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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled "Colonialism and Food Culture in the Lushai Hills" submitted to Mizoram University for the award of the Degree of Philosophy in History is a research work carried out by Ms. Lalrofeli, Research Scholar, in the Department of History & Ethnography, Mizoram University, under my supervision and it has not been previously submitted for the award of any research degree to any other University/Institute.

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Place: Aizawl

Statement on Anti-Plagiarism

It is hereby certified that the Ph.D. thesis entitled "**Colonialism and Food Culture in the Lushai Hills"** is the result of Doctor of Philosophy programme and have not taken recourse to any form of Plagiarism in any of the chapters of the thesis, except for qoutations, from published and unpublished sources which are clearly indicated and acknowledge as such.

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

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DECLARATION

I, Lalrofeli, hereby declare that the thesis entitled, **"COLONIALISM AND FOOD CULTURE IN THE LUSHAI HILLS"** is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form the basis for the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in other Universities or Institutes.

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Place: Aizawl (LALROFELI)

Date:

ABBREVIATIONS

ATC	: Aizawl Theological College
BMS	: Baptist Missionary Society
Deptt.	: Department
HJM	: Historical Journal Mizoram
LPS	: Lakher Pioneer Mission
Ltd.	: Limited
MHA	: Mizo History Association
MSA	: Mizoram State Archives
MZP	: Mizo Zirlai Pawl
NEIHA	: North East India History Association
NGO	: Non- Government Organization
OUP	: Oxford University Press
Pvt.	: Private
Rpt.	: Reprint
YMA	: Young Mizo Association
YLA	: Young Lushai Association
TRI	: Tribal Research Institute


MIZORAM
N
INDIA
ASSAM
MANIPUR
TRIPURA
MYANMAR
BANGLADESH
Kolasib
KOLASIB
Zawlnuam
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Mamit
Darlak
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MAMIT
Darlawn
Suangpuilawn
Mimbung
Ngopa
Selam
AIZAWL
Aizawl
Saitual
CHAMPHAI
Kawlkulh
Vapar
Champhai
Lallen
Tlungvel
Mualpheng
Aibawk
Baktawng
Khawzawl
Phuldungsei
Hmuntha
Vanchengpui
Khawhai
Serchhip
SERCHHIP
Thenzawl
Hruiluk
Buarpui
Biate
Dungtlang
Mauzam
Thenhlum
North Vanlaiphai
Farkawn
Pangzawl
Haulawng
Zawlpui
LUNGLEI
Hnahthial
Thingsai
Tlabung
Serkawn
Lunglei
Sangau
South Lungrang
Thingfal
Vawmbuk
Hmunlai
Lawngtlai
Siaha
LAWNGTLAI
Tuipang
Chikhurlui
SAIHA
Vathuampui
Phura
Hmawngbu
Tongkolong
LEGEND
International Boundary
State Boundary
District Boundary
National Highway
Major Road
Railway
River
State Capital
District Headquarter
City
Map not to Scale
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COLONIALISM AND FOOD CULTURE IN THE LUSHAI HILLS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Food has often been used as an instrument of establishing domination and hegemony since time immemorial. In pre-historic period, human exploited nature to get what he wanted, that is, food. By exploiting and controlling nature humankind procured his basic needs for sustenance. History tells how food factor contributed to the rise and fall of civilization. It is where power comes from. Without possessing the means of survival none could gain power and wealth. It is also the most formidable means of domination. The search for food drew nations and cultures together, had not the European searched for Oriental Spices the relationship or interaction between East and West might have been delayed.

In the thesis 'food culture' is used to connote food production, preparation, consumption and various aspects revolving around food. As it is not just about cooking and good eating, culinary and gastronomy are not used in discussing Mizo food history with the hope that there could be a wider scope if food culture is used. The term 'Lushai hills' is used in the title and the thesis as all the available sources – primary and secondary, used Lushaihills instead of Mizo hills and as the timeline covers till colonial period it is felt that 'Lushai hills' is more appropriate. As the natives of the colonial Lushaihills never called themselves 'Lushai' the ethnonym 'Mizo' is used to refer to the indigenous people. The timeline is framed up to colonial period as there was noticeable cultural transformation during colonial rule, and food practice, as part of culture, also underwent tremendous changes within the time frame.

1.2 CONCEPTS

1.2.1 Colonialism

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently, the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism,

imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory.[1] According to Oxford English Dictionary 'Colonialism' is the practice of acquiring control over another country, occupying with settlers, and exploiting it economically.[2] In the thesis, the impact of colonial rule on the social and cultural lives of the colonized people, that is, Mizo, is examined to a certain extend. When issues related with colonialism are analysed and discussed in the thesis the judgements are made from foodie point of view.

1.2.2 Food

According to Oxford English Dictionary food is 'any substance that people or animals eat or drink or that plants absorb to maintain life and growth'[3]. The diet and what people consider as 'food' differs from country to country, region to region. For instance, what the Mizosconsider as food may not be considered as 'food' by other communities. The choice of food is, thus, a product of culture. Ecological, biological, and economic conditions affect our choice of food as edible or inedible.[4]Food is central to understanding of daily life of the people.[5]

Food is a significant component of cultural sustainability in that it is one of the many life rituals that play an important role in helping reinforce the norms that we embody. The smell of familiar foods can instantly evoke a series of emotions and desires because food and food customs are carriers of identity. Food habits are part of our cultural identity that are seldom relinquished. More than sustenance, food in rituals and customs, as ingredients and in processes of preparation, are symbolic for what they convey about our racial and ethnic identities.[6]

Food history assumes many forms. At the most basic or obvious level, food history is the history of a particular food or dish. An author may describe who discovered or popularized a

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[1]Margaret Kohn and Reddy Kavita, '*Colonialism*', The Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2017), Edward N. Zalta (ed.). Available from: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/, (accessed 20 May 2015).

[2] Oxford English Dictionary, New Delhi, OUP, 2005, p. 163.

[3] Oxford English Dictionary, p. 347.

[4] Cherrie L. Chhangte, *Globalization and Mizo Food Culture* in K. Robin (ed.), Chin History, Culture and Identity, New Delhi, Dominant Publishers and Distributors, 2009, p. 393.

[5]C.M. Woolgar, D. Sergeantsen and T. Waldrons (eds.),*Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, London, 2006, p. 18.

[6]Psyche Williams-Forson, *"I Haven't Eaten If I Don't Have My Soup and Fufu": Cultural Preservation through Food and Foodways among Ghanaian Migrants in the United States*, Africa Today, Vol.61, No.1. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2979/africatoday.61.1.69, (accessed on 20 June 2018).

food item or perhaps who invented a specific dish in addition to providing details about the history of the production and consumption of the food in question. Yet food history is not simply the history of a food. In the 1980's, established historians and students of history were inspired by key works of social and cultural history, in particular the histories of material life and the histories of mass culture, consumerism, and consumption. Some of the food histories of the 1980's focused on the role of food in the everyday life, uncovering for instance, what individuals consumed as well as evidence of how food was prepared. Food historians also drew inspiration from anthropologists, who for decades were asking themselves, what does food or the activities around food tell us about human societies, human interactions, communications, and how do we interpret these interactions? Historians, of course, chose to tell the stories of what happened to these interactions as they changed over time.[7]

1.2.3 Culture

Oxford English Dictionary defines culture as 'the arts, customs, and institutions of a nation, people, or group[8]'. Culture is extremely difficult term to define. It is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, pattern and behaviour. It consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and other related components. The development of culture depends upon human's capacity to learn and to transmit knowledge to succeeding generations. According to Edward Burnett Taylor(Primitive Culture), 'culture includes all capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'.[9]

Every human has its own particular culture, or socio – cultural system, which overlaps to some extent with other systems. Variation among socio - cultural system is attributable to physical habitats and resources; to the range of possibilities inherent in various areas of activity, such as language, rituals and customs, and the manufacture and use of tools; and to the degree of social development. The attitudes, values, ideals, and beliefs of the individual are greatly influenced by the culture in which he lives, and an individual may, of course, live in or travel among several different countries[10].

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[7] Carol Helstosky (ed.), *The Routledge History of Food,* New York,Routledge,2015, pp. XIV – XV.
[8] Oxford English Dictionary, p. 208.
[9] *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 3, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., New Delhi, 2005, p. 784
[10] *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*. Volume 3, p. 784

From food perspective culture is a taste maker as people inherit and bequeath foodways from families and communities. And society and economics are important in giving food values that can signal status, display power, create surpluses, and control access.[11] Cooking deserves its place as one of the great revolutionary innovations of history, not because of the way it transforms food but because of the way it transformed society. Culture begins when the Raw gets Cooked. [12]

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the pre- colonial period most food items were obtained from cultivation, forests and river resources. The annexation of the Lushai hills in 1890 and the subsequent consolidation of the colonial rule brought about significant changes in the traditional foodways of the Mizos. Though many indigenous writers and historians have written about how colonial rule was established, and the effects it had on the political, social, religious, economic and cultural life of the Mizos, none have mentioned the colonization of traditional Mizo food. Colonialism was not just confined to politics or economics. It could be seen on food as well. The change in traditional food habits of the Mizos was basically due to the pioneering work of the British government and the Christian missionaries. New food items that were hitherto unknown to the indigenous people became popular. For instance, the introduction of milk and tea brought along a far reaching effect on the diet and immune system of the Mizos. Likewise, the particular brand of Christianity introduced by western missionaries made the consumption of *Zu* as a sin.

Many questions, thus, arise. How far did the colonial rule change food and drinking practices of the Mizos? What were the responses they received from indigenous people? Did the British rule change indigenous approaches to food and its consumption? Did the work of the missionaries destroy valuable cultural practices of the Mizo*s*? Is there any continuity? Can Mizofood be linked with the search for identity? Most importantly, most existing works onMizo history written by colonial, indigenous and contemporary non- indigenous writers praised the colonial rule with regard to food and health. On what ground and criteria did they

[11] Nancy Shoemaker, *Food and the Intimate Environment*, Environmental History, Vol.14, No.2. Available from:http://www.jstor.org/stable/40608477, (accessed 16 July 2014).
[12]Nancy Shoemaker, *Food and the Intimate Environment*, p.343.

make their judgements? These questions require an in-depth study so that the answer on the topic might be found.

1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Food history, one of the most wonderful and interesting topic that can give clear insight to the daily and cultural life of the people, has been more or less hidden and has not yet occupied its rightful place in the academic bookshelves of modern well educated Mizos even in the 21st Century. As history of food is still in its infant stage the net, therefore, has to be cast wide for information on food. Despite limited work on food history, colonial ethnographies and other historical works by colonial officials and missionaries as well as indigenous and contemporary non – indigenous writings provide us some information to contextualize food and the palate of the Mizos. The scholarly works of disciplines other than history like anthropology, sociology, botany, literature etc. were consulted to get information and relevant data. In thesis the review of literature consists of 30 book reviews, some of which are extracted in the following.

The Cambridge World History of Food edited by Kenneth F. Kipple and Kriemhild Conee Ornelas is a must read for all who desire a knowledge on history of food. A book with its two volumes provide valuable information on what humans eat through the centuries. The wide themes covered by the book include – what our ancestors' ate, Staple foods – domesticated plants and animals, Dietary liquids, The Nutrients – deficient, food related diseases, Food and Drink around the world, History, Nutrition and health, Contemporary food related policy issues, and the dictionary of worlds plant foods. The botanical names provided for each plant / food item prove immensely beneficial for the study of food history. For those who do not have science background the information given by the writers is immensely advantageous. This edited work is also quite functional in understanding the food culture of various societies around the world.

Acclaimed food historian Felipe Fernandez – Armesto also provides a window on culinary history. The book which is titled '*Near a Thousand Tables – A History of Food*' is a provocative work that guides reader in discovering the history of food. There are themes dealing with the origins of cooking, the meaning of eating which he presents as the first building blocks of cultures and traditions, the importance of herding and breeding in the food revolution, the beginning of agriculture, the emergence of inequality which resulted in the

development of haute cuisine, the consequences of the 'Columbian Exchange' on cultural and food history, the emergence of cross cultural cuisine and finally the impact of industrialization and globalization on food culture.

Another book that comes in mind when talking about food history is '*Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire* by Cecilia Leong Salobir'. The book discusses the emergence of a hybrid cuisine in Asian countries that had once been dominated and ruled over by the colonialists. According to the author, the emergence of the hybrid Asian-European cuisine owed its root to the domestic servants working under the colonial rulers. As a result of cross cultural contact and collaboration there emerged new cuisine like curries, kedgeree, pish pash etc. The influence of the domestic servants on the birth of new cuisine comes under analysis and the arguments show the significance of the book not only for the study of food history but also on the history of various Asian countries.

A full course meal on the history of food is provided by Linda Civitello in her monumental work '*Cuisine and Culture: A History of Food and People'*. The book serves the reader with full course meal from food in pre- history to the future of food. In this work, the author describes the agricultural revolution which brought food from 'raw' to 'cooked' form. Ancient, Medieval and Modern food history are also described in detail. In short, it consists of informative essays on every conceivable aspects of food from the use of cinnamon and salt by ancient Egyptian embalmers, how the Columbian Exchange and the Protestant Reformation brought significant changes in food culture, how the emergence of Haute Cuisine and Cake in the 18th Century transformed food practices to the dignified status of potato in contemporary world and the rise of celebrity chefs.

Though Eurocentric Maguelonne Toussaint Samat's '*A History of Food'* is one of the impressive works regarding food studies. It covers most of the history of food production and consumption from the time of the Romans to 1970's. The themes include the origin of humankind, the transition from a vegetable to carnivorous diet, methods of preparation and dietetics. The book also provides an insight into food ingredients and when and where these were first eaten.

Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence by Carole M. Counihan is an ethnographical work. Though the book focuses on 20th Century Florence (Italy) it gives valuable information and knowledge on the relation between cuisine and culture, food and gender, food and communality, and more. Counihan has written that women in Florence had less time for cooking that inevitably led to change in cuisine and cooking. They started preferring packaged food as these were less time consuming. She also

argues that fascism enforced a sharp division of labor with women as home maker and men as breadwinners ruling the family.

One of the most fascinating work on food history is *Food Culture in Southeast Asia* by Penny Van Esterik where the major foods of Southeast Asian countries and the ingredients as well as their significance and symbolization are discussed in detail. The cooking methods, typical meals and the food habits of the people of this region come under analysis. The distinctive method of food preparation and consumption draw lines of commonality amongst the people of Southeast Asia while differentiating them from others. The role of food on special occasion and the history of diet and health are also discussed in detail. The importance of rice, fermented fish products and seasonings are also engaged upon. The consumption of dog meat, a rarity in world food practice, is also discussed. Furthermore, the role of religion and identity, expressed through food, is al explored.

The research on food and its various aspects has been enriched by scholars and historians among which '*Gender, Class and Food – Families, Bodies and Health'* by Julie M. Parsons. Here, Parsons argues that foodways are a powerful means of drawing boundaries between social groups, distinguishing the 'self' from the 'other', defining who we are and where we belong. She makes the differing roles of foodways in family, maternity, health; and also discusses the embodied and epicurean foodways that show gender and class roles. Food acts as a marker of culinary capital in the family and women are positioned as responsible for domestic food work, while men cook for pleasure and leisure. The book proves beneficial in understanding the relation between food and gender.

Another enriching research work on food is the '*Routledge History of Food'* edited by Carol Helstosky. This edited collection of articles is organized into three time periods – 1500 – 1700, 1700 – 1900 and 1900 – present. The articles deal with different themes like the relationship between food, individuals and society, the role of food in globalization, and the commercialization of food in the 20th Century. One of the contributors Cecilia Leong Salobir analyses cookbooks and colonial memoirs in examining the foodways of British colonials in Asia.

Sidney W. Mintz famous work '*Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History'* could not be left out when food history is reviewed. Mintz argues that a cultigen, sugar cane had a long and interesting history in the cultural history of various nations stretching from New Guinea to India and thence to Mediterranean, to Atlantic and the Americas. While arguing sugar as the fore bearer of the Industrial Revolution Mintz highlights that sugar made the capitalists more capitalistic.

1.5 Area of Study

The study mainly focuses on the history of Mizo food and the various issues that come up with Mizo food culture covering both the pre-colonial and colonial period.

1.6 Objectives

The objectives of the study are -

1. To study pre-colonial Mizo food culture.
2. To investigate the relationship between 'new food' and traditional Mizo food.
3. To find out the impact of colonialism on Mizo food culture.
4. To investigate how far food culture has shaped Mizo identity and gender issue.

1.7 Methodology

The methodology adopted for the current study utilized both qualitative and content analysis method. The data includes both primary and secondary sources. The primary source consists of both published and unpublished official documents, loose documents from concerned persons, newspaper, etc. Oral tradition based on open and closed-ended interviews were carried out and such interviews have been subjected to meticulous analyses. The secondary source comprises of published and unpublished literature of books, journals and articles. Crosschecking for validation of the research is done to a possible extent.

1.8 Structure of the Study

The thesis is divided into the following chapters:

1. **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

   The first chapter consists of five sections. The first section gives an outline introduction of the physical features of the Lushai hills and deals with its historical background. The second section discusses the establishment of British rule in the Lushai hills and an attempt is given to concepts which are deemed relevant for the

study. The third section deals with the statement of the problem. The fourth section is devoted to a review of existing literature and rationale of the study and the last section put forward the entire structure of the thesis.

2. **Chapter 2 – Food Culture in Pre-Colonial Lushai Hills**

   The second chapter covers various aspects of food in pre-colonial Lushai hills ranging from Mizo food items and production, preparation, consumption to various issues related with food – food and religion, food and courtship, food symbolism and metaphors, and their significance.

3. **Chapter 3 – Food Culture in Colonial Lushai hills**

   Chapter three of the thesis discusses the introduction of new food item and food practices by the colonial officials and the Christian missionaries and Mizo response to the new foods.

4. **Chapter 4 – Impact of Colonialism on Mizo Food Culture**

   The fourth chapter studies the various impact of Colonial rule on Mizo food culture and habits – change in method of preparation where stress was laid on cleanliness, change in pattern of eating, concept of health, new dichotomy of high and low status food, and Mizo exposure to wider world through food.

5. **Chapter 5 – Colonialism, Identity and Gender in the Lushai Hills**

   The fifth chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the question of Mizo identity during colonial regime in the Lushai hills, how identities were created through food practices. The second section gives an in depth study of the relationship between food and gender in Mizo society while examining the manifestation of gender on various food habits of the Mizos.

6. **Chapter 6 - Conclusion**

   This chapter summarizes the findings of the thesis.

1.9 FINDINGS

Regarding the establishment of colonial rule,it is found that food shortage had made contribution. It was the disastrous famines – the *Mautam* and *Thingtam* Famine of 1850 and 1860 respectively that broke the back of the Mizos who had so far successfully fought back foreign intruders. The food shortage aggravated by the two famines made things easier for the British to defeat and establish domination over the Mizos.

The study reveals that in pre-colonial period, Mizo food culture was simple and unsophisticated. Like other South Asian and East Asian people, in Mizo culture, rice plays an important role. It is their staple food and other foods (vegetables, green leaves, fruits, meats etc.) are always described simply as 'accompaniments' to it. 'To eat food' in Mizo really means 'to eat rice'. The prominent place of rice in Mizo fare was expressed by its usage as an ingredient in the most popular snacks '*Chhangban*' (cooked sticky rice flour wrapped in plaintain leaf) and in the preparation of Mizo typical dishes like *Sawhchiar/ Buhchiar* (Mizo porridge made with either meat or vegetables), also in the brewing of rice beer which was the most popular drink.

It is found that Mizo food has many similaritieswith the food culture of South East Asian countries. The fermenting of soybean and the extensive of use boiling in food preparation are some of such examples. Foods were provided by their surrounding forests, rivers, cultivated jhums and gardens. Their peaceful co-existence with nature was noticeable. Despite their dependence on wild forests and rivers as sources of food they did not destroy their sources of food in pre-colonial period, as such, nature gave them the blessings of numerous foods.

Regarding the culinary skill, boiling and smoking were the prevailing method of food preparation, though there are some instances to prove the usage of oils extracted from animal fat in cooking. The method of frying with oil was not practiced before the establishment of the British rule in the Lushai hills. However, oil was extracted from pig fat and preserved for

future use when a pig was killed. Food was preserved for future use by means of drying, smoking and fermenting. Fermentation not only constitute significant form of preservation but also an important method of preparation. Rice, particularly glutinous one, was fermented and brewed for rice beer which was one of their protein source. The art of food preservation was learned at home, demonstrated by mothers to their daughters which passed from generation to generation.

Most primary (interviews, diaries, personal records etc.) and secondary sources (colonial, ethnographic, missionary and indigenous writings) are very critical of pre-colonial Mizo food, of the way it was prepared as they all believed it was too artless. They might have been right if they wanted a more elaborate style of preparation. However, food experts conceived that primitive food was the best food, thus, the study reveals that simplicity in the preparation without cooking oils and spices - the method known to Mizos, prevented from different food related diseases like diabetes.

It is also found that food served as a marker of class in pre-colonial Mizo society. The hierarchical nature of Mizo society was evident from the food practices. There seem to have been no mentionable sweet food like sugar or jaggery in pre-colonial period though sugar cane plant was found in the hills. Salt and honey were luxurious food. Because of its scarcity and enhancement in the taste of dishes salt assumed prestigious status in the pre- colonial Mizo food and thus, the regular usage of it served as a marker of class or social status. The difference between commoners and chiefs and privileged people (village priest, elders etc.) can be discerned even from food.

