developing

people, a people that have been largely transformed by the power of the Gospel.

VI. Social Reforms :

While the Mizo fictions in the present day portrayed the Church as one of the responsible bodies for social evils among the Mizo society, they also highlighted that the Churches played a key role for the social reformation among the Mizo society. Since Mizoram was given the status of U.T. and particularly to statehood from 1987, money economy has now become the main focus of the society at large. People seek jobs, and to find a good job people have become aware of the needs for quality education. Due to this materialistic worldview of the people, attendance in the Church service began to decline and many Church members become nominal Christians.

Besides, the years of insurgency have affected the moral virtues of Mizoram Christians too. So, the Church see that conversion to genuine Christian faith continues in its nominal segment. Therefore, the new ways and forms are effective and have been made use of in recent years - campaign, crusade and evangelistic camps.⁷¹ When a person become converted or born again in genuine Christian life, they gave up their habitual drinking of liquor or evil doing and they enjoy a happy new life.

In the story of *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?*, the couples of uncle Rama and Zuala's paternal uncle (younger brother of his father) were converted to genuine Christian conviction, probably from the evangelistic camping and Gospel campaign. Now, there is a complete change in their family life and they began to enjoy Christian home life. In the story of *Khualzin Nula*, one has seen that evangelistic camping, Gospel campaign/crusade are organised by some local churches. The minor characters like Rinthangi and her so-called

father. S.Ngura have got a transformation of life from the camping; earlier they spent their life in the place where drinking was carried on and in the streets. Now, they have experienced the power of God and the Holy Spirit in their lives to overcome the age old drunkenness and other social evils.

At the same time, the story of *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* has reflected the draw-back of the action taken by the voluntary social organisation called *Village Defence Party* (VDP) for social reforms. When Ngaihzovi came to Aizawl from Lunglei and arrived at the old residence of her uncle Lunghnema in the nightfall, she was surrounded and harassed by a group of men called VDP while she knocked at the door. By making an excuse they said they are on voluntary duty to defend their local area against robbers who roamed at night, and they let her go alone in the nightfall without providing temporary lodging. In my interview to the author, he told me that such voluntary organisations always used force and mob-rule upon the wrong-doers or who committed crime. They need to give a good care to transform the wrong-doers, whether they are robbers or K.S.(call girl)

The morale of Ngaihzovi was also transformed and regenerated in moral tone when she was carefully looked -after by the family of Muana. Moreover, when she was rescued from the hand of P.C. Hazarika, Muana had given counselling about the love of God and the way of salvation. Thus, Ngaihzovi got spiritual regeneration and has experienced the love and power of God. The family of Muana and the Pastor cared for her life in the teaching of Christian life and admonition of the Lord, so her life became fully regenerated. Regeneration or transformation of life by organising Gospel crusade/campaign or evangelistic camping or counselling for the Church members is the basic task of the Church for the social reformation. The ministries of social reform, caring, healing and salvation belong together.

In the ministry of the Church, Sunday School has played an important part in the social transformation. Sunday School is more important for evangelizing and perfecting the new generations. The stories of *Hmangaihzuali* and *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* have reflected the existence of a graded Sunday School in their respective local Churches. In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, the heroine Zuali was a Sunday School teacher in Primary Department at Kahrawt Presbyterian Church; while Lalrosanga and Zothanpari, the main characters of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, were depicted as Sunday School teachers in Senior Department at their respective Churches. Sunday School teacher for children were normally appointed from the ordinary members especially from the literate young men or girls who are born again or who seemed to be free from any unbehavioural characters.

In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, the author emphatically stressed the burdensome responsibility of Sunday School teacher. They did not have any salary or honorarium, they cannot impose a fine from the disobedient pupils nor punish them like a day school. They do not teach the worldly things but the way of salvation or eternal life. They are expected to be above reproach, temperate, self-control, hospitable, not querrelsome but gentle. Childrens' behaviour is greatly depending on what teaching they received from their teacher in their childhood.⁷² Since children are the future of the world, a lot of responsibility rests on them: to develop the right habit, to nurture the faith and spiritual growth of a person towards maturity in Christ.

The importance of Christian home and family altar cannot be over-emphasised. Now a days, family violence increases in the Mizo society, which many people attributed as the result of drugs and substance abuse, unemployment, frustrations in the midst of modern technological development, and so on. Moreover, the main reason may be the working status of its members, excessive social and religious activities, and the absence of parents at

their home. Especially when parents are at works, their home becomes empty in the feeling of children. So, they prefer to stay out with their friends. When parents come home, they are so tired to offer a warm dealing with their children. Eventually the home is like a hotel where one eats and sleeps without any lively interactions among members.⁷³

Besides, many parents have theological problems. They are fundamental, conservative as well as evangelical. They believe that God calls them to preach the Gospel to other villages or their neighbours. Thus, they always leave their children at home, and engaged in the Church or social activities, loosing their own children's life or characters. They neglected their children leading to a multifunctioning in their latter years.⁷⁴ So, family abuses and all types of family violence, such as negligence, physical assault, verbal, mental and psychological violence can be seen among many Mizo families. Sometimes the mother hid the children's misconduct from her husband. In the novel, *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* we read Rama and his wife Sawmi blamed each other for the cause of their family problems as well as the problem in their marital life and about the sin of their daughter Biaktei.