The dominant place occupied by meat in Mizo fare is also noticed. Most family could only kill a pig within one year. Pig was the most common animal used for rituals and sacrifices, in those sacrifices women were not allowed to consume the sacrificial meat. The occasion for the consumption of meat was, thus, very rare. This must be the case why Mizos considered meat as good food as most were deprived of it and the cravings for meat set their habit of consuming meat as much as possible when they got the opportunity.

The research reveals that before the establishment of the British rule Mizo food was much simple and did not have much seasonings and taste enhancer. All of their taste enhancers were produced locally. Plants like parsley, basil, chilli pepper, Mizo onion, ginger and

turmeric were the prominent seasonings. Besides these locally grown herbs and spices the taste was enhanced by Salt, *Saum* (fermented lard) and *Chingal* (distilled ash).

As far as meal time is concerned they usually had three meals a day – a breakfast (*zing chaw*) first thing in the morning, a lunch at noon (*chhun chaw*), and a heavy evening meal (*zan chaw*) about sundown. When they set out for their jhums or for journey they usually carried cooked rice wrapped up in plaintain leaves for their midday meal. The commoners' dishes were quite simple consisting of three main items boil *(tlak*), chutney (*sawh)*and *bai* (vegetables boiled with salt or wood ash and distilled ash). There was little or no change at all in the meal time during colonial regime.

Among the Mizos there existed division in the food items and eating habits on the basis of gender. Both in the pre-colonial and colonial period women hardly took dog meat. A.G. McCall stated that women stayed away from dog meat for its unpleasant proclivities. The fact remains that in the 21st Century (among Mizos) consumption of dog meat by womenis considered as unbefitting or unsuitable. Traditionally crab was considered as 'women's meat'. Generally, Mizo women consumed significantly fewer calories than men and were perceived as more feminine the less they ate. In the meantime, consuming more calories or large amount of food was considered more manly. In Mizo society, women played the leading role in translating the available food around them into nutritional security for their children and other family members.

Besides cooking women were the one to gather or to make cooking pots and utensils. The utensils were made of clay. The contribution of women was enormous as they made clay pots not only for cooking but also for brewing rice beer. There were very few design for the potter and the same pattern was followed year after year. The entire pottery work was done by hand. Earthenware cooking pots and bamboo spoons and tubes completed the utensils used inside Mizo home.

It is also realized that like other patriarchal society, among the Mizos food preparation was the unquestioned task of women. Women were expected to cook food for the family and girls from a very young age were expected to know how to cook. Food preparation usually took place in the household but on festive occasions it required the involvement of appointed specialists (*fatu*) which was mostly done by men. Men stayed away from cooking at home to avoid being called '*Thaibawih*' or unmanly whereas their ability to cook without hesitation

on feasting occasionsis indicative of Mizo male's attempt to gain social recognition.

In pre - colonial period food was shared by the family by using the same bowl (*Chawthlengpui*)or common wooden plate. Generally,*thlanvawng* (Gmelina arborea) was used for this plate. There could never be a distinction between the rich and the poor in meal eating style. They sat together and shared the food. Meal time was used by Mizos for counselling and guidance for younger members of the family.Hierarchy within the family was also performed during meal time where the eldest member of the family was supposed to take the first bite and then other members follow suit. Those who failed to abide by these manners were considered shameless or indecent.

According to custom all travellers in the hills were entitled to food and lodging free for a night. Some people churlishly refused to give the hospitality required by custom but any one who followed the rules of *Tlawmngaihna* would never refuse hospitality to a stranger and the more strangers a man put up the more *Tlawmngaihna* he was held to possess. However, it is discovered that pre-colonial Mizos were not all hospitable to strangers. This is evident from a due called '*Chawman*' which was paid by a man who had been lodged and boarded in another man's house when he left the house of the man who had been supporting him. Many people supported orphans and others in their houses and when the person whom they had been supporting left their house, they were entitled to claim a sum of Rs. 40 as *Chawman* to cover the expenses incurred in boarding and lodging charges. This due of Rs. 40 could not be claimed when the lodger was turned out by the householder and did not leave on his own free will.

The gender based division of work in Mizo society is found to be responsible for the slow development of Mizoculinary system.As per the division of work, women had to fetch the firewood and water, cook the food and do the greatest part of the weeding and harvesting; they also made all the clothing for the whole household from cotton grown in the jhums, which they themselves gathered, cleaned spin, and woven into strong cloth. In such situation, cooking / food preparation was the unquestioned task ofMizo women who were supposed to make home for the whole family and to also work alongside the menfolk in their jhum lands. As they were supposed to work from dawn to dusk they did not find time for the development of culinary method. For them, food preparation was no longer a passion, instead it became an obligation as it added another number in their list of a must do.

Mizos were not inquisitive enough to experiment new recipe or to invent new dish. Comparing Mizo food preparation with their neighbouring communities it is found that Mizo food culture is less developed. Though located in the same geographical region with other communities under similar ecological setting the Mizos culinary skills and ingredients in their dietary practice are much simpler characterized by simple boiling with and without salt.

When the British administration was consolidated in the Lushai hills the British officials made many attempts to introduce new food items, viz. potato, pulses, carrot, fruits - orange, pineapple, and beverages – milk, tea etc., some of which were welcomed while some others failed to attract Mizo response and attention. Attempts were made to popularize the new food items by issuing ordersto cultivate novel crops such as potato, pigeon pea etc.In the meantime, they propagated the dietary and health advantages of the new food items in a vernacular journal, entitled, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*.

It is also found that during colonial period crystallised sugar assumed equal status with salt as luxury food item. It even defined in a subtle way a person's economic status as having the means to drink sweetened tea was a symbol of status. The only sweetened food that provided calories to Mizos in pre-colonial period was honey. With colonial regime and interaction with other communities such as the Gurkhas,Mizos learnt the art of making jaggery*(Kurtai)*from sugarcane. In the Lushai hills, sugar was possibly used on a regular basis in military camps. It was out of reach of the common people and very few had access to it. Even jaggery was available only for the well-to-do Mizos or government *babus*. Even in the 1940's not only sugar but also jaggery was a rare food item and was considered a luxury food.

Mizoresponses to new food culture represented by European and Indian food culture were varied from one food item to another. While some were readily accepted some other failed to gain their ground till 1947. One example of positive response towards new food is the introduction of biscuits in the hills. They loved the taste and itmade them long for 'heaven' instead of '*Pialral*' (the final abode of spirits in pre- Christian Mizo belief). Another instance of the positive response to the new foods was the introduction and consumption of beverages like milk and tea. By 1927 milk and tea entered Mizo fare on a large scale and spread across the length and breadth of the hills.

On the other hand, Mizosdid not welcome the introduction of new breed of fowls in their land. In fact, there are many Mizos who still preferredMizo chicken prepared in indigenous style over bigger breed of fowls, such was also the case in colonial Lushai hills as there is no indication to show that new breed was welcomed and liked by Mizos.It appears that Mizoswere against the intervention of 'alien food culture' in the initial years but with the passage of time they began to develop a taste for those 'alien' foods and accepted their inclusion in their diet.Thus, there were positive as well as negative responses from Mizos regarding the introduction of new food culture.

The research reveals thatunder colonial rule the method of food preparation underwent remarkable change in the form of *hybrid cuisine* in the Lushaihills. There was a shift from the traditional method of food preparation to a new hybrid of '*European – Indian – Mizo'* food preparation. The colonial rule witnessed deviation in the Mizo food preparation with the increasing availability of salt, oil and sugar. Frying was never practiced by Mizos in pre-colonial times and it constitutes a new method hitherto unheard of. Under colonial rule some Mizos who were employed by European missionaries and Government officials to service their domestic chores were acquainted with the art of frying but never adopted it as a regular cooking style in their own households. Slowly in the post colonial period increasing number of Mizos seems to have embraced frying as part of their cooking practice. Besides frying, there seems to have emerged new method of using oil in food preparation in the form of Indian curry.

The research reveals that under colonial rule there was remarkable change in the dining manner of Mizos.By 1930's many Mizos particularly those in government and mission employment started using tables, stools and short stools. Instead of sharing food from the same bowl they also used separate bowl / plate for each individual diner. After being exposed to the food etiquette of their European colonial masters many of them began to use spoons and forks rather than their bare hands (after colonial period).

As Christianity took its firm ground in the Lushai hills new tradition of do's and don'ts in food eating began to develop under the guidance and supervision of the Christian missionaries. One of the changes that came along with the spread of Christianity is meal time prayer. Presumably, hygienity in pattern of eating was one of the most important aspects of education, thus, their new conceptualization of cleanliness automatically demanded a change

in their pattern of eating in which sharing food from one common plate was found unhealthy and uncivilised and thus, had to be discarded.It is also found that the educated Mizos and the YMA supported the adoption of western table manner. As result of their efforts there wasincreasing number of Mizos who discarded the tradition eating habits particularly in big villages or headquarters of the government officials and Christian mission during colonial rule while the traditional pattern conceivably continued in remote villages till the end of 1960's.

The change in Mizo food ethics is also noticed. Ethical eating or food ethics had a large impact on Mizo food choices for consumption as well as on their eating pattern. Those food ethics had served as an indicator of '*Mizo tlawmngaihna'*. Mizovalue system and their morality towards others had been manifested by the ethics that revolved round food consumption. Mizo concept of food sharing and its significant symbolism came to be less valued after colonialism. According to Mizo folk wisdom, people who share food with others live longer and those who do not, die early – '*sem sem dam dam ei bil thi thi'*. That folk wisdom had been dearly followed by Mizos when the British established their rule over them. It seems that the afore-said folk wisdom came to be less valued after colonial rule. The standing social norm of collectivism was considerably replaced by individualism. Thus, the Social Darwinist concept of survival inadvertently developed in Mizo hills after the establishment of colonial rule.

Education became one of the 'accepted values' of Mizo life after colonial rule. In the old days 'value' was summed up in the sense of achievement brought by performing certain rituals and sacrifices, and to be the possessor of a gun. But there was a growing sign that one of the greatest desire of Mizos in the 1930's was to be educated. Such change was found to provide an opportunity for the discontinuity of some Mizo concepts towards food. The traditional Mizo concept of health had changed. Traditionally health had been defined as the absence of diseases and if someone was free from a disease he was considered healthy. That biomedical concept of health was the prevailing conceptualization of health by Mizos. For instance, "*Chaw kan ei teuh chuan kan chak ang*" - the concept that the eating of more food provides energy to the body was no longer accepted after the coming of the British. After the introduction of modern western education Mizoswere exposed to the world of 'Balance Diet' or a diet that contains the proper proportions of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water necessary to maintain good health.

Wild foods from the forest, including wild ferns, bamboo shoots, and roots, provided food in times of emergency, food shortages or regular expected hunger seasons, and they add unique tastes – often bitter or sour – as well as nutrients not always available in cultivated plants. After colonial period, as fewer people gathered wild foods, the knowledge about locating and processing these food was being lost; at the same time, the environment where they could be found was changing due to the destruction of forests. Mizos depended on wild foods, in fact, those wild foods constitute their delicacies till today. But colonial rule transformed their simple lifestyle into a complex one where many of their daily needs could be procured from the bazaars. The transformation led to the misplacing of the Mizo indigenous knowledge of locating and processing various food items.

Regarding identity issue, in colonial period it is found that Mizos had been living as a separate and distinct people who identified themselves from others. When colonialism encroached their lives and culture a conscious or unconscious attempts were made to destroy Mizo identity and the feeling of *'us'* in them. Colonialism many a times tried to annihilate colonists' identity by employing a 'cultural bomb'. The cultural bomb of the colonists was very effective in creating new identity amongst Mizos. The new Mizo Christian converts were said to have identified themselves as a separate group with the larger Mizo society. They changed the way of dressing, cooking and eating. The cultural bomb also destroyed Mizo capacities and self esteem. In that situation, they began to develop blind imitation of western style of living, worship, dressing and cooking.The colonial rulers did not have empathy with the indigenous tradition. In colonial Lushai hills, *Zu* drinking in Mizo festivals which had assumed the status of tradition was prohibited for Mizo Christian converts. Instead of instilling moderation and limit, *Zu* drinking or consumption was strictly prohibited. The attempt to establish identity with the traditions of the colonized was only a mode of seeking legitimacy by affirming the culture, at least part of it, of the colonized. Paradoxically, though, it tended to deepen rather than minimize the cultural differences between the colonizerand the colonized.

The Christian missionaries and the British colonial administrators working in the Lushai hills were found out to be the one to give a distinct identity to Mizos. The pioneer missionaries nor the colonial administrators inter-dine with Mizos. Instead of inter-dining there was an indifferent attitude towards Mizo food culture. For those who considered Mizo food culture

as ‘primitive’ and ‘filthy’ inter-dining with indigenous family was one challenging task. Their attitude towards Mizo food culture created social and mental gap.Therefore, by secluding themselves from Mizo food culture the identity question was brought up by the missionaries and British officials in the first place. When there was no attempt on the part of the missionaries and the colonial officers serving in the Lushai hills to have social intercourse with the indigenous people, therefore, the feeling of separateness and differences became inevitable. Moreover, they remained exclusive and did not mingle with the Mizos. Such kind of attitude created differences between them and the people they ruled over.

Though Mizos after becoming Christians absorbed western culture and religion the traditional style of eating still persisted in the celebration of Christian festivals. The continuity of communal feasting in Mizo way was even endorsed by most of the later missionaries. It is found that while the ‘cultural bomb’, conjured up by K.N.Pannikar, was very effective in changing the lifestyle, dresses and food habits of Mizos it could not completely destroy Mizo identity. The continuous existence of Mizos as a separate people was reflected in their food culture– the pattern of eating and preparation, their emotions and sentiments towards Mizo food like *Tlak*, *Bai, Bawl, Rawt* etc.

Colonial hegemonization not only created / generated consent but also contestation. Mizos contested in the cultural war revolving around food and identity by replacing their age old ingredients with new ingredients (for example, cooking soda replaced *Chingal*) without losing the traditional taste. Mizo food culture was, hence, neither completely hegemonized by the colonial rule nor fully dissociatedfrom the traditional.

Furthermore, it is found that culinary colonialism through the ‘cultural bomb’ created fusion in Mizo food culture. Bread, cookies, salad, fries etc. clearly came from the colonial experience. Mizo food bears the ascriptions of colonial taste preferences and technological innovations. The colonization of Mizo food may not be visible like the political colonization or the religious changesbut it is clear that the new food technology brought about by the British officials and missionaries altered Mizo taste buds and the gradual change in the taste buds was more visible in the post independence era. Some may attribute Mizo exposure to outside world beyond their own land as the prime factor in changing food habits of the Mizos, however, it is an undeniable truth that colonialism was the most important factor. The introduction of new food, new cooking method, new method of consumption, new cutleries

and new attitude to food were indeed substantial development. However, it is very interesting to emphasize here that despite these changes and the numerous attempts of colonial administrators and Christian missionaries Mizo food culture continued to survive. Some actually flourished and continued to remainan important part in Mizo fare.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From unknown times, the human race has explored the world in search of food. The beginning of European colonialism can be said to have begun with the search for food. Recent research shows that with growing prosperity and growth, the dietary habits of the Europeans had also changed in the 11th century, with more meat being consumed. Much of the cattle in Europe had to be killed during winter due to shortage of fodder, and the meat salted away. Oriental spices were even more in demand in order to make the salted meat more palatable.[1] Considering this, it may be asserted that colonialism and food have a long history of relation.

Food history is a new discipline, considered recently as a fringe discipline.[2]It is a field that examines the history of food, and the cultural, economic, environmental and sociological impacts of food. It is considered distinct from the more traditional field of 'culinary history', which focuses on the origin and re-creation of specific recipes. Food historian looks at food as the most important element of cultures, reflecting the social and economic structure of society. Empires have done battle for food; civilizations have been built around it, crimes committed, laws made and knowledge exchanged.[3] In India's north east tribal area (Mizoram) food factors prompted the tribes to invade their neighbouring areas many times. The British authorities did not know how to handle the situation till the 1880's when the situation turned out in their favour. The Lushai hills was struck by *Mautam* famine creating food scarcity, distress and havoc in the hills resulting in the submission of Mizos to alien rule. It was reported that,

> "The Chiefs sold out their ivory, jewelleries and other valuables for the sake of food. They exchanged their guns and other arms for food. Their jhums were exhausted and even rubber, which offered ample means of subsistence, was

[1]Satish Chandra, *Medieval India Part I – From Sultanat to the Mughals (1206-1526),* New Delhi, Har-Anand Publications Pvt. Ltd., 1997, (2008 reprint), p. 194.
[2]Maguelonne Toussaint – Samat*, A History of Food,* New expanded edition, Malden, MA, USA, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2009.p. 14.
[3] Samat, *A History of Food*, p.14.

failing. They had no means to purchase articles such as salt, tobacco, etc. In short they were reduced to a state of destitution".[4]

The British seemed to be very curious when Mizo chiefs surrendered themselves due to lack of food in the hills. It was unthinkable. In an unexpected turn of events a formidable enemy was willing to make an abject capitulation. They were ready to exchange their only weapon for food. The British had once concluded that the only way to subdue the Mizos was to starve them to submission by destroying their harvest and blocking their supply.[5]

Ever since the annexation of Cachar into the British dominion, the local authorities had to deal with the incursions of the Lushaitribes in the south. Scarcity of food and fertile land often led the Lushais to enter into the plains and indulged in raiding neighbouring territories.[6]The British described the conquest of tribal north east India - either Naga or Mizo - spanning over a period of about a century as ' one long, sickening story of open insults and defiance, bold outrages and cold blooded murders on the one side and long and suffering forbearance, forgiveness, concession and unlooked favour on the other'.[7]It is obvious that the former part of the description was ascribed to the tribal and the latter to the British.[8]The British said ' it was not desired to extend their rule into the interior as the hills were not a land of flowing milk and honey, no glittering outcrops to raise thought of mineral wealth, no telling indications of reservoirs of endless oil'.[9]Colonialism and subsequent establishment of imperial rule in Lushai hillshave been studied and interpreted by a host of scholars using diverse theories. Though these studies reveal the nature and impact of colonial rule on the people of the Lushai hills the basic cause of colonialism in the region (food scarcity and subsequent raiding of neighbouring areas to get food which was eventually clashed with the British economic interests) and the subject of cultural impact through food studies have been left out. Attempt is made to understand why the British came to occupy the Lushai hills and

[4]E.B., Elly, *Military Report on the Chin- Lushai Country*, Simla; Government of India, 1893, pp. 14-15. and also Suhas Chaterjee, *Mizoram Under British Rule*, Delhi, Mittal, 1985, p. 96 as cited in Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers in North East India: Bamboo-Flowers, Rat Famine, and the Politics of Philantrophy, 1881-2007*, New Delhi, Manohar, 2008, p.101.

[5] McCabe during one of his expeditions to the Lushais wrote, 'Exposure and Starvation are our strongest allies and with their assistance I believe that the Lushais will very shortly be craving for peace,' in McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*. pp 59-66 as cited in Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers in North East India*, p. 101.

[6] Lalrimawia, Mizoram – *History and Cultural Identity (1890 – 1947)* Guwahati, Spectrum Publications, 1995, p. 35.

[7] John Butler, '*Rough Notes on Angami Nagas'*, Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal, vol. 44, no.4, 1875, pp.307-27 cited in Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers in North East India*, p. 95.

[8]Nag,p. 95.

[9] McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Calcutta, Firma KLM Private Ltd, Aizawl, TRI, 2009 (rpt.), p. 65.

whyMizos eat what they eat, how they define Mizo food and how their choices changed over time, because these are important questions and answers to these can provide insight into the social, cultural, agricultural, economic and political history of Mizos.

Colonialism brought with it cultural change and was a 'catalyst in many a field'.[10] These changes had multiple sources of inspiration, ranging from direct intervention by the colonial state to the activities of voluntary agencies. Their modes of intervention also varied, appropriation and hegemonization being the most important of them. They were entwined with and complementary to colonial strategies for the perpetuation of power. As a result, indigenous social institutions and cultural practices came under critical scrutiny, and in some cases encountered total disapproval and rejection. While some of them were incorporated into colonial practice, others were so radically transformed that they lost their original identity.[11]

1.1.1 Physical aspects

Tucked in the extreme eastern corner of British Indian Empire, the Lushai Hills was a district under colonial Assam. The territory was designated as *terra incognito*in early colonial maps until its adjacent plains in Bengal and Assam were colonised by the British in late 1700's.The designation 'Lushai Hills' was assigned in the colonial mapping after the largest tribal group in the territory, the Lushais, which is a colonial corruption of '*Lusei*.'It remained to be addressed as Lushai Hills till 1954 when it was renamed as Mizo Hills District by the Indian Parliament due to demand from the people. It remained as a district under Assam state till 1972 and got renamed again as Mizoram when it became a Union Territory and achieved full statehood on 20 February, 1987 and entered the Union of India as the 23rd state.It is situated between 21.58 to 24.29 north latitude and 92.29' to 93.22' east longitude. The tropic of Cancer passes near the capital, Aizawl. It is bounded on the north by the district of Cachar (Assam) and the state of Manipur, on the east and south by Chin Hills and Arakan (Myanmar) and on the west by the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh and the state of Tripura.[12]It has a total area of 21,081 square Kilometres.

[10] K.N. Pannikar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 19
[11] Pannikar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, p. 19.
[12] S.C. Bhatt & Gopal K. Bhargava, *Land andPeople of Indian States and Union Territories: Mizoram*, Delhi, Kalpaz Publications, 2006, p. 23.

An average height for Mizoram is some 900 metre, with the capital, Aizawl, itself situated at over 1,000 m above sea level. The steep hills are densely forested with bamboo and wild banana. Mizoram is bisected by the Tropic of Cancer, giving the hill state a mild climate.[13]Rivers in Mizoram generally flow towards North and West direction. The most important are the Tlawng or Dhaleswari (longest river 185.15 Kilometers), the Tuirial (Sonai) and the Tuivawl, which drain the northern portion of the country thence, enter the Barak River in Cachar district of Assam.[14]The southern hills are drained by the Chhimtuipui (Kolodyne) on the east with its tributaries; Mat, Tiau and Tuipui. While the Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli) at the mouth of which stands Chittagong with its tributaries; the Tuichawng, Kau, De, Phairuang and Kawrpui, forms the western drainage system.[15]Almost all the rivers in Mizoram are fed by monsoon rain which is sufficient to give life to the flora and fauna of the region. Suitably, they swell rapidly during the rainy season and recede shortly after the end of the season. Rivers within Mizoram are mostly not navigable except the Tlawng River, which is navigable by small boats.

Mizoram has the most variegated hilly terrain in the eastern part of India. The hills are steep and are separated by rivers which flow either to the north or south creating deep gorges between the hill ranges. The region is a bio-geographic highway connecting the Indian Peninsula to the Malay and Chinese sub regions, and the flora and fauna interchange between the east and the west is believed to have contributed much to the high bio-diversity of the region.[16]

1.1.2 Flora and Fauna

Mizoram has great natural beauty and endless variety of landscape and is rich in fauna and flora. A British military officer, Woodhorpe, who took part in the Lushai Expedition of 1889, described his impression of the country as follows:

> "When the mist did not trouble us in early morning the scenery was magnificent. On both sides the mist lay in the valleys like a sea of softest wool, stretching far

[13] Himansu Chandra Sadangi, *Emergent North – East India: A Way Forward*, Delhi, Isha Books, 2008, pp. 192-193.
[14] B.C. Allen, E.A. Gait, H.F. Howard & C.G.H. Allen, *Gazetteer of Bengal and North East India*, New Delhi, Mittal Publication,1857, p. 456.
[15] B.C. Allen, *Gazetteer of Bengal and North East India*, p.456.
[16] S.C. Bhatt & Gopal K Bhargava, *Land andPeople of Indian States and Union Territories: Mizoram*, p. 24.

> away for miles, marking out each spur and ravine on the mountain side like little islands, while currents of air below dashed the mist against the steep, outrunning spurs, like mimic breakers against some bold headlands. The hills extended far away to the west, rising range upon range, purple and blue, till the sun appearing above the bluff mass of the *Surklang*, lighted up the mountain sides with most brilliant tints of orange and green and changed the cold blue of the cloudy sea beneath, into all the varied and delicate tints of mother pearls, while over all hung the canopy of clear lilac and gold of the morning sky. Such a scene requires a much more eloquent pen than mine to do justice to it, or even to covey any idea of its exceeding beauty.[17]

The flora of Mizoram consists of brilliant green plantations full of different plant species throughout the year. It has a dense bamboo forest and multiplicities of orchids reside in the state. Its tropical location, which provides favorable climatic condition like moderate temperature, sufficient rainfall, and the nature of soil and elevation facilitated to an abundant growth of vegetation. The vast and dense tropical forest gives rise to an impressive variety of flora and fauna. According to the forest report of India 2015, Mizoram has a vast area of forest covering as much as 88.93 percentages of the total areas.[18]

A range of wild animals like tiger, clouded leopard, elephant, gaur, barking deer, sambar deer, wild boar, hillock gibbon, rhesus macaque, leaf monkey, common languor, etc. inhabit the forest of Mizoram. It also deals with nearly 1468 species belonging to 891 genre no fewer than 295 families, of which insects alone form 37 percent with 520 species.[19] The next abundant group is the birds with nearly 370 species and sub-species distributed throughout the state.[20] In spite of that, the forest cover in Mizoram has been greatly decreased due to devastation and deforestation for the purpose of infrastructure. Consequently, wildlife, game birds and fishes of all kinds and the rich vegetation of various varieties had sadly depleted and exhausted the state. With that Mizos lost a great number of their source of food.

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[17] R.G. Woodhorpe, *The Lushai Expedition* as cited in C.L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, Serkawn, The Literature Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1987, p. 4.
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[20] *Fauna of Mizoram*, State Fauna Series, 14, 2007, p.6.

1.1.3. Climate

The physiographic location of Mizoram indicates the climate of the area. Although the tropic of cancer passes through the middle of the State, it enjoys a moderate climate.[21] During winter, the temperature varies from 11° C to 21° C and in the summer, it varies between 20° C to 29° C. As the area comes under the direct influence of monsoon, Mizoram has an annual rainfall of 254 cm. Even so, due to global warming, the temperature of the region often crossed 35° in summer and reached as low as 4° in winter.

Lack of good communication and transport system make Mizoram into one of the most backward regions in India. Before the British intervention, trade with the neighbouring plains existed but on a very limited scale and was inconsistent. The Mizos then had to apply their genius to meet their needs and requirements for daily utilisation.[22]Although the colonial regime and post colonial Indian government brought numerous changes and advancement in the field of transport and communication in the hills, yet it runs miles behind many of the Indian states at present.

1.1.3 The Nomenclature: Kuki – Chin – Lushai – Mizo

As per general belief the Mizos belong to one of the Mongolian racial group. There has been different thesis on the issue of 'who the Mizo really are as a people'. Some scholars traced their identity by using the language commonly used while there are some others who draw commonality on the basis of cultural and social practices. According to G.A. Grierson, "The Language spoken by the Mizo belongs to the Kuki-Chin group and further classified it as a Burmese branch of the Tibeto-Burman family".[23] The Mizos were erroneously termed as Kuki, Chin and Lushai. The word 'Kuki' literally means 'wild hill people'.[24]

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[21] S.N. Singh, *Mizoram - Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrativ*e, New Delhi, Mittal Publication, 1994, pp.17-18.

[22] Zothantluanga Ralte, '*The Pace of Socio-Economic and Political Developments; Response to British Colonialism and the Emergence of the Mizo Minority in Indian Politics'* in J.V. Hluna, Dr. Sangkima, Dr. Romesh Buragohain (eds.), *Studies on the Minority nationalities of Northeast India – The Mizos,* An International Seminar organised by Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1992, p.60.

[23] G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India, Vol.-III Part-III*, Delhi, 1967, p.10.

[24]*Mizoram District Gazetteers*, Directorate of Art & Culture, Aizawl, Government of Mizoram, Education and Human Resources Department, 1989, p.24.

It seems that the hill people never called themselves as 'Kuki' while the plain people used the term to refer to them as C.A. Soppit had argued,

> "Kuki is a term used by the plain people to denote the hill people. But, the designation Kuki was never used by the tribes themselves, though many of them answer to it when addressed, from knowing it to be the Bengali or plains term for their people".[25]

The debate is also joined by Mizo historians. Among whom the opinion of B. Lalthangliana may be pointed out. He opined that the Burmese called Mizos as 'Chin'. He believed that they were constantly spotted at carrying bamboo basket called 'Chin' by the Burmese and such name came into existence.[26]Zhu Changli quoted, "Chin in Burmese means 'friends' or 'partners'.[27] Nevertheless, B. Lalthangliana translated as, 'Man with the basket'.[28]However, G.A. Grierson hypothesized, "Chin is a Burmese word used to denote those living in the country between Burma and Assam".[29]

The word 'Lushai' is a corrupt term derived from 'Lusei', the name of the most powerful tribe dominating the Lushai hills who ruled under a clan name 'Sailo' at the time of British penetration into the present Mizoram.[30] In the meantime, the British administrators and missionaries adopted the term 'Lushai' to refer to the Mizos. It was Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar, who first officially used the term 'Lushai' instead of 'Kuki'.[31] A.S. Reid had a somewhat different opinion on the issue and thus said –

> "The term 'Lushai' has come into more common use; and although originally applied to the tribe or tribes occupying the tract immediately to the south of Cachar, is now employed, in a comprehensive sense. To indicate all those living

[25] C.A. Soppitt, *A Short Account of the Kuki-Lushai Tribes on the North-East Frontier with an Outline Grammar of the Rangkhawl-Lushai Language and a Comparison of Lushai with other Dialects*, Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1893, pp.1-2.
[26] B. Lalthangliana, 'Mizo' in Dr. J.V. Hluna, Dr. Sangkima and Dr. Romesh Buragohain (eds.), *Studies on the Minority nationalities of Northeast India – The Mizos*, An International Seminar organised by Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1992, p.6.
[27]Zhu Changli, 'A study of the Ethnic Origin and Customs of the Nationalities' in Dr. J.V. Hluna, Dr. Sangkima, Dr. Romesh Buragohain (eds.), *Studies on the Minority nationalities of Northeast India – The Mizos*, An International Seminar organised by Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1992, p.21.
[28]Zhu Changli, p. 21
[29] G.A. Grierson, p.2.
[30] Sangkima, 'An Etymological Study of the word Mizo', *Proceedings of the North East India History Association (NEIHA),* Seventh Session, 1986, p.334.
[31] W.B. Oldham, *The Word 'Lushai', Vocabulary of Lushai Language*, Calcutta, R.H Sneyd Hutchinson, Bengal Secretariat Press, 1897, p.1.

> to the west of the Kolodyne river…various derivations have been suggested for the word 'Lushai', among which are '*Lu*' meaning head, and '*Shai*', to cut, or '*Shai'*, long-haired…I believe the Lushais called themselves '*Zao*'.[32]

The use of the term 'Lushai' is greatly protested by Mizo historians. Lalthangfala Sailo had said, "Due to ignorance and the fault of several uneducated interpreters, the term 'Lushai' came to be officially used by the foreigners and continued on when writing about the history of the people"[33]. Hrangthiauva and Lalchungnunga also contested the usage of 'Lushai' by the colonial officials who came under the misinterpretation by stating that, "Lusei originated after a person called Luseia, which was misinterpreted as 'Lushai' by the British".[34]

The colonial officials were somehow intrigued by the terms - Lushai, Kuki and Chin. Most of them agreed that the Kuki, Chin, Lushai were one race. T.H. Lewin in his famous work, 'A fly on the Wheel' stressed, "The generic name of the whole nation is '*Dzo*'.[35] Shakespear also subscribed to the belief that the Kuki, Chin and Lushai were of one homogenous race. "There is no doubt that the Kukis, Chins and Lushais are all of one race".[36]

Though the British administrators have called the Mizo by different names by following the Bengalis and the Burmese, yet, such name given to them by their neighbours seems alien among the Mizo groups and many writers claimed that 'Mizo' or the word 'Zo' is the name used by the people to refer themselves. Sangkima has contended that the term 'Mizo' is not a recent origin and it may be applicable that the people themselves used this nomenclature long before the British intervention.[37] Unlike Lusei, Mizo is a generic term by which all the Mizo tribes are associated. Mizo writer L. Keivawm commented on this as:

> "Mizo does not stand for the people using the Lushai or *Duhlian* language. It stands for all the 47 *Zo* groups scattered in different areas and Mizo language does not simply mean Lusei language, it covers all the 47 dialects spoken by

[32] A.S. Reid, *Chin Lushai Land* (1893), Calcutta, Firma-KLM Private Ltd., 2008, p.5.
[33] Lalthangfala Sailo, 'Mizo Identity' in *Zopui (Studies in Mizo Identity & Culture),* Archives Committee, Govt. Hrangbana College, Aizawl 2011, p.37.
[34] Hrangthiauva & Lalchungnunga, *Mizo Chanchin (History and Culture of the Mizos) (*1978*)*, Aizawl, C. Chhuanvawra, 2011, p.13.
[35] Thomas H. Lewin, *A Fly On the Wheel or How I Help to Govern India* (1912), Calcutta, Firma-KLM Private Ltd., 1977, p.246.
[36] J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, Aizawl, Tribal Research Institute (TRI), 1988, p.8.
[37] Sangkima, 'Origin of The Mizo - A Study' in *Historical Journal Mizoram (HJM),* Volume - VI, Issue – I, Aizawl, Mizo History Association (MHA), 2005, p.82.

different groups and of them, Lushai language grew to be the most familiar one".[38]

On 1st September 1954 that, 'Lushai Hills District' was officially changed to 'Mizo Hills District' and the term 'Lushai' was replaced by 'Mizo'[39] the word 'Mizo' became the official nomenclature of the people who had once been called Kuki, Chin, Lushai. Hence, in the thesis, the nomenclature Mizo is used to denote the people of present Mizoram and the people who are the subject of the study. But in most chapters, the term Lushai hills is used to connote the area under research and to locate it within the proposed timeframe as indicated in the title of the thesis. Moreover, there was no Mizoram during colonial rule as per colonial documents and records.

1.2.1 Colonialism and the Lushai Hills

The Lushaihills remained unexplored till 1800. The task of exploration was first taken up from Chittagong. However, in 1777 under the command of Captain Ellester, a detachment of military explored the Chittagong Hill Tracts up to the border of the Lushai hills. On the eve of the British contact with the Lushais, almost the whole of the area presently known as Mizoram was under the supremacy of Sailo Chiefs.[40]

The British victory in the first Anglo-Burmese War and the treaty of Yandaboo (1826) effectively checked the Burmese aggression and brought the East India Company in close contact with the northeast frontier tribes. The incorporation of Cachar into British Empire had an immense impact on the Mizos who inhabited the immediate neighbours of their adjudicated frontier. The large-scale expansion of tea cultivation by the British created uneasiness among the Mizos who believed that the newly incorporated areas of Cachar and the tea gardens established by the colonial authority was their hunting ground and lies within their jurisdiction. In order to protect their land and to prevent further encroachment from colonial government, the Mizo chiefs frequently raided the plain areas. The first raid by the Mizos on the British occupied areas occurred in September 1826, when parties of Sylhet

[38] L.Keivawm, 'Mizo Aidentiti: Tlang Thlirna' in *Zopui (Studies in Mizo Identity & Culture),* Aizawl, Archives Committee, Government Hrangbana College, 2011, p. 6.
[39] No LJL. 21/54/30, *The Lushai Hills District (Change of Name) Act*, 1954, Mizoram State Archives (MSA).
[40] Lalrimawia, Mizoram – *History and Cultural Identity (1890 – 1947),* Guwahati, Spectrum Publications,1995, p.8.

woodcutters were massacred in the hills above the Simla (Chhimluang) river, ten miles to the west of the Dullessuri.[41]

The missionaries had recorded that the beginning of colonial rule and the Christian mission among the Mizo was prompted by the food factor, that is, the establishment of tea plantation on what Mizos considered to be their jurisdiction. In *God's Miracle in Mizoram* the missionaries had stated that 'It all started with tea. The major portion of what we drink is known in trade as Assam tea discovered to grow indigenously in Mizoram region'.[42]

Initially the British government followed a policy of non interference towards Mizos while keeping a strict vigil on their activities along the frontiers.[43] With Assam increasingly falling under the East India Company's rule from 1826, Mizo raids on the plantations to the north, particularly from the 1830's became a problem for the British authorities. Almost two decades later on 16 April 1844, Lalsuthlaha (son of a Mizo chief, Lalrihua) with 200 men launched a ruthless attack on the settlement at Kachabari near Kailasahar within Manipur territory killing twenty people and six persons were carried off into captivity.[44]In retaliation, Captain Blackwood carried through the first expedition on a small scale with parties of the Sylhet Infantry and the armed Civil Police at the end of 1844 and managed to capture its chief Lalsuthlaha[45]. This was the first and foremost expedition taken by the British and chief Lalsuthlaha, was tried and transported for life. It is presumably true that the raids committed by the Mizos in the earlier stages were implemented to meet the needs of agriculture and handicraft products not to mention, to procure arms and human heads. Moreover, feuds among the Mizo chiefs and neighbouring Rajas often lead to clash and raids.

It should be noted here that the search for cultivable lands in the Cachar plain areas also forced the British to penetrate deeper into the Mizo territory. In respond to such activities, on November 1849, Ngura, chief of Sentlang raided, and burnt down three Thado villages of the British occupied areas killing twenty-nine people and taking forty-two captives.[46]To suppress such aggression, Colonel Lister, Commandant of the Sylhet Infantry marched from Silchar on 4 January 1850, and set ablaze the village of Ngura and liberated not less than four hundred

[41] Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India* (1884), New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2011, p.279.
[42] Zairema, *God's Miracle in Mizoram (A Glimpse of Christian Work Among Head – Hunters*), Aizwl, Synod Press, p. 1.
[43]*Foreign Political Proceedings*, September, no.269, Atchinson, 4 September 1872 as cited in Nag p. 101.
[44]McCall,p.40.
[45] L.W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles* (1929), Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., Calcutta, 1977, p.21.
[46] Alexander Mackenzie, p.291.

captives.[47] The British felt the need to build a strong outpost on the frontier areas and soon, strong outposts were constructed to keep watch and checked the Mizos from their repeated raids. As a result, the frontier areas remained quiet and calm for twelve years. In 1854, the Superintendent of Police at Chittagong, reviewed the history of the tract for the previous year and recorded 19 raids in which 107 people lost their lives, 15 wounded and 186 carried as slaves.[48]

Despite the occurrence of such event, peace was short lived when in 1860, Rothangpuia, a Thangluah chief made a fierce and daring raid near the Tripura border resulting in the murder of 186 British subjects.[49] Suakpuilala followed when in 1862, he raided Hill Tipperah and some villages in the south of Sylhet. The year 1868-1869 witnessed a series of daring outrages unleashed by the Mizos on the Cachar-Sylhet frontier. On November 1868, the Naga village in Manipur was attacked and burnt by Vanhnuailiana and Pawibawiha. Suakpuilala's men committed destruction in the Tripura areas on the same year. On 10 January 1869, Lalruma attacked and plundered the Nowarbund tea garden. Four days later, Dothiauva attacked the tea garden of Monierkhal. On February, a combined force of several chiefs among whom Liankhama was prominent, raided Kalanagar stockade in Manipur.[50]The continuous raids and destruction conducted by Mizos forced the British to send a military expedition one after the other.

Raids continued and on 23 January 1871, raids were organised and carried out by Bengkhuaia and his men on Alexandrapur, Anierkhal, Monierkhal and Nudigram. At Alexandrapur, a British planter named Dr. Winchester was shot dead in his tea estate and his daughter Mary Winchester, a 5-year-old girl was taken as captive. At Anierkhal, 25 tea workers were killed and 37 taken as captives.[51]Accordingly, on July 1871, retaliation started, consisting of two columns.[52] The right or Chittagong column under the command of General Brownlow with Captain Lewin as Civil Officer, and the left or Cachar column under the orders of General Bourchier accompanied by Mr. Edger in a civil capacity.[53] The Raja of Manipur voluntarily assisted these two columns with a contingent of 500 men and was placed under the order of

[47] J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram 1890-1954 (The Bureaucracy and the Chiefs)*,New Delhi, Mittal Publications, 2007, p.20.
[48] Bertram S. Carey and H.N. Tuck, *The Chin Hills* (1932), Volume – I, Calcutta, Firma KLM Pvt. Ltd., 1976, p.12.
[49]McCall, p.43.
[50] J. Zorema, *Indirect Rule in Mizoram*, p.22.
[51] Liangkhaia, *Mizo Chanchin Part 1*, Aizawl, LTL Publications, 1938, p.75.
[52]Woodthorpe, p.39.
[53] Mackenzie, p.312.

General Bourchier.[54] In consequence to such event, no less than 60 villages had tendered their submission. Of the 60 villages, 20 villages were forcibly occupied for their resistance and fifteen important chiefs had promised their lasting friendship and peace.[55]

Thus, retaliatory military expeditions and increasing contact with imperial officials had brought the area under control by the 1870's. More importantly, visiting restrictions not applying to missionaries, the conversion of many Mizo to Christianity helped the process and spread education. In the 1890s the Lushai area was formally annexed to the British Indian Empire, the northern hills falling under the jurisdiction of Assam and the southern hills Bengal. The North and South Lushai hills were amalgamated as LushaiHills, and awarded to Assam, in 1898.[56]Since then Mizos came to have long term contact and interaction with the 'white people'. They did not have any idea that their lives would turn upside down politically, economically, religiously, socially and culturally.