Moreover, many marriages among the Mizo society often break up because people get married without considering or understanding what this new relationship will mean for their lives. The preparation for marriage is often neglected by the Church or Pastor. No teaching is given to guide many young people in their lives, but many people came to their marriage quite unprepared. In the story of *Hmangaihzuali*, Rinawma and Zuali got married without getting any pre-marital counselling or reliable pre-conception about marriage and family; they rather quite unprepared. So, Rinawma has divorced his wife very soon.

But, now, by awaring the significance of Christian Home, parental care, especially during early and middle childhood and the role of parents in all aspects of family welfare, the Church included Marriage and Family programme as one of the subjects of annual Beihruai (Crusade) in the month of September. And many Pastors organised classes for pre-marital counselling for the people who are to be married and discussed with them some of the new experiences they will come up against in their married relationship. The story of *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* also depicted the Pastor as giving a proper pre-marital counselling to Muana and Ngaihzovi before their nuptial ceremony has been solemnised.

Besides, in order to help the troubled families as well as the deteriorating society, the Christian Home of family altar was started by the Women's organisation in the Church to cope with the family in the admonition of Christian life. In the story of *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?* we read Zuala's mother Muani led the family devotion by reading a short passage of the scripture and leading a short prayer. Then they sang a song and prayed together with the Lord's Prayer (p.20). Before Rama and his wife were born again, they blamed each other for their family problem as well as for the sin of their only child Biaktei, who lived at Shillong for study but becoming pregnant with an illegal child. They have never had a family devotion or altar. But when they were fully converted in the genuine Christian life, they always have a family devotion and their family life became completely changed.

The story of *Khualzin Nula* made a comparison between the pleasure of Christian home where daily devotion was held and the miserable or uncomfortable condition of the worldly family life, where there was no family devotion/altar at all. The two families bearing the name Ngura brought up the twin sister, same blood, same structure, same parents and same name in their respective home. While Elder Saingura brought up his daughter as gentle, kind

and praiseworthy person, S. Ngura brought up his so-called daughter Jane Rinthangi as slovenly, loose character and worthless person.

But when Jane Rinthangi joined her real parents' family, she was guided in the teachings and admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, her life became regenerated and transformed. She could lead a family altar in the presence of her so-called father, S. Ngura; then S. Ngura made up his mind to turn to the Lord by giving up all his habitual drinking of alcohol. Thus, he gave up all his immoral activities and accepted Lord Jesus as his saviour and he became a new man (p.183-85). In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, the Christian Home's campaign programme was launched by the Women's organisation of Buangpui Pastorate in their jurisdiction and one of the Campaign Speakers was Lalhlunchungi, a step-mother of Zothanpari, the heroine. But the author did not depict whether or not it was fruitful.

In my research works, I have seen that the Mizo fictions whose settings are in present day have exposed the subtle social changes of Mizo society. In many parts of Mizoram, these selected stories indicated the rising standards of hygiene and health-care, increasing availability of education, a clearer recognition of human rights, a greater respect for elders and children. In the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*, there is a growing concern to conserve natural environment (p.221-222), and wildlife in the story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh*. Much of these has been due to (directly and indirectly) Christian influence, although by no means all social reformers have been committed Christians. Whenever God's people or born-again Christians have been effective as salt and light in the community, there has been less social decay and more social uplift. At the sametime, they also depicted the people living without God in the world were greedy, pompous men, perfectly self-satisfied for the most part, and at ease about the superior virtue, but at last, they reaped the humiliation which they sowed to their flesh without the fear of the Lord.

As already mentioned above, the present day's novelists are not merely tell-tale story writers or historical novelists, but they write domestic and psychological novels. Novelists turned their attention to the teeming life around them. Each writer moreover tended to be specialised in some aspects of domestic life and so modern society was thoroughly explored.

The old conventions of plot and characters are becoming loose and almost negligible. The regular plot is no longer necessary; characters can be handled with freedom.⁷⁵ Novelists began to use their pens to support or denounce some subjects in which they are interested.

As one of the best contemporary novelists, Elizabeth Boovan defined the object of a novel as: "*The non-poetic statement of a poetic truth.*" The novel is a branch of poetry, it is the expression, in terms of characters and story of the novelist has discovered about life in the course of living.⁷⁶ The Mizo novelists also explored what they discovered in the Mizo society through plot and characters. They do not tell us what they have found simply and directly because they are not psychologist, sociologist but novelists. They have adopted the direct method of narration through the principal characters, the plot, except the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* which was coherent and well-knit and the stories were gripping in its interest.

There is a complex plots in the stories of *Ram leh I tan Chauh* and *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* while the plot of the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* is weak. Some of his plots and characters do not conform to the real. There are too many incidents, rather weakly inter-linked because the story consists of a large variety of characters and incidents clustering round the figure of the hero. He also takes as a hero – Lalrosanga (Sangpuia) but concealing his real character in fine language. Raghunath Tilak said, 'Novelists who concentrate on the outside aspects of character generally fail in the

portrayal of complex characters.’⁷⁷ It is true in the story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*. Anyway, all these stories end with the ringing of wedding bells.

At the sametime some of the writers of the present day’s fiction still expected the Church to play more effective role for reforming the decaying Mizo society in the field of Political, economic, social education and prevention of social evils by employing its efforts in bringing about social reform through the programmes of political and social education.

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CHAPTER - V

CONCLUSION

The research indicates the origin and historical development of Mizo fictions within sixty years (from the first) 1936 upto 1996. The selected novels are systematically studied from the perspective and light of Christianity in which it has been interacted and how Christianity has influenced them. It became clear that the growth of the Mizo fiction is best for depicting the growth of Christian faith and extraordinary growth of the education among the Mizo people which was introduced by the Christian missionaries.

The evolution and development of Mizo fiction is an interesting subject for a research for Mizos and North East Indias in general. In the present study, we have tried within certain limitations, to throw the light of Christianity and the great changes brought about by Christianity in religious beliefs, practices, in social value and also in the sphere of economic and political life as found from the selected fictions.

Readers might have perceived the introductory chapter as a historical perspective of the social background of the Mizo people. Before the British came, Mizos had a narrow range of social relationships confined to their villages; they were never subjugated by any outside group, and they led their own independent life. The only kind of outside contacts they made was in terms of raids and warfare described in chapter II.

When the British consolidation of Mizoram took place in 1890s, the active work of Western missionaries closely followed it; for the latter preached the Gospel and reduced the Mizo language in written form and they had taught a

number of Mizos to read and write by opening the day school. The phenomenal growth of education opened the eyes of wider horizon to the world literature and they started writing fiction. In 1936, the first ever Mizo fiction, namely *Hawilopari* was written by Biakliana, since which writing of fiction has gradually developed and now there are more than 100 (one hundred) Mizo fictions published during the sixty years.

In the second chapter, novels with pre-Christianity era settings or historical novels had depicted the early Mizo life as Boulton said, ‘All the historical novels please in part by the unfamiliar background....’¹ But in my careful examination, I find these novels are merely labeled as fiction of pre-Christianity era due to their setting and selection of themes, but they predicted the Christian life in their characters and tinged their story with the Christian concepts of love and good morals. The novelists being brought up in Christian environment, all their philosophy and interpretation of social and religious life of the olden days were deeply linked with Christian faith and belief.

These novels only reflected the old Mizo religion, a system of beliefs, practices and their superstitions in the light of Christianity. But all the practices of *sakhaw biakna* (religious system for worship of God) or the sacrifices made to appease an angry spirit (*ramhuai hnena inthawina*) and other traditional practices of religious ceremonies totally disappeared. At the sametime, true indirect adaptations of biblical stories are found in these stories.

Again, Biakliana, the first writer of Mizo fiction surprised us in his novel, *Hawilopari* where the heroine *Hawilopari* while in the throes of her agony prays directly to God. But, the early Mizo history tells us that Mizos never prayed to God directly. As it has been mentioned above, the early Mizos believed naturally in the existence of God, known as ‘Supreme Being’ whom they named *Pathian*; the creator of the Universe; but they hardly worship Him

due to lack of knowledge. It was only *Khuavang*, (the guardian of village) to whom a person would pour his or her agonies.

All these stories have emphatically stressed *Tlawmngaihna*, which can be translated as *chivalry* or *altruism* in the purest form, which is a beauty of the socio-cultural life of the Mizos and it is the code of morals, the wonderful philosophy of life. The Mizo people who possessed this *tlawmngaihna*, for example, Zema and Chhana in *Hawilopari*, Kaptluanga and Chhingpuii in *Chhingpuii*, Phira and Thianga in *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* were generous and hospitable not only for their friends but also to the poor or the needy persons and the strangers by self denying and self-sacrificing at the right moment. They are ready to help those in distress, and they are compassionate to a companion who fell sick on journey or in the home. Though this *tlawmngaihna* is not stressed as merely altruistic nature but having affinity with the teaching of Jesus Christ as ‘... greater love had no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends’ (John 15:13). The novelists also inculcated to their readers that a man who thinks of the welfare of his fellow-men has no time for thoughts of self exaltation and ambitious design for his benefit only; life will be bitter where people cannot taste the sweetness of this *tlawmngaihna*.