The successful expedition made the British to introduce and pass the 'Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873' for the frontiers districts and it came into force in 1875.[57]This regulation had given power to the Lieutenant Governor to prescribe a line, called the 'Inner Line' in each of the tribal areas. By this notification, no Mizo could venture beyond the 'Inner Line' unless they obtain a pass or permit from the Deputy Commissioner of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and violation of such laws would result to prosecution.[58]

In the Lushai hills peace prevailed on the frontiers for about a decade. Despite the British policy of segregating the Mizos and issuing restrictions on them, they failed to acknowledge the rights of the Mizos thereby continuing their expansion of tea garden. The demand for more lands led to deeper encroachment of the Mizo territory which the Mizo chiefs could not simply endure. For this reason, on 13 December 1888, Lungliana, Nikhama and Kairuma with a large number of followers attacked the village of Pakuma Rani, Chakma Chieftainess, killing the Chieftainess along with 20 subjects and carrying off 15 persons as captives.[59] The

[54]Woodthorpe,p.48.
[55] McCall, pp.49-50.
[56] Himansu Chandra Sadangi, *Emergent North East India: A Way Forward*, Delhi, Isha Books, 2008, p.194
[57] R. Thangmawia, *Zoram*, Aizawl, Zo-Reunification Organisation, 2011, p.19.
[58] Lalrimawia, 'Inner Line (Mizoram) – A Study in Historical Perspective' in J.V. Hluna, Sangkima, Romesh Buragohain (eds.) *International Seminars in Studies on the Minority Nationalities of North East India – The Mizos*, An International Seminar organised by Directorate of Higher and Technical Education, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1992, pp.125-126.
[59] Lalrimawia, *Inner Line (Mizoram) – A study in Historical Perspective*, p.86.

raids followed on January 1889 when Lianphunga sent off a raiding party that devastated the upper part of the Chengri Valley.[60]

In the event of the affairs, the British soon learned that their policy of frontier defence was inadequate and the need to initiate new measures and policy to check the frontier tribes was inevitable. A peace treaty or a punitive expedition was not enough to subdue the Mizos. An approach from conciliation to subjugation was soon instigated. Accordingly, on 11 September 1889, the Government of British India sanctioned the expedition called the 'Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90' to bring the Mizo hills completely under their control. The Chin Lushai Expedition, with an objective to punish the tribes and subjugate them and to ensure pacification and recognition of British power started immediately. The British marched in from different corners and in pursuance of this plan, General Tregear with about 3,000 troops advanced to Lungleh (Lunglei); whence a strong column under Colonel Skinner marched to Aijal (Aizawl) along the Tlawng valley. Daly with 400 men of the Silchar Military Police advanced up the Tlawng from Silchar.[61]

The expedition of 1889-90 established the British sovereignty over the entire Lushai Hills and the hill became divided into two administrative districts namely North Lushai Hills District and South Lushai Hills District. Soon, the immediate task of the authority was the restoration of peace and normalcy in the region. On the other hand, the introduction of forced labour, the collection of revenue, and the loss of their privileges disgruntled the Mizo chiefs and it was chief Manga and his descendants who first took necessary measures from the north to suppress the British intruders in 1890.[62] Several Mizo chiefs gathered at Kalkhama village to push back the British and the decision to assassinate Captain Browne was finalised.[63]

Subsequently, on 8 September 1890, when Captain Browne left Aizawl, the Mizos made a surprise attack on Capt. Browne and his men at Sairang village and killed Capt. Browne and twenty-two persons in the encounter.[64]In retaliation, an expedition under the direct command of Capt. Loch was dispatch in December 1895 from Falam, Aizawl and Lunglei against

[60] J. Zorema, p.22
[61]A.S.P.O (Judj.) No. 14-50-22-4-1905, J. Shakespear Notes on the Lushai Hills, its inhabitants, and its administration since 1888, Dated Manipur, the 22nd March 1905, p.2. (MSA).
[62] Lalthanliana, *Zalen Nana British Do (Kum 1820-1894 Inkara Indo leh Inrun)*, Aizawl, 2000, p.132.
[63] Lalthanliana, *Zalen Nana British Do*, p.133.
[64]MSA, No. 13. Mc. Cabe letter to the Secretary to C.C., Assam, Aijal 19.9.91.

Kairuma and his allies.[65]The resistance collapsed and the operations came to a successful conclusion.

Followed by pacification, a policy of consolidation began which resulted to various changes in the social, economic, political, religious and administrative set up in the Hills. On 1 April 1898, the tracts formerly known as the North and South Lushai Hills was amalgamated into one District namely the Lushai Hills with the addition of a small tract of Cachar and the tract known as the Zongling area.[66] A subtle but swift change was sought which weakened the territorial integrity of the Mizos thereby dissecting the Mizo groups.

Ever since the entry of British in the Lushai hills, ordinances and regulations came into being and it was Captain Browne who first introduced the payment of house tax by each household at a normal rate.[67] He also demanded a minimum number of porters from each village for government works and for officers while on tours. Such demand was against the wishes of the Mizo chiefs and soon, Capt. Browne suffered his fate. The order that no Mizo should possess a gun without a license since 1896 was enforced.[68]The colonial administrators implement rules and regulations to reduce the power of not only the chiefs but also of the entire community for effective and efficient control of the entire hills. The greatest improvement or development was in the field of education. Missionaries spread education and this has a profound impact on the traditional Mizo society. The emerging educated class started to question the old age system repeatedly and propagated the need for a social change in the Mizo ways of life.

The process of the consolidation of the British administration in tribal dominated area in Assam started in 1919 when Lushai Hills along with some other hill districts was declared a 'Backward Tract' under Government of India Act, section 52 on 3 January, 1921.[69]The famous Government of India Act 1935 also came into force and Mizo Hills District was termed as an 'Excluded Area', which means that control of the district was outside the Provincial Legislature of Assam. The Viceroy as King/Queen of British Empire became

[65] A.S.P.O (Judj.) No. 14-50-22-4-1905, MSA.
[66] A.G. McCall, *The Lushai Hills District Cover*, TRI, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 2008, p.1.
[67] A.G. McCall, *The Lushai Hills District Cover,*p.61.
[68]MSA, Letters from C.W. Bolton, Chief Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal to the Secretary to the Govt. of India, Dated Darjeeling, the 4th May 1896.
[69] Bhatt &Bhargava, p. 18

responsible for the administration and the Superintendent represents the Viceroy.[70] So, the Superintendent was bestowed with utmost unlimited power within his jurisdiction.

The Colonial authority refused to acknowledge any political development in the Mizo Hills. Virtually, any form of political development in the Mizo hills was kept at bay. Even so, during the 1940s, political consciousness swept the entire region and on realising the need for a political institution, encouragement in some form began to take shape. The Mizo response to the indifferent attitude of the British towards their political and social developments was the formation of Non – Government Organizations (NGO). The students seemed to be the torch bearers of the awakening and they began to form student's organization. And, for the first time in Lushai hills, a political party called 'Mizo Union' was established. Soon, the Independence of India marked the end of British colonial rule and under such circumstance, election to thirty-seven members Advisory Council for the Lushai Hills was finalised on 10 November 1947. In respect to such development, an election to the Advisory Council commenced in 1948 in which the Mizo Union won the election and for the first time in the history of Mizoram, a democratic form of government was established. It remained as a district of Assam and with the implementation of the North-Eastern Re-Organisation Act 1972, on 21 January 1972; it became a Union Territory. After one and a half decade, on 20 February 1987, Mizoram was elevated to a state and it became the 23rd state of the Indian Union.

1.2.2 Concept of Colonialism

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is hard to distinguish it from imperialism. Frequently, the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. The etymology of the two terms, however, provides some clues about how they differ. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This word reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin.[71] According to Oxford English Dictionary 'Colonialism' is the practice of acquiring

[70] Bhatt & Bhargava, p.18.
[71] *Colonialism*, Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, revised on 29th August, 2017, available from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism, (accessed 20 May 2015).

control over another country, occupying with settlers, and exploiting it economically.[72] In the thesis the impact of colonial rule on the social and cultural lives of the colonized people, that is, Mizo, is examined to a certain extend.

When issues related with colonialism are analysed and discussed in the thesis the judgements were made from foodie point of view. The colonial Lushai hills was not lonesome in experiencing cultural change as James C. Scott has written - The encounter between expansionary states and self governing peoples is hardly confined to South East Asia. It is echoed in the cultural and administrative process of 'internal colonialism' that characterizes the formation of most modern Western nation – states; in the imperial projects of the Habsburgs, the Ottomans, the Han, and the British; in the subjugation of indigenous peoples in 'white- settler' colonies such as the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and Algeria; in the dialectic between sedentary, town dwelling Arabs and nomadic pastoralists that have characterized much of Middle Eastern history. The precise shape of the encounters is, to be sure, unique to each case. Nevertheless, the ubiquity of the encounter between self governing and state governed peoples – variously styled as the raw and the cooked, the wild and the tamed, the hill, the hill/forest people and the valley/cleared-land people, upstream and downstream, the barbarian and the civilized, the backward and the modern, the free and the bound, the people without history and history.[73]

1.2.3 Concept of Food

Food can be defined as anything solid or liquid which when swallowed, digested and assimilated nourishes the body. Like air and water, food is also basic to our existence. In fact, food is the primary concern of human beings for their physical existence throughout all recorded history. Food or the lack of it has greatly influenced the destinies of human beings. One must eat to live and what one eats affects to a high degree one's ability to keep healthy, to work, to be happy, and to live well. Food can be obtained from the animal as well as the plant kingdom, from organic as well as inorganic sources.[74]

[72]*Oxford English Dictionary*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 163.
[73] James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, New Delhi, Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd., 2010, pg.3.
[74]The Educational Planning Group**,** *Food and Nutrition*(Fourth Edition), New Delhi, Arya Publishing House, pp. 4-5.

According to Oxford English Dictionary food is 'any substance that people or animals eat or drink or that plants absorb to maintain life and growth'.[75] The diet and what people consider as 'food' differs from country to country, region to region. For instance, what the Mizosconsider as food may not be considered as 'food' by other communities. The choice of food is, thus, a product of culture. Ecological, biological, and economic conditions affect our choice of food as edible or inedible.[76] Food and diet are rightly popular areas of research, central to understanding of daily life of the people.[77] Food and eating can transcend the material to serve as metaphors of dominance.[78] Food is, therefore, a mediator of power relations between people.

1.2.4 Food History

Food history has preceded the history of humankind. It is interesting to note that the history of humankind's struggle for survival is more or less related with struggle for life, that is, food. Plant leaves absorb the sun's energy and construct nutrients through photosynthesis. These are passed along to animals that swallow them when they eat the plants; to animals that eat animals that eat plants; and to other animals, including humans, who eat both plants and animals. Because such nutrients are basic to human survival, finding or producing food has been the most important historical preoccupation of humans and their ancestral species in an evolutionary journey to the top of the food chain.[79]

Moreover, food is also related to power as Alan Bennet says, "Its not just pork. Its power".[80]Some people relate food with a necessary condition for being called 'civilized'. 'Civilized human kind does not eat as it is available in nature. He cuts, crushes, cools, processes and modifies in many ways before consuming, adding variety to the diet'.[81] It is

[75] 'Food', *The Oxford English Dictionary,*New Delhi, OUP, 2005, p. 347.
[76] Cherrie L. Chhangte, 'Globalization and Mizo Food Culture' in K. Robin (ed.), *Chin History, Culture and Identity*, New Delhi, Dominant Publishers & Distributors, 2009, p. 393.
[77] C.M. Woolgar, D. Sergeantsen and T. Waldrons (eds.),*Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 18.
[78] Woolgar, Sergeantsen and Waldrons (eds.),*Food in Medieval England*, p. 342.
[79] Kenneth F. Kipple, *A Moveable Feast: Ten Millenia of Food Globalization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 1.
[80]Annie Grant, '*Food, Status and Religion in England in the Middle Ages: An Archaeozoological Perspective'*, available from http://www.mnhn/fr/museum/front/medias/publication/11147_ Grant pdf, (retrieved 9 February 2012).
[81] B. Srilakshmi*, Food Science* (Fourth Edition), New Delhi, New Age International (P) Limited Publisher, 2007, p.1.

possible to imagine an economics without money and reproduction without love but not life without food. It is what matters most to most people for most of the time. Yet food history remains relatively underappreciated. Most academic institutions still neglect it.[82]

Food history assumes many forms. At the most basic or obvious level, food history is the history of a particular food or dish. An author may describe who discovered or popularized a food item or perhaps who invented a specific dish in addition to providing details about the history of the production and consumption of the food in question. Yet food history is not simply the history of a food. In the 1980's, established historians and students of history were inspired by key works of social and cultural history, in particular the histories of material life and the histories of mass culture, consumerism, and consumption. Some of the food histories of the 1980's focused on the role of food in the everyday life, uncovering for instance, what individuals consumed as well as evidence of how food was prepared. Food historians also drew inspiration from anthropologists, who for decades were asking themselves, what does food or the activities around food tell us about human societies, human interactions, communications, and how do we interpret these interactions? Historians, of course, chose to tell the stories of what happened to these interactions as they changed over time.[83]

1.2.5 Approaches to Food

In *Food Culture in Colonia Asia: A Taste of Empire*, Cecilia Leong- Salobir discusses the different theories of food. She contends that foodway is one way looking at the porous boundaries of colonialism in areas of race and domestic relationships. She also points out the different theories of food as follows:

1. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu discusses the theory that the food consumption patterns of different social classes are determined by their experiences. He contends that food tastes are not acquired individually but collectively and are derived through interaction among different social classes.
2. Pierre L. Van der Berghe feels that community strengthens its social connections through food sharing both in the home and in the public sphere.

[82] Armesto, Felipe Fernandez, *Near a Thousand Tables-A History of Food*, New York, The Free Press, 2002, p.4.
[83] Carol Helstosky (ed.), *The Routledge History of Food,*New York, Routledge, 2015, pp. XIV – XV.

3. Anthropologist Sydney Mintz regards cuisine as legitimate when the community claims ownership of it through knowledge of and familiarity with, the dishes.[84]

Felipe Fernandez Armesto also discusses different approaches to Food:

> 'It is all about nutrition and malnutrition, sustenance and sickness. Some people think that food is essentially about cuisine. Economic historians see food as a commodity to be produced and traded. When it gets to the state of being eaten, they lose interest. For social historians' diet is an index of differentiation and changing class relations. Cultural historians increasingly interested in how food nourishes societies as well as individual bodies- how it feeds identities, defines groups. For political historians food is the stuff of tributary relationship and its distribution and management are at the heart of power while environmental historians sees food as a linkage in the chain of being the sustenance of the ecosystems which human beings strive to dominate'.[85]

1.2.6 Concept of Culture

Oxford English Dictionary defines culture as 'the arts, customs, and institutions of a nation, people, or group'.[86] Culture is an extremely difficult term to define. It is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, pattern and behavior. It consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art, rituals, ceremonies, and other related components. The development of culture depends upon human's capacity to learn and to transmit knowledge to succeeding generations. According to Edward Burnett Taylor 'culture includes all capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'.[87]

Every human has its own particular culture, or socio-cultural system, which overlaps to some extent with other systems. Variation among socio-cultural system is attributable to physical habitats and resources; to the range of possibilities inherent in various areas of activity, such as language, rituals and customs, and the manufacture and use of tools; and to the degree of

[84]CeciliaLeong- Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, Oxon, Routledge, 2011, p.
[85] Armesto, *Near a Thousand Tables-A History of Food*, p.7.
[86]*Oxford Engilsh Dictionary*, OUP, New Delhi, 2005, p. 208.
[87] *The New Encyclopedia Britannica Volume 3*, New Delhi, Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 2005, p. 784

social development. The attitudes, values, ideals, and beliefs of the individual are greatly influenced by the culture in which he/she lives, and an individual may, of course, live in or travel among several different countries.[88]

From food perspective culture is a taste maker as people inherit and bequeath foodways from families and communities. And society and economics are important in giving food values that can signal status, display power, create surpluses, and control access.[89] Cooking deserves its place as one of the great revolutionary innovations of history, not because of the way it transforms food but because of the way it transformed society. Culture begins when the raw gets cooked.[90]

1.3.1 Statement of the problem

Around the world, eating has been shaped by two factors since the mid 1700's – rapid technological change brought on by the scientific and industrial revolutions, and accelerating cultural exchanges between regions.[91] European governments grabbed territories in Africa and Asia as they asserted control over trade. This nineteenth century imperialism brought new exchanges.[92]The impact of new exchange with the British-Mizo culture was enormous though there is very little evidence on the topic.

Food constitutes a vital component of East Asian cultures and identities. It plays a crucial role in the celebration of festivals and in the everyday interaction of Chinese, Koreans and Japanese, functioning as an important means of communication. Deriving from its central role in East Asian societies, cuisine has become a significant marker of East Asian cultures in the global world as well. A category of food defined as "Chinese" epitomized by a variety of ingredients stir- fried in a wok (Chinese style frying pan), serves as a banner of Chinese culture worldwide. For Japan and Korea, the same function is performed by specific elements

[88] *The New Encyclopedia Britannica, Volume 3*, p. 748
[89] Nancy Shoemaker, 'Food and the Intimate Environment', Vol. 14, No. 2 (APRIL 2009). Available from: Jstor, (accessed 16 July 2014).
[90] Shoemaker, p. 343.
[91] Laresh Jayasanker, Food (Overview) in Peter N. Stearns (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World 3*, OUP, 2008, p. 335.
[92] Peter N Stearns *(ed), The Oxford Encyclopedia,* p. 337.

from their cuisines, such as sushi and kimchi. Culinary culture is, thus, an effective tool for identifying historical dynamics of East Asia.[93]

Looking at the history of India it can be stated that food history has not yet attained the kind of attention it deserves while considerable works have been done on social and cultural history. Cultural exchanges with foreign countries as well as colonial rule and globalization have considerable influence on the food practices of Indians. The nineteenth-century imperialism brought new exchanges. The British taste for Indian chutneys, curries, and tea proves the Indian palate's effect on the colonial rulers. Similarly, Indian diet did take on some British qualities, notably Indians enjoy tea as much as the British.[94]

To look at the diversity of North East Indian cuisines is sometimes an unfathomable proposition, makes surprise to believe and accept. The cooking styles and flavors of each and every state in the region is unique and differs from each other with considerable influence of Bengali, Nepali, Thai, Bhutani, Tibetan, Myanmar and Chinese cuisines. One fact is common in North Eastern cuisine; bamboo is used extensively; from Tripura to Nagaland and from Mizoram to Arunachal.[95]

There is no clear and direct primary evidence to traditional Mizo food. A.G. McCall and other writers (colonial and indigenous) have mentioned in their works food and the palate of the Mizos in brief. They did not explore much into this area. Like other South Asian and East Asian people, in Mizo culture, rice plays an important role. It is their staple food and other foods (vegetables, green leaves, milk, fruits etc.) are always described simply as 'accompaniments' to it. Although it is a staple, rice is not a complete food, and the missing elements have to be added to the diet. Yet, the appetite of the Mizos cannot be met or satiated until and unless rice is served. This unique characteristic or attitude of the people distinguish them from others and give them distinctive identity.

As a result of scarcity of primary sources for reconstructing food history in pre-colonial period one has to take recourse to colonial and missionary ethnographic accounts and oral history. Although the economy of early Mizos was simple, it was the mainstay of the people. Before paddy was cultivated Mizos used maize, millet, gums, arum- bulbs, sweet potatoes

[93] Stearns, p. 340.
[94] *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World 3,* p. 337.
[95] R.C. Gupta, 'Cuisines of North East India', in K. Robin (*ed*.), *Chin: History, Culture and Identity*, p.384.

etc. as their staple food.[96] We do not know when rice substituted these items but tradition says that rice was first cultivated when they first came to the Chin Hills of Burma. Domestic animals like pigs, chicken, goats, mithuns, dogs etc. played a very important part in the economic life of the Mizos. In addition to being important items of sacrifices in rituals relating to birth, marriage, death, sickness, festivals and healing ceremonies, they were also extensively used as important sources of food and protein.[97] The early Mizosalso hunted animals for food and other purposes. Birds were also killed for their meat. Meat was the favourite food of the Mizos.[98] Meat, however, according to McCall, never played a large part in the diet of the Mizos.[99]

In the pre-colonial period most food items were obtained from jhum, jungles and rivers. The annexation of the Lushai hills in 1890-1891 and the subsequent consolidation of the colonial rule brought about significant change in the traditional food and drinking habits of the Mizos. Though many indigenous writers and historians wrote about how colonial rule was established, and the effects it had on the political, social, religious, economic and cultural life of the Mizos, none have mentioned the colonization of traditional Mizo food. Colonialism was not just confined to politics or economics. It could be seen on food as well. The change in traditional food habits of the Mizos was basically due to the pioneering work of the British government and the Christian missionaries. New food items that were hitherto unknown to the indigenous people became popular. For instance, the introduction of milk brought along with it a far reaching effect on the diet and immune system of the Mizos. Likewise, the particular brand of Christianity introduced by western missionaries made the consumption of *Zu* as a sin.

Many questions, thus, arise. How far did the colonial rule change food and drinking practices of the Mizos? What were the responses they received from indigenous people? Did the colonial rule affect Mizo food culture in the post – independence period? Did the British rule change indigenous approaches to food and its consumption? Did the work of the missionaries destroy valuable cultural practices of the Mizos? Is there any continuity? Can Mizofood be linked with the search for identity? Most importantly, most existing works onMizo history

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[96] V.L. Siama*, Mizo History*,Aizawl Lalrinliana & sons, 1978, p. 10 as cited in Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, Delhi, Spectrum Publications, 2004, p.62.
[97] Sangkima*, Essay on the History of Mizos,* p. 62.
[98]Lalrimawia, *"Economy of the Mizos (1840 – 1947", Studies in the History of North East India*, History Association Publication, 1986, p. 166 as cited in Sangkima,*Essay on the History of Mizos,* p.62.
[99]McCall, p.186.

written by colonial, indigenous and contemporary non-indigenous writers praised the colonial rule with regard to food and health. On what ground and criteria did they make their judgements? Nutritionist and food experts have regarded 'primitive food as the best food'; can this be applied to traditional Mizo food? These questions require an in-depth study so that the answer on the topic might be found.

1.4.1 Food and Colonialism: A Review of Literature

Food history, one of the most wonderful and interesting topic that can give clear insight to the daily and cultural life of the people, has been more or less hidden and has not yet occupied its rightful place in the academic bookshelves of modern well educated Mizos even in the 21st Century. As history of food is still in its infant stage the net, therefore, has to be cast wide for information on food. Despite limited work on food history, colonial ethnographies and other historical works by indigenous and contemporary non – indigenous writings provide us some information to contextualize food and the palate of the Mizos in brief. The scholarly works of disciplines other than history like anthropology, sociology, botany, literature etc. have been reviewed to get information and relevant data.