The main theme, brotherly love, is also nicely portrayed in a Christian concept. The term, ‘Brotherly love’ indicates the closest fellowship of man to man in attitude characterised as a brother (or sister), as one would treat his brother in flesh.² The sacrifices of the characters like Zema and Chhana, the village prince for their poor friends Hminga and his younger brother Liana in *Hawilopari*, Thianga for Phira in *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* were not merely ‘*philia*’ (friendly love) but deeply religious and conformed to the biblical love which is found in the life of Jonathan for his friend David. Besides, the love and act of Chhingpuii for her beloved Kaptluanga in *Chhingpuii* was also against the socio-cultural life of Mizos, yet the author seemed to put greater emphasis

on the biblical love than on the socio-cultural life. The novelists seemed to have a religious background in writing their novels because Christianity put a strong belief about the brotherly love in the society and towards other humankind, not to repress, hatred, envy and other degrading follies of men; but to cultivate pity, gentleness, courage and some more qualities which enable them to become true gentlemen. And love of beauty leads a man or woman to the readiness of giving free service to the beloved in action as the Bible says, “*My children, our love should not be just words and talks, it must be true love which show itself in action*” (I John 3:18)

Again, as it has been mentioned in the second chapter, the tragi-comedy love story, *Hawilopari* and tragic love stories, *Chhingpuui* and *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* provide us with a faithful reflection of the life of their times. Here one sees the typical Mizo community life at work, under the tutelage of the village chiefs. These were the times when tradition of *Zawlbuk* or men’s dormitory was still in practice, when the virtues of honour, bravery and *tlawmngaihna* - the selfless dedication of one’s life for the good of others - still flourished and were seen as a way of life. These were times too, of the *pasaltha* or hero - in war or hunting, a status of that any man worth this shall strove to achieve, a time when young men refused to get drunk at feasts and ceremonies for fear of being indisposed when their beer-intoxicated elders needed them; a time indeed when a weary traveller could enter any house and seek food and lodging and be assured of hospitality.

The novels also depicted the dark side of the picture, such as the practice of head-hunting, the continuous inter-village war, the constant fear of their enemies or wild beast, and the merciless treatment of enemies and traitors, such as the one meted out to Buati and her young son Luta in *Phira leh Ngurthanpari*; when it was discovered that they had released the village’s arch enemy Hrangchina, by name from captivity and let him escape. Here the author

clearly pictured the successful *Pasaltha* in war who comes home victorious from war, is only the terrible harbinger of sorrow and death to many, leaving behind widows, orphans, and the homeless in his wake. He also compared the chiefs and elders with the thoughtless young children who rock and swing on the high branches of a tree for play and pleasure, giving no thought to the damage caused to the tree beneath, which eventually given away is finally destroyed.

The post-Christianity era novels have clearly reflected that the contribution of Christianity is not alone in the religious activities but also in the disappearance of the superstitious beliefs, religious rites and rituals. Christianity has done away the priests occupying the central place in the religious activities of the society. The pre-Christian worship, namely bloody sacrifices, ‘*ai*’ ceremony, feast for attaining *Thangchhuah* (which means attaining paradise-perfect peace after death), sacrifices to appease an angry spirit for curing the disease totally disappeared. Now, every Mizo people knew that entry in *pialral*/paradise did not depend on the title of *Thangchhuah* but on faith in Jesus Christ, who will take us to heaven. There is no need of animal sacrifices to evil spirits to escape from their anger. Mizo have completely abandoned their belief in the numerous evil spirits to whose malign influence were ascribed all the death and sufferings. The Mizos now believe that Jesus has power and authority over evil spirits.

The advent of Christianity in Mizoram has totally shaken the Mizo society and all discriminations against women have gradually died in additions to the religious activities in terms of conversions. In the pre-Christian society, there was no place for women in religious life. They used to say, ‘*Women and crabs have no religion*’. But Christianity brings with it real freedom and equality among the Mizo society. Our novels clearly depicted that many young girls and women were appointed for Sunday school teachers and for missionaries.

Nevertheless, women were not ordained for a Pastor and an Elder in the Church, yet they have a crucial role in their Church and there is an opportunity to serve the Lord in their Church. Their influence and contribution for the consolidation of the Church was unaccountable. Their performances for witnessing Christ are also generally better than men among completely non-Christian elements. They have a better access into the hearts of families and God uses them for soul winners.

The novel, setting of pre-Christianity era have reflected among the early Mizos, the intrigue, vie with one another and to give one a bad reputation was prevailed. There was discrimination between rich and poor, and there was no impartial judgement. The story of *Hawilopari* has depicted when Hawilopari and her father went to the chief court against Khuala, son of village elder, who publicly claimed she was his girl, surprisingly the court declared that Pari was guilty but justified Khuala, her opponent because the chief's court was merely passing partial judgement for the *haves* and *haves* not. Besides, in the story of *Chhingpuii*, the life of protagonist Kaptluanga was ruined by his enemies because they envied at his success. They bewitched him and consequently he suffered a dreaded chronic bronchitis or Tuberculosis. But the novels of setting post-Christianity have reflected the life of the Mizos, after conversion into Christianity peaceful living, affectionate and cooperation; no hatred between the inter-villages. The Mizo etiquettes like *tlawmngaihna* and respect of elders were well adapted. There were no discrimination between the rich and poor, and the poor and needy, the physically handicapped and disable persons or orphans were given necessary help.

The ideas and practices of *tlawmngaihna* were refined and slowly modified after conversion to Christianity. It is true that *Tlawmngaihna* as individual's competition and the ceremonies honouring a *tlawmngai* are no longer prominent. Many people considered the *tlawmngaihna* in the Mizo

society as slowly declining at all levels of social activities, but the values of *tlawmngaihna* have been adapted on the corporate level. The practices of digging graves, comforting the bereaved, helping the poor and the widows and the families facing hardship have been moreover refined by the teaching of Christianity. The ethical teaching of doing good and helping those who are in need are being perpetuated in every generation, instead of *tlawmngaihna* being made disappear. Meanwhile, our novels have depicted that the new socio-economic change of life has over-shadowed the precious and beautiful principle of *tlawmngaihna*, which was considered the best part of Mizo culture. Mr. Mukherjee, an M.P. once said about the Mizos thus, ‘they are simple – hearted and genuine people, not the like you and me who do not always say what we mean’³

Before the advent of British administration or the coming of Christian missionaries in Mizoram, there was prevalence of total insecurity of human life caused by conflicts, raids, attacks and war. So, every village needed a *Pasaltha* (the chief commander in times of war of invasion) like Phira in *Phira leh Ngurthanpari* to protect the village against the enemies. But the story of *Thla Hleinga Zan* has clearly depicted that peace prevailed all over the country of Mizoram since the Mizos’ conversion into Christianity. Therefore the *Pasaltha* no longer existed to protect the village due to changing condition. Rather the qualities and criterion of a *Pasaltha* have changed along with changing times.

Our novels also indicated that the new religion has contributed much in bringing about social reforms. Many indigenous practises have been replaced, and many are still practiced with many new things added. The indigenous practises like slave-owning, head-hunting, nomadic habitat, the practice of consuming intoxicating drinks (*zu*) in social functioning and celebration of marriage, and the system of *Zawlbuk* (Bachelor’s Dormitory) were abandoned.

At the sametime, a few modifications took place in the existing social phenomena of the Mizo society- like customs relating to marriage system, issue of divorce, death, burial and condolence etc. Many things that were completely new to the Mizo society were introduced. Of the entire new introduction, the following were noteworthy: reduction of Mizo language into Roman script for reading and writing in formal education, religious education (Sunday School), rich religious literature, uses of medicines, etc. New Christian elements were introduced in place of paganism. These included the rites of baptism, the Lord's Supper, observance of Sunday, celebration of Christian festivals such as Christmas, New Year and Good Friday etc. and the offering of the produce of Jhums to God. The traditional songs were replaced by the new religious Christian songs. There were some improvements in the quality and variety of food and in general health among the Mizo Christian society. The Christians forbade the drinking of *zu*, tea was introduced for individual and social drink in place of *zu*. The marriage ceremony is also solemnised in the Church; so as marriage system became more stable, the women were also given freedom to marry men of their own choice. Besides, women were given equal opportunity with men in all social gatherings, placement of status in the society at par with men.

Since the Mizo society was dominated by Christian teachings, every village has its burial ground outside the village where the entire dead, rich and poor, are buried following Christian rites. The funeral function was performed with a series of prayers based on Christian religion and singing of Christian lyrics. The *tlawmngaihna* in the indigenous Mizo society is still practices in the events of death and burial. A.Ray, the then Deputy Commissioner, Aizawl, Mizoram also observed that, "The impact of the Christian teaching on the Mizo society is much greater than in any other Christian areas in India. Nowhere else in Indian religion has so much influence on social, political, and other temporal aspects of life".⁴

Abolition of Chieftainship decreed by law by the then British - India Government could also be seen partly as the result of mass education initiated by the Missionaries. Government and the impact of Christianity have brought a change from the indigenous village chieftainship to the establishment of the rule of the people in the Mizo society. The story of *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* has clearly reflected the new village administrative system. Knowledge was imparted through education at primary and middle school level.