The early British monographs on the tribes of North East India and diaries and accounts of the Christian missionaries provide a lot of valuable information. In the mean time indigenous writings as well as myths and legends are mines of information for the topic. However, interpreting these sources remains challenging. The movement and settlement of Mizos to their present state also have some connection with food. In his '*Mizo Chanchin: A Short Account and Easy Reference of Mizo History'*, B. Lalthangliana connected the movement with food problem. He argues that Mizo ancestors, who were referred to as 'Chi'ang' by Chinese, had been rearing goat and sheep. The Chinese had also been rearing bison, cattle and pig. As sheep and cattle cannot be reared in the same field we often heard of disputes between nations or groups. Similarly, Mizo ancestors also had shared some disputes with the Chinese. The Chinese used to sacrifice their captives (*chi'ang*) in their rituals and ceremonies. To him,Mizos moved westward because of the dispute between the Chinese and theMizo ancestors.

K.N. Pannikar, one of the foremost historians of modern India in his famous work *'Colonialism, Culture and Resistance'*, describes the different forms of resistance to British

rule in India. He argues that 'colonial domination and resistance occupied the centre of historical experience' during colonial regime. In that resistance he analyses the cultural resistance expressed in the form of cultural consciousness and national identity, patterns of dress and manners, literature and education. He analyses that the colonialists hegemonized Indian society and culture by expropriating and appropriating many cultural symbols. However, those hegemonizations resulted in the awakening and birth of cultural and national identity.

The Cambridge World History of Food edited by Kenneth F. Kipple and Kriemhild Conee Ornelas is a must read for all who desire knowledge on history of food. The book in two volumes provides valuable information on what humans eat through the centuries. The wide themes covered by the book include – what our ancestors' ate, Staple foods – domesticated plants and animals, Dietary liquids, The Nutrients – deficient, food related diseases, Food and Drink around the world, History, Nutrition and health, Contemporary food related policy issues, and the dictionary of worlds plant foods. The botanical names provided for each plant/food item prove immensely beneficial for the study of food history. For those who do not have science background the information given by the writers is immensely advantageous. This edited work is also quite functional in understanding the food culture of various societies around the world.

Acclaimed food historian Felipe Fernandez – Armesto also provides a window on culinary history. The book which is titled '*Near a Thousand Tables – A History of Food'* is a provocative work that guides reader in discovering the history of food. There are themes dealing with the origins of cooking, the meaning of eating which he presents as the first building blocks of cultures and traditions, the importance of herding and breeding in the food revolution, the beginning of agriculture, the emergence of inequality which resulted in the development of haute cuisine, the consequences of the 'Columbian Exchange' on cultural and food history, the emergence of cross cultural cuisine and finally the impact of industrialization and globalization on food culture.

Another book that comes in mind when talking about food history is *'Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of* Empire'by Cecilia Leong Salobir. The book discusses the emergence of a hybrid cuisine in Asian countries that had once been dominated and ruled over by the colonialists. According to the author, the emergence of the hybrid Asian-European cuisine owed its root to the domestic servants working under the colonial rulers. As

a result of cross cultural contact and collaboration there emerged new cuisine like curries, kedgeree, pish pash etc. The influence of the domestic servants on the birth of new cuisine comes under analysis and the arguments show the significance of the book not only for the study of food history but also on the history of various Asian countries.

A full course meal on the history of food is provided by Linda Civitello in her monumental work '*Cuisine and Culture: A History of Food and People'*. The book serves the reader with full course meal from food in pre-history to the future of food. In this work, the author describes the agricultural revolution which brought food from 'raw' to 'cooked' form. Ancient, Medieval and Modern food history are also described in detail. In short, it consists of informative essays on every conceivable aspects of food from the use of cinnamon and salt by ancient Egyptian embalmers, how the Columbian Exchange and the Protestant Reformation brought significant changes in food culture, how the emergence of Haute Cuisine and Cake in the 18th Century transformed food practices to the dignified status of potato in contemporary world and the rise of celebrity chefs.

Though eurocentric, Maguelonne Toussaint Samat's '*A History of Food'* is one of the impressive works regarding food studies. It covers most of the history of food production and consumption from the time of the Romans to 1970's. The themes include the origin of humankind, the transition from a vegetable to carnivorous diet, methods of preparation and dietetics. The book also provides an insight into food ingredients and when and where these were first eaten.

Around theTuscan Table: Food, Family and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence by Carole M. Counihan is an ethnographical work. Though the book focuses on 20th Century Florence (Italy) it gives valuable information and knowledge on the relation between cuisine and culture, food and gender, food and communality, and more. Counihan has written that women in Florence had less time for cooking that inevitably led to change in cuisine and cooking. They started preferring packaged food as these were less time consuming. She also argues that fascism enforced a sharp division of labor with women as home maker and men as breadwinners ruling the family.

One of the most fascinating works on food history is *Food Culture in South East Asia* by Penny Van Esterik where the major foods of Southeast Asian countries and the ingredients as well as their significance and symbolization are discussed in detail. The cooking methods,

typical meals and the food habits of the people of this region come under analysis. The distinctive method of food preparation and consumption draw lines of commonality amongst the people of Southeast Asia while differentiating them from others. The role of food on special occasion and the history of diet and health are also discussed in detail. The importance of rice, fermented fish products and seasonings are also engaged upon. The consumption of dog meat, a rarity in world food practice, is also discussed. Furthermore, the role of religion and identity, expressed through food, is also explored.

The research on food and its various aspects has been enriched by scholars and historians among which '*Gender, Class and Food – Families, Bodies and Health'* by Julie M. Parsons may also be mentioned. Here, Parsons argues that foodways are a powerful means of drawing boundaries between social groups, distinguishing the 'self' from the 'other', defining who we are and where we belong. She makes the differing roles of foodways in family, maternity, health; and also discusses the embodied and epicurean foodways that show gender and class roles. Food acts as a marker of culinary capital in the family and women are positioned as responsible for domestic food work, while men cook for pleasure and leisure. The book proves beneficial in understanding the relation between food and gender.

Another enriching research work on food is the '*Routledge History of Food'* edited by Carol Helstosky. This edited collection of articles is organized into three time periods – 1500 – 1700, 1700 – 1900 and 1900 – present. The articles deal with different themes like the relationship between food, individuals and society, the role of food in globalization, and the commercialization of food in the 20th Century. One of the contributors, Cecilia Leong Salobir, analyses cookbooks and colonial memoirs in examining the foodways of British colonials in Asia.

Sidney W. Mintz famous work *'Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History'* could not be left out when food history is reviewed. Mintz argues that a cultigen, sugar cane had a long and interesting history in the cultural history of various nations stretching from New Guinea to India and thence to Mediterranean, to Atlantic and the Americas. While arguing sugar as the torch bearer of the Industrial Revolution, Mintz highlights that sugar made the capitalists more capitalistic.

An edited work on gastronomy/food history that brings loads of information is *Food in Global History* edited by Raymond Grew. The book is divided into four parts, each part

dealing with globalization of food practices and history. There are articles concerning with the politics of identity, expressed through food habits, in post colonial era. One of the informative accounts is provided by Sucheta Mazumdar in her '*The Impact of New World Food Crops on the Diet and Economy of China and India'*. She discusses how the introduction of new food items brought about social and cultural change in India and China.

Food – A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present edited by Jean Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari is indispensable for anyone interested in food history. The book with its readable articles traces the evolution of food from pre-historic times and the birth of restaurants in modern world to McDonalds in contemporary world. There are chapters on food systems and models of civilization, Urban and rural diets in Greece, Seasonings, Cooking and Dietetics,food industry etc. In short, the book turns food history into valuable cultural history via cuisine.

J.Shakespear's *The Lushei Kuki Clans* is a colonial ethnographic work which provides an insight to the domestic life, law and customs, and the religion of the Lusei tribe. It is divided into two parts – part one dealing with the Lusei and part two with the non-Lusei clans. J. Shakespear had written about the Lusei culinary art and also he had written how rice was more or less related to identity. He also gave information on *Zu*. However, this book does not provide sufficient information on the history of food in Mizoram.

While writing about the contribution of colonial writers on the history of food one that is worth mentioning is A.G. McCall's *TheLushaiChrysallis*. This book provides first hand information on various aspects of Mizo history. McCall describes how the Lushais, which he called 'land of tranquility yet upheaval, of wisdom and dire folly, of plenty yet poverty, of spirit and materialism, hope and again despair, lethargy yet vitality' develops itself from primitive stage to considerable improvement under colonial rule. Also, he discusses in detail the indigenous mode of living in order to show how 'uncivilized' the Lushais were before the coming of the British. This work shows the food habits of the Mizos in general and also talks about Mizo taste and culinary art. Some of his points are very 'biased' as he wrote from imperialist view point. Moreover, this work is too brief and inadequate to study the food history of the Mizos.

Among colonial ethnographers N.E. Parry gave the most detailed information on food and habits of a particular Mizotribe, that is, the Lakhers. His work*, The Lakhers*, gives a clear

picture of the religion, customs and practices of the Lakhers. He also explored their domestic life and food and drinking habits. He even traced how rice beer was discovered. Something very interesting about this ethnography is that it talks about the taste of indigenous food which attracted the colonial officials. However, this work is beset with some limitations, from the point of view of food history of the Mizos, as it deals with one particular section of the Mizos. Thus, it fails to give a complete picture of food habits of Mizosas a whole.

The Report of Baptist Mission Society on Mizoram 1901-1938 gives report on Mizo society, economy, and the changes introduced by Christian missionaries like education, Christianity, medicine, Mizo revival movement etc. It contains the insistence on total abstinence from drinking rice beer for Mizo Christian converts. Despite its informative report the report failed to cover the change in Mizo food to which they brought some change.

There has been various works on Mizo history written by indigenous writers which have given us some information to contextualize food in Mizo history. Mention may be made of *Mizoram – History and Cultural Identity 1840 – 1947* by Lalrimawia. This book throws some light on food habits of the Mizos in the pre- colonial period. It deals with Mizo history before the coming of the British and the impact of colonial rule and mission work on Mizo society. Something very noteworthy about this book is that unlike many indigenous writers Lalrimawia has mentioned the impact of colonial rule on the diet of the people. But it would not be an exaggeration if one says that this book has missed out many important points and failed to discuss indigenous culinary history.

James Dokhuma in his book '*Hmanlai Mizo Kalphung'* provide us a good amount of information on the social, economic, cultural, religious and political lives of the Mizos. James Dokhuma had written about Mizo food while discussing their domesticated plants and animals. Though the book is very informative it did not mention the role of *Zu* (rice beer which was indispensable to the Mizos).

Sangkima's edited work - *Essays on the History of the Mizos* is a collection of essays dealing with various aspects of Mizo history – sources of the history of Mizoram, the origin of the *Zo* people etc. Infact, some chapters provide little information on the topic like social and cultural history of the Mizosand social change of the Mizos which cover both pre-colonial and post-colonial period. Sangkima has mentioned how the drinking of *Zu* was disbanded. He

also argues that the Mizos readily accepted changes introduced by the British. Can this be applied to traditional Mizofood habits?

In his other work, '*Mizo Society and Social Change'*Sangkima traces Mizo society and, social practices and traditions from earliest times to colonial period in detail. He attributes colonial regime and Christianity for bringing various social change in Mizo society among which he includes change in the food habit. He argues that change in food habit was very insignificant on account of the fact that the people were too ignorant about food habit. In the last chapter, he discusses Mizo response to those changes as negative in the initial years but subsequently switched over to positive attitudes in the later years of colonial rule.

Another indigenous work that may be mentioned is *Mizo Ethos: Changes and Challenges* by V.S. Lalrinawma. In this book Lalrinawma has discussed pre-British Mizo society. He compares pre-British Mizossociety with British and missionary period and thus, makes critical analysis of the changes introduced by the British. Under a careful reading of this book an idea can be formed on the social and economic history of Mizoram. However, it does not provide sufficient information on food history and miss out one of the most important aspect of Mizo history, that is, food which is basic to understanding of daily lives of the people.

The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram by C.L. Hminga gives a good account on the establishment and working of the Churches in Mizoram while special attention is given to the Baptist Church. Using oral, archival and literary sources the writer talks about the conversion of Mizos into Christianity within a short decade. Though there are references Mizofood in pre-colonial period the writer fails to discuss how the missionaries and churches changed the food culture of Mizos. His access to personal diaries, documents and memoirs makes his work remarkable and more informative than other writings of its kind.

In *'Being Mizo: Identity and belonging in North East India'* Joy L.K. Pachuau describes how Mizo social practices convey a sense of 'being' or 'identity' and 'belongingness' to Mizos. She writes how identity issues are taken up in North East India and particularly in Mizoram. Her professionalism in history writing makes her work readable and reliable. Her arguments on the formation of Mizo identity and the social, cultural and political set up that provided an arena for the formation and preservation of Mizo identity proved to be worthwhile for anyone attempting to understand Mizo identity.

Among non – indigenous contemporary work it is worthy to mention *Mizoram Under the British Rule* by Suhas Chatterjee. In this book Chatterjee discusses in detail the annexation of Mizoram by the British, the policies followed by the British where conciliation was replaced by aggressive policy which ultimately led to the domination of Mizoram by the British. He praises the missionary work on the Lushai hills that 'it is no exaggeration to state that missionaries were the real torchbearers of civilization among the ignorant Lushaipopulation'. While writing in detail about the establishment of colonial rule he simply neglects to discuss the history of food, he also discusses how the British policy effected the economic and social life of the Mizos but he forgets to mention how daily life of the people which according to him had changed from ignorance to civilization. He does not talk about the history of food before and after the British rule. Thus, this work is not sufficient for a thorough understanding of food history of the Mizos.

Mizoram: Historical, Geographical, Social, Economic, Political and Administrative by S.N. Singh gives brief information on all that are mentioned in the title of the book. Singh here gives some information on food as he discusses the socio-economic profile of Mizoram. He tells us the food items of the Mizos, some of which were indigenous while others were introduced by the British. This book is, once again, inadequate to provide information on history of food in Mizoram.

Sajal Nag's book *Pied Pipers in North East India* studied the *Mautam* famine in Mizo hills up to 2007. The book though focuses mainly on the bamboo flowering and gives invaluable information on colonial policy towards Mizos in times of starvation and difficulty. It discusses how 'calamities have been used by men to acquire colonies, subdue people, annex territories, secure power, infuse ideologies, transform religion, induce culture and instigate rebellion'. The colonial rule as well as the Christian missionaries used the famine and the subsequent food problem in Mizoramas a mean to subdue Mizos, to annex their territories into the British Indian Empire, and to convert Mizos into Christians.

One of the must read lists for scholars working on Mizo history is '*Mizo Chanchin'* by Liangkhaia (one of the first Mizo church leaders). The book provides valuable information on Mizo history – the origin, *Chhinlung* myth, different clans and sub – clans, the coming of the British, the British administrators and their work in theLushai hills. However, as he had come under missionary influence the writing reflects his attitude towards the colonial rule and the

Christian mission. He had readily accepted that the white men were superior as compared to Mizos.

1.4.2. Rationale of the Study

Judging from the existing literature it appears that there are numerous gaps on the topic that can be filled up by conducting a research. The gaps include – knowledge about pre-colonial Mizo food culture, missionaries and their contribution towards the changing food habits, skill acquired by indigenous Mizo cooks employed by missionaries and colonial officials, the relation between food and various aspects of Mizo culture and society etc. Academic discussion about these are non-existent till today. Hence, the research is taken up to fill these gaps and to open up new avenues for future research.

1.5.1 Area of Study

The study will mainly focus on the history of Mizo food and the various issues that come up with Mizo food culture covering the pre-colonial and colonial period.

1.5.2 Objectives

The objectives of the study are –

1. To study pre-colonial Mizo food culture.
2. To investigate the relationship between 'new food' and traditional Mizo food.
3. To find out the impact of colonialism on Mizo society and food culture.
4. To investigate how far food culture has shaped Mizo identity and gender issue.

1.5.3 Methodology

The methodology adopted for the current study utilized both qualitative and content analysis method. The data includes both primary and secondary sources. The primary source consists of both published and unpublished official documents, loose documents from concerned persons, newspaper, etc. Oral tradition based on open and closed-ended interview was carried

out and such interviews have been subjected to meticulous analyses. The secondary source comprises of published and unpublished literature of books, journals and articles. Crosschecking for validation of my research is done to a possible extent.

The thesis is also based on ethnographic fieldwork method carried out in Mizoram during which the scholar had met and interviewed people related to British Christian missionaries or whose ancestors were close acquaintances of the colonial administrators and missionaries. Structured as well as unstructured interviews were found to be fruitful in a number of different aspects. The study was focused on the whole of Mizoram and no case study was taken up with the hope that a more general picture comes to light. Much of the research work was carried out on the basis of informal interviews, discussions and observations.

1.5.4 Structure of the Study

The thesis is divided into the following chapters:

1. **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

   The first chapter consists of five sections. The first section gives an outline introduction of the physical features of the Lushai hills and deals with its historical background. The second section discusses the establishment of British rule in the Lushai hills and an attempt is given to concepts which are deemed relevant for the study. The third section deals with the statement of the problem. The fourth section is devoted to a review of existing literature and rationale of the study and the last section put forward the entire structure of the thesis.

2. **Chapter 2 – Food Culture in Pre-Colonial Lushai Hills**

   The second chapter covers various aspects of food in pre-colonial Lushai hills ranging from Mizo food items and production, preparation, consumption to various issues related with food – food and religion, food and courtship, food symbolism and metaphors, and their significance.

3. **Chapter 3 – Food Culture in Colonial Lushai hills**

   Chapter three of the thesis discusses the introduction of new food item and food practices by the colonial officials and the Christian missionaries and Mizo response to the new foods.

4. **Chapter 4 – Impact of Colonialism on Mizo Food Culture**

   The fourth chapter studies the various impact of Colonial rule on Mizo food culture and habits – change in method of preparation where stress was laid on cleanliness, change in pattern of eating, concept of health, new dichotomy of high and low status food, and Mizo exposure to wider world through food.

5. **Chapter 5 – Colonialism, Identity and Gender in the Lushai Hills**

   The fifth chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the question of Mizo identity during colonial regime in the Lushai hills, how identities were created through food practices. The second section gives an in depth study of the relationship between food and gender in Mizo society while examining the manifestation of gender on various food habits of the Mizos.

6. **Chapter 6 - Conclusion**

   This chapter summarizes the findings of the thesis.

CHAPTER – 2

FOOD CULTURE IN PRE-COLONIAL LUSHAI HILLS

Up to the present century all Mizo villages were built on safe mountain ridges and enclosed within strong stockades and their number was small. Thus, they were usually far apart with wretchedly rough paths in between. Each village was self-contained, self-governing and had to be self-sufficient. Its territory extended over a wide area. Within this the village would choose a fresh hillside every year for cultivation. This would be divided out between all the families and ideally the same hillside would not be cultivated for another ten or fifteen years. The surrounding territory would be exhausted before then and that meant the whole village needed to move to another site. This was the semi-nomadic life to which the Mizos were accustomed and very well adapted. This autonomous village system generally worked well and ensured the limited needs of Mizo community.[100]

For most of the societies of the hill areas like the Khasi-Jaintia and Garo societies, the societies of the various Naga tribes, the tribes of Mizoram and the numerous tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, there is always a problem of reliable historical evidence for a greater part of their past because these societies have a long pre-literate past. Therefore, for such societies historians would have to be very innovative in interpreting oral sources and making careful use of ethnography and anthropological studies in order to reconstruct the phases of social and economic developments in those societies.[101] As a result of paucity of primary sources for reconstructing pre-colonial history of food, therefore, one has to take recourse to indigenous, colonial and missionary ethnographic account and oral history to study Mizo food in pre-colonial period.

Mizoswere economically independent in pre-colonial period. They could obtain what they needed from their rich forests. Laying in the Tropic of Cancer region the land was blessed with fauna and flora. The inhabitants gathered more than what they needed from forest resources. Owing to this their food culture covered wide ranges of varieties from mushrooms, shoots, berries, wild plants, vegetable leaves of different kind, vegetables, worms and meats

[100] J. Meirion Llyod, *History of the Church in Mizoram (Harvest in the Hills*), Aizawl, Mizoram, Synod Publication Board, 1991, p. 3.
[101] Manorama Sharma, *History and History Writing in North East India* (2nd Edition), New Delhi, Regency Publications, 2006, p.84.

which many culture are not acquainted with. Some of these served medicinal purposes for pre-colonial Mizos. It is remarkable to note here that some of these like arum worms, spiders (*Tangtial*) andlarvae of bee (*khuaino)*were their delicacies.

There is no clear primary evidence to food culture followed by the Mizos in pre-colonial period. The available sources are mostly secondary source and while interviews proved extremely significant in understanding what Mizo ancestors ate, why they ate what they ate, what were considered as prestigious food before the coming of the British. In the meantime, colonial ethnographies and missionary accounts are also used on a large scale as they were the first to encounter the hills with its people. A.G. McCall and other writers (colonial and indigenous) have mentioned in their works food and the palate of the Mizos in brief. The colonial writings are used to analyse and interpret food in pre-colonial period as there had been no written work on the topic before colonial intervention.