There was political development that brought a change in the attitude of the people. Further, the growth of mass education initiated by the Christian missionaries and Government has also evolved a change in the Mizo economy. The old Mizo economy, purely agrarian in the past was now complemented with trade, industry and other professions. The stories like *Thla Hleinga Zan, Zawlpala Thlan Tlang, Kros Bulah Chuan* and *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* indicated that many Mizo youngmen joined the Government services like Army, School Teacher, Doctor and Indian Police Service etc.

The setting of post-Christianity era also highlighted that the concept of peace subsequently invaded the value system of Mizos, and the people learned that living in peace with one another is better than fighting. Christian teachings again reinforced that people should love one another that peace is better than war that love is better than hatred and that doing good for others or to enemies is better than killing them.

At the sametime, Mizos find it difficult to adopt any of the dominant Indian culture because of their strange culture and traditions as well as their receptivity to western culture. They can conceive of India as a federate Union of varieties of people and cultures than being a country where the minority cultures are absorbed by the dominant culture. Thus the Mizo National Front (MNF) declared Mizoram as a sovereign and Independent from India with

effect from zero hour of March 1.1966; Mizoram was put under the disturbed area.

In this regard, Christianity being a modernizing aspect can be regarded as one of the causes of the growth of regional sentiment. However, the novel, *Nunna Kawngthuam Puiah* has clearly reflected Christianity indeed brought changes to the primitive customs of the Mizos and gave them formal western education and thus indirectly made them socio-political conscious.

How Christianity has brought about far reaching changes in Mizo society cannot be expressed in statistical form. Suffice it to say that it is Christianity and its fellow agent of education that have made the Mizo people what they now are - socially, economically and politically. Therefore, Christianity, being a modernizing aspect cannot be one of the causes of the growth of regional sentiment; because Christianity is a Universal religion of 'peace and goodwill towards humanity.' The only aspiration of the integration of all the Mizo ethnic groups under one Government possessing the highest degree of freedom, upgradation of the status, and to work out her own destiny for the development of the economic condition of the Mizo people, and to formulate her own foreign policy⁵ had responsible for the narrow domestic regional feelings.

Anyway, these novels reflected the village community life and not the life in Aizawl. The stories, *Kros Bulah Chuan* and *Zawlpala Thlan Tlang* have of course treated life in Aizawl, but they were also brought to the village fireside. So, we get delight, idealised picture of Mizo village community life and in this respect the novels were unique. They tell us the truth about the contemporary Mizo society. Generalising from particular experiences of their life, they give to their readers a complete philosophy of life. Their view of life was essentially moral and it was a central code of conduct that re-arranges the disorderly facts of life.

An examination of the present day's novels or the last chapter of the thesis shows that there were so many social problems which cannot be coped with in the Christian life. All the novelists mentioned that alcohol was used by people in the early Mizo society without ever disturbing anyone. But Mizo society today need to learn that wine or *zu* has very bad impact on the over-all social life. With the advent of Christianity in Mizoram, the Mizos have experienced the power of God in their life to overcome the social evils, and as a result many people have given up their habitual evil doing.

But today, the Mizo youth are again increasingly affected by alcoholism, drugs, sexual-abuse, all these have become a menace in Mizoram. All these outgrow of social evils are caused by the social injustice, prevailing economic corruption and weakness of religious structure. Due to drug-abuse and alcoholism, cases of robbery, rape and murder have increased a lot. Some Mizo young people caught a dreaded disease called HIV positive (AIDS) which may not be cured by giving medical treatments. In this regard, the Church is expected to play more effective role for the regeneration or transformation of their members by organising Gospel Camping or Crusade etc. The stories like *Hlim Ni Kawl Eng Ve Tak Ang Maw?*, *Khualzin Nula* and *Hmangaih Zoramthangi* have clearly highlighted that the regeneration or transformation of life through these programmes are the basic tasks of the Church for the social reformation.

They also emphatically stressed, beside the Church programmes, the necessity of Christian home and family altar to cope with the family problems as well as social evils. In their opinion, the present social evils like drugs and substance abuse, frustration in the midst of modern technology etc. were the results of the family violence or broken family. Many parents neglected their youths, while giving their first priority to their Church activities they were loosing their children's life or characters. So, the story of *Mittui Kara*

Hmangaihna has portrayed that the Church's Women Fellowship has started to launch the Christian home programme to cope with the deteriorating Mizo society. The story of *Khualzin Nula* also clearly depicted the pleasant life of Christian home where daily devotion was held and the miserable life of the worldly family where there was no family devotion at all.