Pre-colonial Mizo food could also be studied mostly on the basis of their economy.Mizo writers have left some imprints on the economic history of Mizos before the advent of the British. Colonial writers like A.G. McCall had also thrown some light on the economy of Mizo by commenting that money was naturally very rare, the village economy being based on domestication of animals and crops and the number of family members. While kinship was strong, individual proprietorship was definite, though each would help the others without thought for any repayment beyond help at some future time, when, perhaps, the donor himself might upon evil days.[102]

2.1.1 Mizo Conceptualization of Food

Like other South Asian and East Asian people, in Mizo culture, rice plays an important role. They were and still are agriculturists. It is their staple food and other foods (vegetables, green leaves, milk, fruits etc.) are always described simply as 'accompaniments' to it. Although it is a staple, rice is nota total food, and the missing elements have to be added to the diet. It would not be wrong to state that the appetite of the Mizos cannot be met or satiated until and unless rice is served. This unique characteristic or attitude of the people distinguish them

[102]McCall,p.98.

from others and give them distinctive identity. J. Shakespear (the first Superintendent of the Lushai Hills District) also remarked,

> "The Lushai when speaking of food always means rice. Though he is fond of meat and likes vegetables and seasonings, he only considers them as a garnish to his rice. When a *mithan* is killed to feast the village, the flesh is boiled in earthen pots in the street and the contents emptied out on to plaintain leaves, where the feasters help themselves with their fingers, washing down the savoury morsels with the water in which they have been boiled, but this banquet in no way takes the place of the regular meal of rice".[103]

2.2.1 Major food items

In this section it is attempted to classify Mizo major food items into 6 groups - Grains, Vegetables and Leafy Vegetables, Meat, Fish and Seafood, Fruits and Seasonings. There might be a slight difference from what Mizos ate in pre-colonial period but for the absence of archaeological and written evidence, oral sources and secondary sources are mostly used in the classification.

I. Grains/Cereals

1. Rice

Rice is a member of the grass family (*Gramineae*) and belongs to the genus Oryza under tribe Oryzeae. The genus Oryza includes 20 wild species and 2 cultivated species (cultigens). The wild species are widely distributed in the humid tropics and subtropics of Africa, Asia, Central and South America, and Australia. Of the two cultivated species, African rice is confined to West Africa, whereas common or Asian rice (O. sativa L.) is now commercially grown in 112 countries, covering all continents.[104] Rice is the dominant staple of many Asian countries particularly South East Asia. It adapts to different ecological niches, and creates new niches. The most basic contrasts in rice is the distinction between dry and wet - rice

[103] J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, London, Stamford StreetRichard Clay and Sons limited., Aizawl, TRI, 2008, pg. 36.
[104] Kenneth F Kipple & Kriemhild Conee Ornelas (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food*, Volume-1, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 133.

cultivation, and in the mainland, between those grow and eat glutinous or sticky rice and those who prefer the non-glutinous varieties[105]. In Mizo economic, social and cultural lives rice occupied the most dominant status. The non - glutinous rice was cultivated and consumed by all as 'food' while the glutinous rice was brewed for the making of 'rice beer' and was pounded to form rice powder for the popular snacks '*Chhangban*' (sticky rice flour wrapped in plaintain leaf, it may vary in size).

According to *Sangkima*, 'till the advent of the British the entire population was agriculturists. The staple food of the people was rice and everybody earned his livelihood by cultivating paddy. Traditions indicate that paddy was grown or cultivated only when they came to a settlement at *Lentlang* or the present Chin hills of Burma. Until they came down in the Lushai Hills maize, millet and arum bulbs were the main food of the Mizos. Besides paddy, maize, millet, yams, arum bulbs, sweet potatoes etc. were also grown. Tribute payable to the traditional Mizo chief was also paid in terms of rice'.[106]

Lalrimawia also argues that rice was the staple food of the Mizos. It was taken along with boiled meat and vegetables. Tuberous roots, berries, shoots and fruits of the jungle, chillies etc. were also taken with boiled rice. Three meals were normally taken. The Mizos ate almost any kind of flesh or wild animals and birds. Salt was in use from an early date.[107] As mentioned earlier in normal year rice was the main food of the Mizos. But in bad years like bad harvest and famines they had to depend and satiate on other food items like arum, pumpkin and its leave, millet, corn and sweet potatoes. Traditionally rice was stored in threshed bins for daily consumption, it was cleaned by separating the husk by pounding.

The prominent place of rice in Mizo diet is also depicted by its usage as snacks / *hmawmsawm*. Snacks which are one of the most commercialized food items today may be defined as a small quantity of food eaten between meals or in place of a meal. The pre-colonial Mizoshad their own snacks which was locally called '*hmawmsawm*'. Mizo cultural history holds that they had indulged in the snack and the most prominent of which was '*Chhangban*' (sticky rice flour wrapped in plaintain leaf, it may vary in size). Unlike modern packaged and processed snack foods Mizos snacks were prepared locally by every Mizo household. Though the process was quite complicated every Mizo woman was supposed to

[105] Penny Van Esterik*, Food Culture in South East Asia*, Greenwood Press, 2008, p. xvii.
[106] Sangkima, *Mizo Society and Social Change (1890-1947)*, Guwahati, Spectrum Publications, p. 48.
[107] Lalrimawia, p. 21.

know the processing and preparation of this particular snack. Besides *Chhangban*other snacks mostly consisted of wild fruits. There seem to have been no mentionable sweet food like sugar or jaggery in pre- colonial period though sugar cane plant was found in the hills.

Rice, being the staple still occupied dominant place as snacks. The left overs were consumed between meal times by children as snacks without any other dish. They would just take a chunk of the boiled rice (*Chawtlang*) as much as their hand could hold and would go out to the village streets and ate the '*Chawtlang*' as snacks. It was the best snacks a Mizo kid could ever ask for.[108]

2. Maize

Maize, a member of the grass family Poaceae (synonym Gaminaea) is one of the most important human dietary cereal grains and the second most abundant cultivated cereal worldwide. Maize was introduced across temperate Europe and in Asia and Africa during the 16th century and 17th century.[109] Although the economy of early Mizoswas simple, it was the mainstay of the people. Before paddy was cultivated Mizos used maize, millet, gums, arum-bulbs, sweet potatoes etc. as their staple food.[110] Maize known locally as *'Mim'/ 'Vaimim'* constituted a vital food in pre-colonial period. Shakespear had also commented on the importance of maize in Mizo diet as 'Next to rice, maize was considered the most important staple. It was eaten boiled, never being ground into flour'.[111]

3. Millet

Millet, known locally as *'Buh tun'* was one of the important cereals consumed by Mizos. This small seeded grass was used by Mizos in pre-colonial period and most of the sources have mentioned its usage as a 'substitute to rice' in times of scarcity. It is interesting to note here that Mizo women were the one to collect and process the food by soaking, cooking and drying.

Among the grains rice assumed prominent place. J.M. Lloyd, a Welsh Missionary, discussed the importance of rice in Mizo diet –

[108]Chhuanliana BVT, interviewed by Lalrofeli, Behlehem Vengthlang, 2019.
[109] Kipple and Ornelas (eds.), p. 97
[110] V.L. Siama, p. 10
[111] Shakespear, p. 39

> "two plants grew in the Mizo hills which made life possible. One was rice and the other was bamboo. Rice was much more important than any single kind of food was to the Welsh. They used the same word for cooked rice as for food. A rich man was called *'hausa'* - this meant that he had more rice than enough for one year. They mostly hoarded for years ahead. If they had rice with salt that was a meal. But if there was a little meat or fish or egg with it they enjoyed it more".[112]

Though this record was made towards the end of colonial rule it sends a message that rice had always occupied predominant place in Mizo diet.

II. Vegetables

Vegetable of different kinds -tubers, seeds and leaves, were procured from jhum, *leipui* (sort of jhum land but smaller than jhums and usually near to the village), wild forests and garden. Because of the geographical location in the tropical area, Mizos were blessed with numerous vegetables both cultivated and wild. J. H. Lorrain listed out the trees and fruits that they had encountered on their journey to the 'Lushai hills' on 9th May, 1984 as 'plum, breadfruit, bananas, mangoes, lemons, coconut, palms, sugar-cane, guavas, bamboos, castor oil plants, nukvomica – creepers with berries red, white and black. In cultivated patches near villages – chillies, mustard, potatoes and radishes of gigantic size, some as much as 2 feet long and several inches thick'.[113] To believe the record made by the pioneer missionary on the cultivated and grown plants and vegetables on the Lushai hills is extremely difficult as the record goes against oral testimonies and colonial official record. For instance, potato was not grown by Mizos before the coming of the British. On the basis of all the available sources the most common vegetables grown and consumed by Mizosmay be classified as domesticated and wild.

The domesticated/cultivated vegetables consumed by Mizos included pumpkin, pumpkin leaves, mustard leaves, cow pea and its leaves, pigeon pea,ginger, soybean, butter bean, among tubers – taro and yam, bitter gourd, snake gourd, brinjal, chilli pepper, bitter tomato, elsholtzia *(Lengser)* and parsley.[114]

[112] J.M. Lloyd's Documents, ATC Archives, Aizawl.
[113] J.H. Lorrain's *Log Book*, ATC Archives, p. 33.
[114] James Dokhuma*, Zokhaw Nun*, Aizawl, James Dokhuma (J.D. Press), 1998, p. 21.

The wild vegetables included Indian Ivy rue, Aralia Foliosa *(chimchawk*), different variety of edible calamus erectus *(hruizik),* bamboo shoot, stinky bean, East Indian glory bower leaves, the tube of wild cardamom , climbing wattle, dysoxylum excelsum *(thingthupui)* etc.[115]

Considering the above lists, it is clear that Mizos consumed a variety of vegetables. Pu Buanga (J.H. Lorrain) Dictionary contains a list of vegetables consumed and used by Mizos as food item. The abundant prevalence of vegetables was one of the blessings of the hills. Since many of these vegetables were wild ones how to identify edible ones from toxicated was one challenging task. Mizos also consumed numerous mushrooms most of which were gathered from wild forests. The identification of edible mushroom from the toxicated ones required great skill and knowledge.

Shakespear made a note on the vegetables used by Mizos in the *Lushei – Kuki Clans*. Besides the grains and herbs which he grew in the jhums, the Lushai found many edible roots and herbs in the jungle. The young shoots of the bamboos were by no means unpleasant eating, and a salad of these of the sago palm was quite a luxury, while the pith of the latter was eaten in times of scarcity.[116] As mentioned earlier in normal year rice was the main food of the Mizos. But in bad years like bad harvest and famines they had to depend on other food items like arum, pumpkin and its leave, millet, corn and sweet potatoes. Wild food from the forest, including wild ferns like *Chakawk* (edible fern), bamboo shoots, and roots and mushrooms provided food not only in times of food shortages but also in normal times. Those wild foods added unique tastes and provided nutrients not always available in cultivable plants.

III. Meat

Domestic animals like pigs, chicken, goats, mithuns, dogs etc. played a very important part in the economic life of the Mizos. In addition to being important items of sacrifices in rituals relating to birth, marriage, death, sickness, festivals and healing ceremonies, they were also extensively used as important sources of food and protein.[117]The early Mizos also hunted animals for food and other purposes. Birds were also killed for their meat. Meat was the

[115]Dokhuma, *Zokhaw Nun*, p. 21.
[116] Shakespear, p. 36.
[117] Sangkima, p. 48.

favourite food of the Mizos.[118] Meat, however, according to McCall never played a large part in the diet of the Mizos.[119]

Shakespear had observedMizo food items and method of preparation. According to him, 'flesh of all animal was eaten, and was not objected to even when considerably decomposed. The flesh of leopard and tigers was only eaten by children. Rats of the white bellied variety were considered a luxury. Dogs, especially puppies, are a favourite dish'.[120]

The Mizo culture prior to the British domination of the Lushai hills which began in 1890, was what some anthropologists would call non-literate culture because the people had not developed writing.[121] There is some axioms regarding the eating of dog meat. According to popular oral tradition, theMizos claimed that they were once given a written language by God as other races were given and it was a parchment. But they were not keeping it carefully and a dog ate it up. They were, thus, deprived of a written language. Oral testimonies testify that some Mizos regarded this incident the reason for eating dog meat by the Mizos.[122]

When theLushai Expeditionary force was sent in 1871 the domesticated animals for the purpose of diet was described and observed by R.G. Woodhorpe which include *metua* (a very handsome animal of the bovine race with fine horns), the goat, pigs which were fattened upto great size, and fowls. He also described the domestication of dogs in some villages they had occupied.[123]

When a large animal had been killed at a distance from the village the flesh was cut into strips and dried over a slow fire, after which it remains edible, according to Lushaiideas, for a very long time. Boiling was the only culinary art known'.[124]Sangkima is of the opinion that in pre-colonial Mizo food culture, meat was the favourite food of theMizos and contended that Mizos were fond of fresh meat and trapped every kind of animalfor consumption.[125]

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[118]Lalrimawia, *"Economy of the Mizos (1840 – 1947"Studies in the History of North East India*, History Association Publication, 1986, p. 166 as cited in Sangkima, pp. 48-49.
[119]McCall, p.186.
[120] Shakespear, p. 36.
[121] R.B. Taylor, *Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, as cited in C.L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, p. 23.
[122] Hminga, p. 23.
[123]Woodhorpe, p. 87
[124] Shakespear, p.36.
[125] Sangkima, p. 49.

The domestic animals like pigs, goats, fowls, dogs, mithun, etc. occupied an important place in the economy of the Mizo society. They served as food and medium of exchange. Before the introduction of money, everything including brides' price was paid in kind. The domestic animals were commonly used for sacrificial purposes. The most valued animal was the mithun. In most cases, the wealth and prosperity of a man was considered by the number of mithun he kept. Dogs were eaten freely but their chief value was derived from the demand for sacrificial purposes. Every family reared chicken and pig which they used to kill whenever they like. Formerly, pig oil was used by for preparation of other items of meal.[126]

The main sources of meat included domesticated animals, wild animals and fishes, crabs, snails, tadpoles, etc. Fishing was done with what they called *ngawi m*ade of bamboo barricade in running water. They also caught fish by poisoning the stream with the fruit of a tree called *ru.* Other poison used were the the root of a plant called *rulei,* and the bark of a certain creepers called *khang.*[127]

The protuberant place occupied by meat in Mizo hearts was no wonder. Most family could only kill a pig within one year. Pig was the most common animal used for rituals and sacrifices, in those sacrifices women were not allowed to consume the sacrificial meat. The occasion for the consumption of meat was thus very rare. This must be the case why Mizos conceptualized meat as good food as most were deprived of it and the cravings for meat set their habit of consuming meat as much as possible when they got the opportunity.

IV. Seasonings

Herbs and spices have been added to foods throughout history for preservation and flavor. Although they are plentiful and inexpensive today, herbs, spices and other flavorings were considered as valuable items as gold or jewels for many countries. Quests for them helped shape human history, influencing explorations for the New World in the 15th century and also leading to the establishment of trade routes between Europe, Asia and Africa.[128]

One of the best descriptions of Mizo food is that it is 'unsophisticated'. It is unrivalled in its simplicity. Before the establishment of British rule in the Lushai hills the food was much

[126]*Mizo Women Today*, Mizoram TRI, Art &Culture Department, 1991, p. 10.
[127]*Mizo Women Today*, p. 10.
[128] Dole Foods (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Foods – A Guide to Healthy Nutrition*, Academic Press, 2002, p.363.

simpler and did not have much seasonings and taste enhancer. All of their taste enhancers – plants, salts, and fermented ones were produced locally. Plants possess a wealth of different chemical ingredients, ranging from substances with simple structures to very complicated ones, such as terpene or benzoic derivatives. Some are poisonous, others are important raw materials in biochemistry and medicines, while still others are responsible for the appetizing odors we identify with certain food. Although the majority of spices are derived from plants, the most important of all is a mineral - salt. Salt has been mined for culinary use (and perhaps, more importantly, as a food preservative) for more than 2,500 years, as well as secured at the sea side by the evaporation of sea water.[129]

The pre – colonial Mizo flavors were accomplished by blends of spices and herbs which were locally available. Plants and vegetables like parsley, garlic, ginger, turmeric, chili pepper etc. were the prominent seasonings. Besides these locally grown herbs and spices the taste was enhanced by salt, *Saum* (fermented lard) and *Chingal* (distilled ash water).[130]

Salt was known to Mizos in pre-colonial times. Salt assumed the most prestigious status in the food habits of Mizos which is evident from the use of *"Chibai"* (Mizoword being used to greet and welcome one another). '*Chi'* is salt while '*bai*' is a Mizo dish where either vegetables or green leaves are boiled with salt. Pre-colonial Mizos faced scarcity of salt owing to their location and other geographical reasons. There were a number of inter-village or inter-clan dispute arising out of salt scarcity. There were very few salt springs from which they could procure salt for consumption. Being very hard to get salt was a precious item. Thus, only when a special guest came they put salt in the dish or '*chi-bai'* was prepared. In normal time, wood ash, particularly the ash of bamboo leaves, was used to add tastiness to the food.[131]

Chilli was one of the most prominent taste enhancer used in pre – colonial period. It is not possible to trace the time when Mizos started its cultivation. Chillies entered South East Asia only in the 16th centuries, brought from the New World by Portuguese traders as part of the Columbian Exchange. 'Chile' is the Aztec word for peppers and was in use 6000 years ago in Equador. Roasting and cooking intensifies the hotness of peppers, while soaking reduces

[129] Kenneth F. Kipple & Ornelas (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food Volume I,* p. 431.
[130] Chhuanliana BVT, interview, 2019.
[131] C. Rokhuma, interviewed by Lalrofeli,Mission Vengthlang, 2015.

their fiery heat.[132] Chillies may have been in great use in the food preparation as taste enhancer in pre-colonial period.

Another Mizo seasoning which is still in used is *Saum*(fermented lard). They cooked the fatty portions of the meat mostly the abdominal fat and put inside a dried and treated Chinese Calabash Gourd for about three to four days till it gets fermented and produced unique smell and taste. On occasion they added a spoonful of this to their dishes to enhance the taste and smell. Pre-colonialMizos used to extract the oil from pig fat andusually preserved it to be used later as additives in their dishes and as hair oil. They usually killed their pigs during winter[133]. Perhaps they found the weather suitable for preservation. From this instance it is evident that oil was used in traditional Mizo food preparation.

One of the most favourite items of Mizo meal was which continues to be so till today is '*Bai*'. In the preparation, a vegetable or leafyvegetable is boiled with salt, *chingal* (distilled wood ash) and Mizolard (*Saum*). Saum was found in every Mizo household.[134]*Chingal* was one of the most prominent Mizo seasonings. *Chingal* (distilled wood ash, lye or potash solution) is a strong alkaline solution, which is leached from wood-ash. It often took the place of soap and soda for washing purposes and was also greatly used by Mizos in pre – colonial to post independence period for cooking certain articles of food like *bai, bawl* etc.

V. Fruits

Mizos were fruit lovers though they were not provided with many of today's fruits. The required vitamins were supplied by fruits available in their land most of which were wild. There seem to have been no special method of fruit preparation like modern fruit salad. Fruits were eaten raw[135]. From oral sources the common fruits of Mizos in pre-colonial period may also be listed out as follow – Indian red pear, Red Mango, Berries (Snowpeak Raspberry, Himalayan Raspberry, Wild Raspberry), Myrica, Chinese Sumac, Elephant Apple, Bird Cherry, Burmese Grape, Snake Fruit, Silver Berry, Lemon, Gooseberry, Wild Mango, Tamarind, Red Barberry, Hog Plum, Fig, Dwarf Hygro, Monkey Fruit, Freshwater

[132]Esterik, p. 34.
[133] C. Rokhuma, interview, 2015.
[134]*Mizo Women Today*, TRI, Art & Culture Department, Mizoram, 1991, p. 10.
[135] Chhuanliana BVT interviewe, 2019.

Mangrove, Cyclamin Cherry, Indian Persimmon, Malabar Gulbel, Currant, Plum etc. [136]The interviewees(92 and 98 years) oral information testified that the above list of fruits was known to them during their childhood which may be taken to mean that these fruits were known to Mizos in pre-colonial period.

2.2.2 Food Production

Mizos adapted themselves to their natural environments. Like other communities, their economy, social institutions, beliefs and practices and in fact their whole subsistence pattern was an adaptation to their immediate environment and their culture could be best understood in terms of their intricately interrelated nature-man-spirit complex.[137] Before 1890, Mizos obtained their food from their jhum, forest and river. They thrived on agriculture and depended on slash and burn method. Due to this forest played an important role in their lives as a place where they could collect and gather food items. They lived as a part of ecosystem and exploited nature to meet their food demands and some of their food items were quite different for outsiders. Some of their collected food items from forest were nutritionally rich.

Even though pre-colonial Mizos produced most of their food items from their jhum lands they explored forests and rivers in the hills. They cultivated pumpkins, chillies, turmeric, cabbage, onions, brinjal, yams, cucumbers, creeper beans, ginger, arum, bamboo, maize, rice etc. All these various items were collectively available, but, individually they were not by any means always at hand. Energy giving foods were amply available, but protective foods were not sufficiently sought.[138] Both men and women worked really hard from dawn to dusk to produce food for the family. Everybody tried to earn their livelihood by cultivating the land and never wanted to be somebody's burden in terms of food production.

2.2.3 Method of Food Preparation

[136] C. Rokhumainterview, 2016, Lalkhumi, interviewed by Lalrofeli, Tuithiang Veng, Aizawl, 2017, and M. Dawngliana, interviewed by Lalrofeli, Mission Veng, 2015.
[137] Sarkar, Amitabha and Dasgupta, Samira, *Ethno – Ecology of Indian Tribes: Diversity in Cultural Adaptation,* Jaipur, Rawat Publications, 2000, p. 103.
[138] McCall, p. 187

Many recent archaeological studies explore the effects of diverse production and preparation strategies on foodways and culture. In terms of food preparation, it is necessary to examine the labour that goes into processing and cooking, including who cooks for whom as well as the technology of cooking (hearths, containers, kitchen etc.). Cooking vessels, for instance, may denote specific food preparation technique.[139]

Being a patriarchal society, in Mizo society food preparation or cooking at home was considered as the sole duty of women. They usually had three meals a day – a breakfast *(zing chaw)* first early in the morning, a lunch at noon (*chhun chaw*), and a heavy evening meal (*tlai chaw)* about nightfall. When they set out for their jhums or for journey they usually carried cooked rice wrapped up in plaintain leaves for their midday meal. Women were expected to cook food for the family and young girls were expected to know how to cook. This philosophy was followed by Mizos before and after the coming of the British.

Besides cooking women were the one to gather or to make cooking pots and utensils. Laithangpuia had written that most Mizo utensils were made of clay. Women would carry potter's clay which was then pounded and dried in the sun for some day. After the drying was enough they were beaten into shape to make earthen ware pots. The sundried earthen pots were then burned in a fire and they became ready for use.[140] All these were done by women folk. The contribution of women was enormous as they made clay pots not only for cooking but also for brewing rice beer. There were very few designs for the potter and the same pattern was followed year after year. The entire pottery work was done by hand. Earthenware cooking pots and bamboo spoons and tube completed the utensils used inside Mizo home.[141]

Woodhorpe discussed that Mizos had great skill in basket work and they had used bamboo on a large scale. Regarding the usefulness of bamboo for Mizos he argued that bamboo had rightly been called friend of the hill people. Commenting on Mizo spoon he said,

> "A very useful spoon, which serves a variety of purposes, is made from bamboo. A portion about a foot long is cut off above a joint, and the bamboo afterwards

[139]George Gumerman IV, Food and Complex Societies, *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory,* Vol. 4, No. 2 (Jun., 1997), Available from: Jstor, (accessed 16 July, 2014).

[140]Thanga, *Hman Lai Mizo Awmdan*, p. 85.
[141] Lalrimawia, p. 32.

cut, as is making a quill pen, a scoop with a long handle is made in two minutes".[142]

Foods were cooked in the hearth which was made of clay, enclosed by three stones which support the pot over the fire. Shakespear had written how Mizo hearth was made – 'the hearth was made of clay, in the centre of which three stones or pieces of iron were fixed, on which the cooking pot rested. The earth was kept in its place by three pieces of wood, that in front being a wide plank with the top carefully smoothed, which formed a favourite seat during cold weather. The earth was put in wet and was well kneaded, and eventually became as hard as brick'.[143]

Regarding their culinary skill, most food items – meats and vegetables were either boiled, smoked or eaten raw. They preserved oil by frying pork fat and stored them for cooking and for hair oil. The commoners' dishes were quite simple consisting of three main items boil *(tlak), sawh* (chutney) and *bai* (vegetables boiled with salt).[144]There might have been a slight difference in the commoners and chiefs / privileged (village priest, elders etc.) people's food as the latter used to receive portion of meat whenever an animal was killed either byhunting or trapping by any resident of a village.

In Mizo society food preparation usually took place in the household but on festive occasions it required the involvement of appointed specialists (*fatu)* which was mostly done by men. The rice was cooked in one pot and the vegetables were cooked separately. When the vegetables were of kinds which were supposed to clash when cooked together, each kind of vegetable were then cooked in a separate pot. A.G. McCall observed that no fat or grease of any kind but water was used for cooking by the Lakhers. He believed that the Lakhers (Maras) were certainly fed less well than the 'Lusheis' who cooked with oil or fat.

However, there are some evidences that proved that boiling was not the only culinary art known by Mizos. For instance, some Mizodish like *Sawh / Bawl* were prepared by either smoking or burning a particular vegetable (chillies, brinjal etc.) and mixed it with salt, chillies and sometimes with dried / smoked fish and fermented lard. It is obvious that Mizo, in pre - colonial times, knew the art of making chutney (*chawtani* -a typical Mizo rendering).

[142]Woodhorpe, p. 93.
[143] Shakespear, p. 24.
[144] Thanga, p. 122.

The preparation was done in the simplest way and the taste was as simple as it could get. R.G. Woodhorpe had depicted how Mizo prepared chicken when he got the opportunity of seeing 'Lushai' cooking operation performed on a fowl. 'Squatting before a huge wood fire, the bird was killed by cutting its head off, and giving a few hurried plucks to some of the largest feathers, then the body was flung into the midst of the flames. Snatch it out a second or two after, a few more feathers were plucked, and again it was thrown into flames. These alternate burning and plucking operations were continued for about six or seven minutes, when the singed and blackened little mess was carried off to be devoured'.[145]

Laithangpuia had argued that salt was one precious food item of the Mizos in pre-colonial Lushail hills. Mizos lacked salt for cooking as a result of which their cooking style or culinary art was bound to be simple. They hardly put salt in their boils or in the preparation of their chutneys. They drank the water of what was being boiled and saved salt for the time when meat was prepared. Before the *Vailen* (Lushai Expedition) Mizos were economically poor and subsequently they hardly consume meat. It was on specific occasion like sacrifices that families got the chance to eat meat of the sacrificial fowl. But there was exception regarding the families of good hunters who often ate the meat of wild animals, birds and fishes.[146]

Before 1930 Mizos hardly used oil in their culinary art on a regular basis. Most dishes were boiled, dried and smoked.[147] While killing pig and fowl they used fire instead of hot water to burn and clean the hairs.[148] Most of the primary (interviews) and secondary sources (colonial, ethnographic, missionary and indigenous writings) are very critical of pre-colonial Mizo food, of the way it was prepared as they all believed it was too simple. They might have been right if they wanted a more elaborate style of preparation. However, food experts conceived that primitive food was the best food, simplicity in the preparation without oils and spices - the method known to Mizos, prevented from different food and life style related diseases like diabetes.

The migratory nature of Mizos was found to be responsible for the simple culinary skill of Mizos as they had been deprived of enough time to think and develop their ingredients or their method of preparation. Their constant moves had had a great share in moulding their

[145]Woodhorpe, p. 191.
[146] Thanga, pp. 122-123.
[147] K.L. Khama Chhakchhuak, *Zofate Nunphung Danglam Zel leh An Hun Tawnte*, p. 70.
[148] K.L. Khama Chhakchhuak, p.70.

character, for when they had to carry all their worldly goods from their old to their new house every four or five years, it is not strange that they were disinclined to amass more than what was absolutely necessary and gradually contented with very little, and preferred ease and idleness to toiling in the hopes of being able to add to their worldly possessions.[149] Moreover, frequent inter-village and inter-clan wars did not allow them to develop their culinary skill. When their lives were at stake all the time, when they cared the most was security, such condition did not permit them to try out new recipes or new food.

Another important reason that was responsible for the slow development of Mizoculinary system lies in the social set up where women were subordinated. They had to fetch the wood and water, cook the food and do the greatest part of the weeding and harvesting; they also made all the clothing for the whole household from cotton grown in the jhums, which they themselves gathered, cleaned, spun, and woven into strong cloth.[150] In such situation, cooking/food preparation was the unquestioned task of Mizo women who were supposed to make home for the whole family and to also work alongside the menfolk in their jhum lands. As they were supposed to work from dawn to dusk they did not find time for the development of culinary method. For them, food preparation was no longer a passion, instead it becamean obligation as it added another number in their list of a must do.

Perhaps, Mizos were not inquisitive enough to experiment new recipe or to invent new dish. Comparing Mizo food preparation with tribes surrounding them it is evident that Mizo food culture is less developed. As a result of their geographical location the food items available to other tribes of North East India was also readily available to Mizos. However, Mizos fell short in the preparation. They did not make an effort to develop their culinary system and failed to invent new method. The same method of food preparation – simple boiling with or without salt was followed through many generations. Though they had fire, which is basic to cooking, they never seemed to improve their cooking style or ingredients.

2.2.4. Pattern of Eating

The consumption of food involves not only what is eaten, but the gathering and serving of the participants as well as the clearing away of the meal. As such, the participation and non – participation in a meal and the location of the event often affect the contents and help

[149] Shakespear, p. 23.
[150] Shakespear, p. 16.

establish and maintain social relations while imbuing the food and occasion with symbolic meaning.[151] The type of meal consumed (e.g. daily meals, snacks, and feasts) and its structure, manners and technology (containers, utensils, tables, etc.) also are critical in terms of understanding the relationship between food and culture.[152] In pre-colonial Lushai hills, food was shared by the family by using the same bowl known locally as *Chawthlengpui*. It is Mizo plate or common wooden plate in the Mizo society of the by - gone days. There could never be a distinction between the rich and the poor in meal eating style. They sat together and shared the food from the same wooden plate. Generally,*thlanvawng* (Gmelina arborea) was used for this plate. The size varied in accordance with the size of a family.[153] The food thus, shared from the same plate not only nourishes their bodies but it also strengthened their bond as family and friends, and so food was a medicine for the heart and soul.

Food sharing is highlighted by C.L. Hminga when he says 'As common to most non-literate societies Mizo children received their primary education at home. Boys learn their traits from their fathers and girls learn theirs from mothers. At meal time when the whole family would sit in a circle on the floor, eating food from a large common wooden plate, the father who is head of the family would give assignments of work to the family members and would speak words of advice or caution to his children.[154] Meal time was, thus, used by Mizos for counselling and guidance.

Eating food / dining in other people's houses without proper invitation were considered to be ill-mannerism particularly for girls and women. When they received invitation during community feast they usually pretended that they could not accept those kind of invitation or they showed that they did not like to eat by saying "*Ka chak lo ve, ka puar e*" (I have no appetite for food, I'm already full). If the inviter/ host really wanted them to savour,then he/ she would take the hands of the invitee and dragged him to his house. When he failed to drop them to his house the invitees would return.[155]Thus, in pre-colonial Lushai hills this kind of attitude was considered well - mannerism as far as food eating is concerned. Actually they

[151] Gunnerman IV.
[152] Goody.J., (1982) *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge as cited in Gunnerman IV. Available from:http://www.jstor.org/stable/20177360, (accessed 16 July 2014 01:48).
[153] *Mizo Thilhlui Thenkhat (Objects of Mizo Antiquity),* Aizawl, Mizoram, Tribal Research Institute Directorate of Art and Culture, 1993, J & J Press, p. 4.
[154] Hminga, p. 28.
[155] V.L. Siama, p. 25.

thought that this attitude was one way of showing their "*Tlawmngaihna*"[156] (self sacrifice, unselfishness etc.).[157] When they ate food the eldest took the first bite of rice, he/she then drank vegetable soup or broth, it was only after this was completed that others would join him/her in consuming the food. Those who failed to abide by these manners were considered *zaktheilo* (immodest, shameless and indecent).[158]

Among the Maras (then known as Lakhers) cold water was never drunk at meals, but the food was washed down with the water in which the vegetables had been cooked. When a family was having its meal the door was usually closed, and if a visitor came while people were at a meal it was etiquette for him to go away and return later, even if pressed to stay, as it was bad manners to interrupt people at their food. When a child wandered into a house while meal was in progress a little rice was put into his right hand and a little meat into his left and was sent away. It was considered by the Maras the height of stinginess and bad manners to send a child away from a meal without giving him something to eat. At the end of a meal anything left over was put back into the cooking pot for use in the next meal.[159]

They had unique custom towards eating certain meat like pork which is described by N.E. Parry as follow - 'before eating pork many Lakhers pinch off a little bit of meat and say a grace, "*Chanithaisa Chabawthaisa*" which means roughly, "I will eat as much of you as I can, I will swallow as much of you as I can." The bit of meat is then rubbed on the speaker's navel and thrown away, after which he does justice to the pork. It is said that no one who rubs his navel with a bit of meat before starting to eat ever suffers from the effects of over-eating'.[160]

2.2.5. Food Preservation

[156] Siama, p. 25.
[157] Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, Kolkata, The Asiatic Society, 2008, p. 513.
[158] Siama, p.25.
[159] Parry, p. 84.
[160] Parry, p. 85.

North Eastern region of India is a treasure of indigenous knowledge pertaining to agriculture, food, medicine, and natural resources management. People are habituated to live and survive with the forest jhum cultivation culture, which ensure a range of ethnic foods rich in nutrition and compatible to culture and ethnicity of tribes.[161] Since unknown times, rural women of this region have selected many wild plants and non-vegetarian foods through trial and error.[162]

Most of these indigenous materials were collected by women folk either from the forest areas, conserved in shifting land or indigenous kitchen gardens.[163]These ethnobotanical resources used in traditional foods are based on the location specific demand, culture, economy, ethnicity, food habit and overall needs.[164] Different fermented and non-fermented foods are used in various combinations with traditional vegetables to meet the food and nutritional security.[165]Mainly the different tribal women share these traditional foods at community level in various cultural occasions, which ensure the equitable availability and balanced nutrient supply to all the members of village.[166]

Pre-colonial Mizos knew the art of preserving pig fat by extracting the oil from pig fat and saved the extracted oil and used the fatty portion for their delicacy - *Saum* (fermented lard). They usually preserved the oil which they would later use as hair oil. Most of the time they preserved oil for the next year. They usually killed their pigs during winter.[167] Perhaps they found the weather suitable for preservation. From here it is evident that oil was used in traditional Mizo food preparation and was well preserved.

Food was also preserved by means of drying and smoking. Mizos consumed numerous dried and smoked foods that ranges from vegetables and meat to foods obtained from rivers. Mizo delicacies consisted of numerous dried and smoked food. The leaves of certain vegetables like roselle/gongura, cow pea, mustard, yam etc. were either dehydrated through the process

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[161] Dutta B K & Dutta P K, *Potential of ethnomedical studies in Northeast India: An overview*, Indian Traditional J Knowledge, 4 (1) (2005) 7-14 as cited in Singh, Singh and Sureja Cultural significance and diversities of ethnic foods of Northeast India, Indian J Traditional Knowledge, Vol.6(1), January 2007, p.79.
[162] A. Kar, *Common Wild vegetables of Aka tribe of Arunachal Pradesh*, In Singh, Singh and Sureja, p.79.
[163] R.K. Singh, *Conserving diversity and Culture – Pem Dolma*, Honey Bee, 15 (3), 2004, 12-13, p. 79.
[164] R.K. Singh,*Using Indigenous Varieties of Bamboo and Banana for the Sustainable Survival of Adi Tribe,* S.N. 484, India, http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ikdb/ik_results.cfm(2006) as cited in R.K. Singh, *Conserving Diversity and Culture*, p.79
[165] R.K. Singh,*Using diversified ethnic fruits for food security and sustainable livelihoods,* SN 475, India, available from http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ikdb/ikresults.cfm(2006) as cited in R.K. Singh.
[166] Singh, Using diversified ethnic fruits for food security and sustainable livelihoods, SN 475, India, available from http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/ikdb/ik results.cfm (2006) as cied in R.K. Singh.
[167] C. Rokhuma interview.

of sun drying or smoking for future use. These dried food items actually formed part of their delicacies. The art of fermenting was well known which is evident from the common usage of fermented soybean in their diet. Moreover, glutinous rice was also brewed and fermented for the manufacturing of rice beer. The art of food preservation was learned at home, demonstrated by mothers to their daughters which passed from generation to generation.

2.3.1 Role of Food and Drinks in Mizo Festivals and Feasts

Mizos celebrate three festivals following the rhythm of their agricultural season. Each village celebrated the three great annual festivals or feasts.These three festivals connected with the crops. *Zu* always figured largely in these events. This was rice beer of various degrees of potency. It is a popular drink throughout South East Asia, especially in the hills from Nepal to Vietnam, and the same word appears in many languages. The first of the three festivals was the *Chapchar Kut*. It was the most important festivals of the Mizos, and was held after the jhums were burnt, about the sowing time, and was never omitted. It lasted three or four days. On the first day a pig was killed by each householder who could afford it and *Zu* was drunk. On the second day, the whole population gathered in the open space in the village, dressed in their best attire. Everyone brought platters of rice, eggs and meat, and tried to force the food down the throats of their friends.[168] During this festival drinking, feasting and dancing continued. J.M. Lloyd, referring to this festival, said that the first missionaries often saw whole villages drunk for several days.[169]

The *Mim Kut* was held after the harvest of maize crop. It was held in honour of the dead and the first fruit of the crops were offered to them.

The third festival of the Mizos was *Pawl Kut*. This was held in December when the harvesting had been completed. Every family would try to get a little meat for the feast. They would usually shoot or snare a jungle bird. Failing that they would kill one of their hens. This serves to show how poor the average villagers were, and how meagre their fare. To feast to their hearts content was what everyone aimed at during *Pawl Kut*, and there would be *Zu* in

[168] Shakespear, p. 87.
[169] J.M. Llyod, *On Every High Hill*, p. 20 as cited in C.L. Hminga, *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*, p. 35.

abundance. At other times *Zu* – drinking [170] would be controlled by the chief and his elders. (*Zu* was his own special prerogative and since every villager at the time of harvest had to give him 30 kilos of rice the chief was never short of *Zu*).[171]Eventhough *Zu* was in abundance during the celebration of these festivals the young men and women hardly got drunk. It was considered shameful for young people to get drunk and they always tried to carry their drink properly.[172] Pre-colonial Mizos had a custom, *Tlangchil*, as per which the villagers would punish a man who behaved badly in the *Zawlbuk* or was unable to carry his drink properly and made a nuisance of himself in the drinking place or who made himself generally unpopular in any other way. The young men would wait for their chance till they could meet the man to be dealt with in the *Zawlbuk*, they put the fire out so that it was impossible for him to see who attacked him and then seized him and beat and kicked him and finally probably pulled down his house.[173]The pre-colonial Mizos, hence, had good custom to maintain peace in their villages. *Zu* drinking was never a problem for them as N.E. Parry had written "Lushais were gentlemanly drinkers".

No doubt these festivals gave release to a people whose lives were generally harsh and monotonous, yet the results of drinking *Zu* as they had seen them in their pre – Christian days caused a deep and instinctive revulsion among Christians and, as the Church began to grow, they insisted on total abstinence among the converts. But it must have been very hard on Christians at first. There was no milk at all in an average village, and even water was scarce. It was providential that tea was beginning to be easily available in the Lushai hills at the time when the Gospel arrived. Needless to say tea came from the very area where the Mizos had once plundered. Tea replaced the rice beer. D.E. Jones, whose father had once destined his son for the flourishing tea – business which their family owned in Liverpool, made sure that tea came up regularly from the Plains. In his autobiography, he mentioned his friends Chalmers, a man who had had a sudden and remarkable conversion. Chalmers owned the tea-estate of Katlicherra very near Alexandrapur where Winchester had died. He used to send a chest of tea to every missionary in the locality and a separate chest of tea to be distributed among the Mizos before Christmas.[174]

[170] Lloyd, p.11.
[171] Lloyd, p. 12.
[172] Lalengzauva, Interviewed by Lalrofeli, Chhinga Veng, Aizawl. 2016.
[173] Shakespear, p. 17.
[174] Shakespear, p. 13.

Feasting was part and parcel in their lives. It was often used either to enhance or to establish social relations. Feasting had two principal characteristics – the communal consumption of food (including drink) - usually of foods that are different from everyday practice, and the social component of display - usually of success, social status of power. Hayden sees feasts primarily as displays of biological or ecological success and as the principal context for investigating surpluses and the consumption of luxury foods. He argues that we should regard the intensification of food procurement as a process driven by the status quest, which resulted, perhaps most significantly, in the transition to farming. Dietler meanwhile emphasizes the political role and ritual nature of many feasts.[175] He categorizes feasts into four types – Celebratory feasts, entrepreneur or empowering feasts, patron - role feasts and diacritical feasts.[176] Based on this categorization of feasts, what pre-colonial Mizos had as their feasts falls to the first two categories - celebratory and empowering feasts.