These two novels also opined that the Church may be advised to emphasize more and more family education programmes, because the Mizo family can no longer be the same as the traditional family any more. Since the emergence of new religion (Christianity), new political system, new economic order and social orders in the society, the family has to adapt with these new orders in its form, functions, relationship and so on. This adaptation needs a lot of adjustment which many Mizo families fail to do causing problems and misunderstanding in the family. So, the post-counselling for an ideal married relationship, child-rearing, Christian nurture in the home could be done by means of seminar and counselling etc. All these novels have clearly tell us that there has been less social decay but more social upliftment whenever the church or her born-again members have been effective as salt and light in the community.

Money - economy in Mizoram has brought a change that has a tendency to create social distinctions among the Mizo people. Every individual in the Mizo society enjoys the close-knit homogenous and classless society in the absence of a caste system. But the gulf between the rich and the poor has emerged in the recent past due to money power. Growing economic disparities have destroyed much of the once- communitarian Mizo society and brought about a spirit of individualism. People have begun to lose honesty and confidence in each other. The poor economic condition and socio-economic inequalities have contributed to an increase in social evils and the practice of corruption. Class distinction, if it even comes in the society, would be purely

for economic reasons. Therefore, Mizo society which used to be under one umbrella of Christian religion as a common faith could no longer be under one denomination; it is rather divided into different denominations.

Yet, some of the present day' novelists like Zothansangi Pa (B.Pawlthanga), Dr. H.Lallungmuana, and Lalhriata being Elders in the Presbyterian Church, have reflected that it is a great challenge for the Churches in Mizoram to examine why such social evils, immoralities and corruptions would increase in a society where nearly every Mizo belongs to the Church, for these are not acceptable to God. Therefore, the Churches in Mizoram should try to find ways to help their members to become free from those kinds of evils. They also need to reflect and reexamine the relevance of their ministries in order to check corruption, which is believed to be the opium of development of Mizoram.

The Churches prohibited all the full time Church workers from active participation in party politics, which is reflected in the Story of *Hmangaihzuali* and *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna*. Many people expected that the Church should play a vital role for the transformation of the Mizoram political scenario while there is a great debate among the church members as well as the politicians: 'the Church should steer clear of politics' and 'don't mix religion and politics'. The non-interference policy has been popular among the Mizo Christian population and a common opinion is that the duty and responsibility of the Church is only spiritual matter for her members; so, she should keep away from politics and administration. Yet, the impact of Church's teachings can be seen on the political parties when they select their candidates for election.

Therefore, our novelists were of opinion that the church now need to envision for future politics in which the politicians may learn to play both a prophetic and an administrative role. Since political leaders are God-given for

the welfare and protection of the people, they need to be God-fearing people. If the church neglected politics and not accepted her responsibilities for the transformation of politics and administrative system in Mizoram, there will not be a sound planning development. So, the church should give an effective advice to the government in policy making, plan and working programmes etc; and she should play a prophetic role to uphold socio-economic justice. Now Mizoram is in need of politicians who can work against socio-economic and religious injustices.

Some of the novelists in the present day have a clear sense of calling to infuse in man a right motive and incentive for hard labour, faithfulness and trust-worthiness in professions, and a joy of labour. For example, the author of *Ram leh I Tan chauh* felt that Mizo youths need to learn different kinds of works both at home and in the fields, not to depend on the Government job alone, but to attain self-sufficiency from hard working. The novel, *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* also clearly indicated the youth need to develop themselves for technical trades for which the Government has lot of schemes. The government policy for promotion of economic development can be implemented through hard work by introducing new schemes for the young educated persons.

The church is also expected to play more effective role for the economic development by organizing workshop or seminar at various levels for awareness of economic stability and to encourage her members to strive for economic development through various programmes. The story of *Mittui Kara Hmangaihna* has stressed the duty of Christians as 'a good Christian should not be slothful but self-sufficient through hard works and they should not weary in well-doing' (p.92). The government has introduced different schemes like, New Land Use Policy and Jhum Control etc as an alternative to jhuming and to promote economic development; people's participation is necessary in

these programmes for their own development to create a community of love and sharing.

At the same time the different funds for rural development programmes are always meddled and monopolized by a few officials. There are not fair distributions to reach the targeted rural people and the latter hardly participated in the development programmes due to financial problems. Thus, the new schemes for rural development are always unimplemented. Therefore, the church is expected to play a vital role for fair distribution of the rural development funds. The function of village council, YMA, and church organizations is one of the most important pressures in the political system of Mizoram.

The position of Mizo women is now lifted up by the society as well as by the Church to become equal to men in all walks of life. Christianity brings freedom to men, yet it does more to women. Emancipation is surely taking place. The more the Mizo women began to receive education the more Mizo women have been brought to the front equally with men and now equally sharing the responsibility of their families in particular and society at large with their male members in economic, political and other activities of social life. As reflected by our novels, they were given more freedom to marry their own choice. Father or brother no longer used to force their daughter or sister to marry their own choice or the son of a wealthy man, but they become helper and take care for the happiness of their daughter or sister. In religious matters too, women in many cases have superceded men nowadays.

Consequently, the teaching of the Bible regarding relationship in the family became more inculcated in the minds of Mizo Christians. The home of a Christian Mizo was very different from that of pre-Christian Mizo. Better understanding and relationship between spouses and between parents and

children through family prayers and other Christian activities, emphasis on personal hygiene, and other changes were seen in Mizo Christian homes. Children were given priorities in the family as well as in the Church. Many parents dream great future for their children and send to study higher education within or outside the state. Our novels also suggested that since the children are the future of the world, young ones in the family should be given clean instruction about the physical facts about sex and moral aspects of boys and girls relationship.

The main task and duty of Christian or the Church is propagation of the Gospel among the non-Christian people. The Mizoram Synod Mission Board also set up Mission fields at the neighbouring states. The story of *Khualzin Nula* has exaggerated the mission movement. The main character, Jane Lalrinthangi has dedicated herself to be a full time missionary under the Synod Mission Board and she was followed by (the protagonist) Biakmawia. The story of *Ram Leh I Tan Chauh* also concluded with the family of Ramchhuana making a decision that the house-rent they received from his inherited mansion of his father will be used for the propagation of the Gospel among the Muslims.

On the whole, my studies and my careful observations convinced me to maintain that all the Mizo novelists are Christians and their themes and philosophy are deeply linked with Christian belief and faith. Normally, their philosophy that '*virtue is rewarded whereas vice is punished*' is all pervading at the end of their story. Their ends were mostly marriage except two stories whose settings are pre-Christianity era. The sufferings or problems of the good characters in the novels have been made clear in the end while the ungodly or bad characters were always punished or get themselves lost in their world. They share one common feature that is, being solely a means to an end

of having a moral or social purpose, of being a tool for instruction and depiction of Christian identity.

The limited choice of themes in Mizo fictions are still confined to Christian ethos, side by side with the depiction of our Mizo way of life while there is a vast scope for choice of different themes to deal with depiction of human relationship at different levels, or human complexity and conflicts. There is no serious purpose of mitigating evil under which the poor were the sufferers or the unfortunate victims of the society. They did not exaggerated the woeful condition of the poor in order to draw attention to the real need from the government or the church, as Charles Dickens exaggerated the injustice toward the poor in his *Oliver Twist*.⁶ Indeed, the dominant Christian religious perspectival story or a good moral tone is generally considered a good novel.

Even from the readers' side, there are no comparative studies with other English Novels and suggestions for the improvement of our Mizo novelists. Instead, majority of the Mizo people expected that the moral lesson in religious tone must be inculcated in the mind of the readers. Besides, protagonists and other characters of Mizo fictions are also characterized in the allegorical typified mould with no attempt at variety. The characters are still used as a medium for impression of the writer's vision or view to the readers.

Their settings are only social manners and natural background, there is no material setting to give minute detail of streets, houses etc. While the writer must see the surroundings clearly and their select from the whole scene sharp bits or details that will both heighten the atmosphere and enable the reader to complete the picture by itself. There is no depth and complexity.

From their context, most of Mizo novels were regional novel, because they emphasized on the setting. Social structure and customs of a particular

locality of Mizoram, not merely as local colour, but as important conditions affecting the temperament of the characters and their ways of thinking, feelings and interacting. They also are concentrating on a particular region of Mizoram, depicting the life of that region or Mizos in such a way that the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are uniquely regional and one could differentiate it from others in the common motherland.

Some of them have merely compact the outside states or outside world in their novel, but they do not include the entire/whole way of life or culture of other states or outside world, but rather simply concentrate within a particular part of Mizoram. For instance, Chhuanvawra, the protagonist of *Nunna Kawng Thuam Puiah* traveled abroad within the Indian states and he visited different places, but the author did not depicted about the pattern of life of the people of other states, a national culture where there is a considerable diversity and a considerable variety corresponding to geographical divisions, but he concentrated within the limit of the Mizo culture.

They are generally realistic and concerned with life in rural areas or town. Only the novel, *Khualzin Nula* had mentioned or depicted entire superstitious life of the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh and the vicious life of the goons. Nevertheless the novel has concentrated on the contemporary community life of Mizoram.

Finally, all these findings may be useful for future researchers of Mizo novels and it may guide writers to develop a varied approach to generate research and an indepth study and to generate scopes for future research.

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B. Persons Interviewed.

Name	Place	Date
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Khawlkungi	Aizawl.	16. 1. 2004.
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