In *Khuangchawi* and *Chawngchen* feasts the main intention of the host was to reinforce existing social bonds. And it did not include a competitive aspect, instead these feasts *(Khuangchawi* and *Chawngchen*) were larger community feasts in traditional Mizo societies with little emphasis on equality but to celebrate the achievements of some well-to-do Mizos. Here, it is worth mentioning that in *Khuangchawi* the main object was to help the performer on the road to *pialral* or paradise. People who could perform *Khuangchawi* were distinguished from others. By organizing the community feast the host raised his standing and his prestige thereby empowering himself amongst fellow villagers. After the performance of *Khuangchawi* he was distinguished outwardly by wearing striped cloths, turbans and the King Crow's feathers in his headdress. He was also allowed to have windows in his house.[177]

2.3.2. Food and Mizo Hospitality

Mizos were known to be very hospitable folks, as has been recorded by many non-Mizo people in diaries, books and oral histories. They were taught that when company/ stranger

[175] B. Hayden, *Fabulous Feasts*, New York Russel sage foundation, pp.23-64 & Dietler, Feasts and Commmensal politics in the Political Economy: Food, Power and Status in Prehistoric Europe, in *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary* Perspectives (eds P. Wiessner and W. Schiefenhovel), Provodence, RI: Berghnan, pp. 87 – 125, as cited in Veen, Marijke van der, '*When is Food a Luxury'*, World Archaeology, Vol.34, No.3, Luxury Foods (Feb., 2003), pp.405-427. Available from:http://www.j.stor.org/stable/3560194, (accessed 16 July 2014)
[176] B. Hayden, *Fabulous Feasts,* p. 411
[177] Shakespear, p. 94.

came to their home it was compulsory for them to offer them something to eat or drink immediately if one did not partake of what was offered she/he offended the hosts. William Williams and his party (when coming to the Lushai hills) said they had a very happy two hours with Mizo boys who they met for the first time on 15th March 1891 and used every Mizo word they knew. They boys exchanged yams and bananas for salt and tobacco.[178] Food had something to do with morality and hospitality in pre-colonial Mizo society. 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.[179]

According to custom all travellers in the hills were entitled to food and lodging free for a night. Some people churlishly refuse to give the hospitality required by custom but any one who follows the rules of *Tlawmngaihna* (self sacrifice)would never refuse hospitality to a stranger and the more strangers a man put up the more *Tlawmngaihna* he was held to possess.[180] However, it would be wrong to generalize that pre-colonial Mizos were all hospitable to strangers. This is evident from a due called '*Chawman*' which was paid by a man who had been lodged and boarded in another man's house when he left the house of the man who had been supporting him. Many people supported orphans and others in their houses and when the person whom they had been supporting left their house, they were entitled to claim a sum of Rs. 40 or *Chawman* to cover the expenses incurred in boarding and lodging charges. This due of Rs. 40 could not be claimed when the lodger was turned out by the householder and did not leave on his own free will.[181]

"*Chawkhawn*' or asking rice from different household was common if not popular in pre – colonial Mizo society. When a stranger travelled to village other than his own he was sometimes put into difficult situation and could not be provided with rice by the villagers. He had to ask for food from one house to another. Judging from the '*Chawkhawn*' practice the hospitality of pre-colonial Mizo society was quite unsatisfactory though they claimed themselves to be hospitable folks. However, it should be kept in mind that economic problem might have led to such situation to aggravation.

[178] *Report of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram*, p. 20.
[179] C.L. Hminga, p. 30.
[180] Parry, p. 20.
[181] Parry, p. 60.

2.3.4 Food and Migration

The movement ofMizos from Shan state to present Mizoram was the outcome of inter tribal feud and raids over the search for fertile land. The Luseis, as a group, became powerful force against smaller groups. Their formidable position was said to be partly due to their having a daring leader, Darkawlchhuna. However, the Pawis were considered to be better warriors in the sense that they could carry many days' supply of ration without hindering their movement in the jungles. This was possible because the Pawis were able to sustain themselves with simple food like yam and cereals other than rice which were easy to carry so that they could sustain long journey in the warpath. In this fashion, the Pawis became the dreaded enemy of the Luseis.[182]Since Mizos needed vast area to continue their agriculture each year they were forced to leave their earlier home and move towards present Mizoram. Thus, like some culture and civilization Mizos migrated to meet their food or physiological needs.

Their nomadic lifestyle seemed to have consequences in their food habits. The preparation of certain food items differs from one group to another. Those group who first migrated seemed to adopt cooking method different from those who migrated later. For instance, '*Hmar bai' (Bai of the Hmar clan*), which is known for its hot flavour, have different taste from the '*Mara bai'* who do not use distilled ash in their *bai*.

2.3.5 Food Symbolism and Metaphors

Cultural anthropologists have a long tradition of studying the social and symbolic roles of food. Early researches focused on food taboos and sacrifices, often emphasizing the religious aspects of food.[183]This interest later turned to the functional aspects of food, particularly the value of food in developing and maintaining social relations. Radcliffe Brown viewed food as a means of regulating the social system. He focused on rituals involving food, stressing the social function rather than the religious event. Although interested in nutrition, Audrey Richards (also emphasized the functional aspects of food by exploring how food expresses

[182] C. Nunthara, *Mizoram Society and Polity*, New Delhi, Indus Publishing Company, p. 41.

[183]James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1935 and E.W. Smith and A.M. Dale, *The Ila Speaking People of Northern Rhodhesia,* Vol. 2, London, Macmillan, 1920 as cited in George Gunmerman IV, 'Food and Complex Societies', *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, Vol.4, No. 2 (Jun., 1997), pp.105-139. Available from:http://www.jstor.org/stable/20177360, (accessed 16 July 2014).

and symbolizes social relationships: "The whole social organization is held together very largely by the strength of these nutritive ties, and if we divorce the economic activities of food-getting from the study of man's physiological needs and appetites, we shall fail to understand the nature of society itself".[184]

Food is intrinsically social. Indeed, social relations are defined and maintained through food. As Ross points out, "Variation in what people eat reflects substantive variation in status and power and characterizes societies that are internally stratified into rich and poor, sick and healthy, developed and underdeveloped, overfed and under-nourish".[185]In pre- colonial Mizosociety food had its own social symbolism. This is evident from the phrase "*Sadawt fatlum ang mai*". In traditional Mizo society the *Sadawt* served religious service for the whole village as a village priest and used to receive remuneration for his performance of sacrifices and ritual. In lieu of his service he used to receive some portion of the deceased/hunted animal in the village as his remuneration. He and his kin, thus, had the good share of meat. In Mizosociety the phrase had been used to denote a fat / healthy looking person. From the message bears by the phrase, it may be said that traditional Mizo society was not equal as far as food is concerned.

Community feast which was part and parcel in the lives ofMizos show the inequality in pre-colonial Mizosociety. '*Sa vei chawi'* was one type of community feast by which all the participants would come and sit together when the food was cooked. The cooks (*fatuho*) then distributed the meat with winnowing plate (*thlangra or fawng*) and kept it (the meat) on the left side of each man, giving the best part of the meat to some prominent person while the least prominent people were sometimes deprived of their share of meat and left out of the distribution. The phrase "*Tu pa sa vei chang lo sawi emaw a nih dawn chu*" has been used to mean those saying which are not worthy to be believed.[186] The food of the commoners and the well to do people was also a mark of social inequality in pre-colonial period. The commoners had boils – with or without salt and simple chutney (*sawh*) as their side dish.

[184]A.I. Richards, *Hunger and Work in a Savage Tribe: A FunctionalStudy of Nutrition Among the Southern Bantu, London, G. Routledge & Sons,* 1932, as cited in George Gunmerman IV, *'Food and Complex Societies'*, Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory, Vol.4, No. 2 (Jun., 1997), pp.105-139. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20177360,(accessed 16 July 2014).
[185] E.B. Ross, *An Overview of Trends in Dietary Variation from Hunter – Gatherer to Modern Capital Societies* in Harris, M. and Ross, E.B. (eds.) Food and Evolution: Toward a theory of Human Food Habits, Philadelphia Temple University Press, p. 7 – 55 as cited in Gunnerman, '*Food and Complex Societies',* (accessed 16 July 2014) p. 106.
[186] Thanga, pp. 142 – 143.

All cultures have prestige foods, which are mainly reserved for important occasions or even more, for the illustration of wealth and being cultured. One study suggests that, even in vegetarian societies, these are usually protein, frequently of animal origin. They are usually difficult to obtain, so that they are expensive and relatively rare.[187] For pre- colonial Mizos meat and salt were prestige food as it was difficult for commoners to include these in their daily diet.

In pre-colonial period, food symbolizes parents' love and care to their children. The Mizos occasionally faced food shortage due to famine, epidemic, and other natural calamities. In those times of scarcity, parents reserved rice for their young children while they subsisted on yams, jungle vegetables, and the pitch of the sago palm.[188]

2.3.6 Food as Indigenous Medicine

Mizos believed that diseases and sickness were caused by evil spirits. They performed different sacrifices, in the hope of getting cured, to propitiate the interested spirits, whoever they happened to be. A.G. McCall listed out different diseases recognised by Mizos such as dysentry, goitre, eye diseases, worms, skin sores, fever, stomach pain, rheumatism, diarrhoea, cholera and respiratory diseases.[189]Mizos used salt as medicine in pre – colonial period. This is evident from the name that they gave to salt, the '*Dap chi'*, which was believed to be a good medicine for goitre. (today, Dap is renamed as *Dapchhuah* / Tut river). The villagers of Phaileng used to sing the Dap villagers song that shows how people from different villages flocked to Dapchhuah to collect salt for medicine as -

Dap chi kualkhung
Lai lai runah kan leng e,
A hnaih in hnai lo e
Awrpuar zawng.[190]

[187] (Jelliffe 1967: 297 -81) as cited in Marijke van der Veen, 'When is Food a Luxury?',*World Archaeology* Vol.34, No.3, Luxury Foods (Feb., 2003) pp. 405-427. Available from http://www.j.stor.org/stable/3560194, (retrieved 16 July 2014).
[188] Shakespear, p. 17.
[189] McCall, p. 178.
[190] C. Rokhuma interview.

Salt from certain areas, like the Piler hill, east of the Tuichang river, were known to be beneficial, when taken in small quantities, either with or without food. Salt was also used externally to treat burns.[191] During various difficult and uncongenial climatic conditions, by virtue of experiments and experience, they acquired knowledge of the medicinal qualities of certain roots, fruits and leaves, plants, juices etc. A combination of these served as medicine. The medicine was then applied by drinking, smearing on the body, inhaling, or attaching to some part of the body, neck, hand, waist etc.[192]

2.3.7. Food and Mizo Myths

Like any other culture Mizo food tradition is often linked with food. They believed that in the beginning there was no earth, nor man or any other animal. There was, however, a god called *Khuazingnu*, who created earth. In order to eat the fruits of the green earth man and animals were created.[193] From here it may be observed that man and animals were created to play the part of consumption as per Mizo folk tales.

The folk tales also tells us how rice became the staple food of the Mizos. The story goes like this, 'Once upon a time, both man and beast co-existed in perfect harmony. But with the passing of time and increase in numbers, friction arose over many matters and the need for a ruler became necessary. For this they elected Vanhrikpa, who ruled over them judiciously, without discrimination. In those days, it was not rice but maize, millet and fruit that were the staple food. One day Vanhrikpa announced to his subjects that as long as they depended on maize and millet they would always be at the mercy of Manmuaia, which destroyed these crops. "Therefore, take rice as your staple food, make a choice between *buh kiririum* rice and *buhchangrum* rice," he urged. They all looked at each other not knowing how to respond. So Vanhrikpa continued, "*Kiririum* has such an excellent taste that you would not need any other dish. *Buh changrum* on the other hand, though tougher, enhances the taste of other dishes. Now make your choice".[194]

[191] McCall, p. 178.
[192] Lalrimawia, *Mizoram – History & Cultural Identity 1890-1947*, p. 30
[193] Zama, Margaret Ch., 'Origin Myths of the Mizos' in Geeti Sen (ed.), *Where the Sun Rises when Shadows Fall – The North- East*, New Delhi, OUP, 2006.
[194] Margaret Ch. Zama, *Origin Myths of the Mizos*, pp. 9 – 10.

To test the views of Vanhrikpa, they first tasted *kirirum* and in the process swallowed their tongues, as it proved extremely tasty. Thus, they opted for *buh changrum* as they declared they would have no tongues left if they chose the tasty *kirirum.*[195] In order to obtain the paddy seed of the *buh changrum* rice, they now had to perform the daunting task of crossing the *Tuihriam* waters, for the seed lay on the opposite shore. After the failure of the first attempt they finally decided that the rat would ride on the badger's back and complete the task with its pointed nose. The mission proved successful and the rat demanded that he should have the first bite. But his friend replied, "Not at all, for it is only one paddy seed. We will first sow and increase it, once harvested you may live in the granary itself and eat to your heart's content." This is the reason why, we are told, our forefathers used to tolerate and leave the rats in the granary in peace".[196]

Pre-colonial Mizos also used foods particularly rice to acquaint themselves with the knowledge of magic especially black art. J. Shakespear observed that the Mizosaw a man eating rice. 'May you bewitched' they said. They bewitched him in his rice eating, and for a year after whenever he ate cooked rice it changed into dry uncooked rice and it swelled inside him till his stomach could not hold it and he died.[197]

2.3.8 Food and Traditional Courtship

Feeding has always been closely linked with courtship. In several species of insect (the praying mantis for example) the female devours the male after mating as he has done his job and so becomes a source of nutrition for the now expectant mother. The males and females of all species seem to be involved in this mating gamble with food as the bait. With humans this work two ways since we are the only species known to cook - the bride is usually appraised for her cooking ability.[198]

Among Mizos great sexual freedom between the young men and girls. One of the chief amusements of the young men was courting the girls and they might do so with or without serious intentions. If the man decided that the girl was suitable he would most likely suggest

[195] Margaret Ch. Zama, pp. 10 – 11.
[196] Ch. Zama, p. 11.
[197] Shakespear, p.109.
[198] '*Food and Eating: An anthropologicalPerspective*', available from www.sirc.org/publik/food-and-eating-8.html, (accessed 15June 2014).

that they should in future help each other in their work with a view to getting married. If the girl agreed, they would come to a definite understanding on the matter and henceforth help each other in their respective fields and the man would escort the girl when she went out to carry wood or water. The girl by this time had an opportunity of judging her suitor was likely to make her a good husband or not.[199]

Mizos used food like vegetables and fruits to express their feelings. They were part and parcel in the traditional courtship. There is a practice called "*Chhawlthuai*" by which lovers / friends exchanged messages to each other. After a day's work in the jhum they would bring back some vegetables or fruits with them and carved the name of the loved ones/ recipients. Then they would keep this somewhere in the village road. It would be picked up by the one whose name was written in the gift. This was one of the chief amusements of the young man who was courting a girl and vice versa.

2.3.9 Food, Superstitions and Rituals

Mizos life prior to 1890 bound around their customary practices, social norms, religious beliefs and of courses their superstitions and their belief in the magical properties of objects. Food superstitions have rooted out from almost every civilization known to exist.[200]Like any civilization and any culture Mizos had superstitious beliefs towards the killing, preparation and eating of some meat and vegetables. Even though they were fond of dog meat it was considered to be very unlucky if a dog was killed in a jhum house and if one killed a dog in another man's jhum house he was liable to a fine of Rs. 40.[201]Crab which was one of their delicacies was never cooked in a jhum house as they believed this would bring bad luck.[202]

In the *Khalchuang* or *Meiawrlo* sacrifice a goat was killed but its flesh was not cooked till the next day. It was '*thiang lo'* (forbidden) to eat '*theihai*' (mango) fruit. The Mizoshad so many taboos related to women during and after pregnancy. During her pregnancy the woman should avoid brinjal (egg plant) as it was socially perceived that if a pregnant woman ate

[199] Parry, pp. 21-21.
[200] Nandini Bhatia, '*Are you a Believer: 10 Food Superstitions Over the* Centuries', available from http://m.food.ndtv.com/food-drinks/are -you-a-beliver-10-superstitions-over-the-centuries-775592, June 27, 2015, (accessed 14 November 2016).
[201] Parry, p. 76.
[202] Parry, p.76.

brinjal her baby's buttock would become black.[203]They also had some superstitious beliefs towards certain illness. For instance, in the case of eye defects, a boiled egg would be placed in a receptacle for pig's food, and the patient would have to eat it, kneeling in a position of all fours. The bile of a wild boar mixed with water served as one medicine, while drinking a cup of cow's urine was another for treating fever. Though meat was usually considered unsuitable in fever cases, the Mizos recognised monkey's flesh and that of water turtle as appropriate feeding, possibly due to their great tastiness at a time when appetites would generally be jaded.[204]

Cures were attempted by performance of sacrifices. But it was by no means a simple or a cheap adventure. It was not even easy to produce a priest, because it was widely believed that if the priest failed to affect a cure, he might, and probably would, fall a victim to the disease, as a failure to affect a cure would have disclosed his inability to overcome the particular evil spirit at the root of the disease, and after such an unsuccessful challenge he was certain of death.[205]

As Mizosfeared to displease evil spirit which they believed to have caused them illness and misfortunes, they used to worship trees, rocks and water where they believed the spirits would live and they would offer sacrifices by killing animals. The most common evil spirits which caused illness (mostly pain in the stomach) to young women was called '*Khawhring*'. This case was more frequently found among unmarried women rather than married ones. A girl who was said to have or possess such spirits could simply be turned out of the village by a chief and she could hardly find a husband because of her bad reputation due to the stigma attached to her. All the Mizo in those days were afraid of *Khawhring*. Thus, before taking meal at the jhum or forest, they would offer a little portion of food to the spirits in order to propitiate them.[206]

The Mizos, before their adoption of Christianity, were controlled by their superstitious beliefs. This was observed by J. Shakespear who said, "The Lushai's are an extremely superstitious race; any unusual occurrence is considered as portending some evil results".[207]

[203] K.L. Khama Chhakchhuak, p. 103.
[204] McCall, pp. 178- 179.
[205] McCall, p. 180
[206] Lalfakzuali, *Changing Status of Mizo Women*, Aizawl, TRI, 2010, p.5.
[207] Shakespear, p. 100.

During threshing Mizos avoid mentioning certain things for the fear of bringing ill luck, such as monkeys, the dead, ghosts etc. They did not allow others to take brands from their fire, nor would they burn cloth. They also put the following near the place of threshing – ears of rice, a hoe sickle, ginger, *thang* (trap), *vakohhrui*(certain gourds). They put two pieces of *phelsep* (a split bamboo) over these in the form of an arched cross or place of a *laite* (small ladle made of a gourd) at the place of crossing. Some when threshing, would not speak a word to passing strangers for they were afraid that this would bringing bad luck. During threshing they chanted the following lines through which they express their wishes and hopes of increasing their paddy harvest as much as possible -

"Fang rawng aw!
Chhumpui zingin lo zing rawh,
Ka chhaka tlang, lianpui kai rawn al rawh,
Chhumpui angin lo pung thur thur rawh".[208]

2.3.10 Food and Religion

It does not take a great of reflection to recognize that food plays a critical role in religious traditions. In pre-colonial Mizo society individuals and group had avoided and consumed particular foods and drinks to connect spirituality with the divine and to achieve physical and spiritual health. Many of the features that shape dietary habits are derived from religious laws. All over the world many people choose to eat or avoid certain foods according to their religious beliefs. When a dietary practice is preserved by religious dogma it is given additional force.

Before discussing the relationship between food and Mizo religious beliefs it is necessary to discuss Mizo religious lives. Most writers specially the colonial ethnographers described Mizo religion as animism. Some (like J. Shakespear) had held the view that Mizos did not have religion instead they had ancestor worship. A.G. McCall had said, "Before the occupation of their land by the British, the Lushais were wholly animists".[209]One of the Mizo historians, Liangkhaia, believes that the religion of the Mizos had its origin in the consciousness of their need for deliverance from physical illness and from other misfortunes

[208] J.H. Lorrain, *Log Book*, ATC Archives, p. 94.
[209]McCall, p. 68.

which they attributed to evil spirits. The earliest known sacrificial chant would indicate there was a time when they did not know whom they should invoke in time of need. The chant may be translated in English as, "Oh, hear us and answer us, thou who was worshipped by our ancestors".[210]

Mizos believed in the existence of a supreme being/spirit which they called '*Pathian*'. This was affirmed by J. Shakespear when he said that 'practically all divisions of the Lushai- Kuki family believed in a spirit called *Pathian*, who is supposed to be the creator or everything and is beneficent being, but has, however, little concern with men'. To the Mizos, the world in which they lived was full of evil spirits to whose malignant influence were ascribed all the diseases and sufferings which affected mankind. J. Shakespear again commented on this by saying 'Far more important to the average man were the numerous "*Huai*" or demons, who inhabited every stream, mountain, and forest, and to whom every illness and misfortune was attributed. The *puithiam* (priest) was supposed to know what demon was causing the trouble and what form of sacrifice would appease him, and a Lushai's whole life was spent in propitiating these spirits'.[211]

To appease these evil spirits Mizos offered their animals and food for sacrifices as they had been in constant fear of these evil spirits that caused them sickness, misfortune, suffering etc. J. Shakespear made a classification of the sacrifices made by the Mizos into eight classes:

1. *Sakhua* :- A sacrifice to the guardian spirit of the clan or family.
2. *Khal*:- These are sacrifices to *Huai* supposed to frequent the village and houses.
3. *Daibawl*:- These are to propitiate the *Huai* in the jungle, streams, and mountains.
4. Various sacrifices in case of sickness.
5. Sacrifices to cure barrenness in women.
6. *Nauhri*:- These sacrifices should be performed once in a lifetime in a particular order.
7. Sacrifices connected with hunting and killing animals.
8. Sacrifices connected with jhuming[212].

In most of these sacrifices different animals were killed and the meats of those animals were offered to appease spirits. In some case food / meats were used to propitiate the evil spirits.

[210]Liangkhaia, p. 57.
[211] Shakespear, p. 61.
[212] Shakespear, pp.69-70.

For instance, the *Bawlpui* sacrifice was performed to cure a sick person after all other sacrifices had been tried. This is described by J. Shakespear as follows:-

> "Two small clay figures were made, one to represent a man and the other a woman. These were called *ram – chawm*. The female figure had a petticoat of *hnahthial* (a plant which had tough leaves used for wrapping up food to be taken on a journey), and was made to bite the pig's liver. The male figure was provided with a pipe and a necklace of the liver of the pig which was sacrificed. A small bamboo platform was made, and on it was put a clay model of a gong and other household utensils, and sometimes of mithan. The pig's throat was cut and the blood allowed to flow over the platform. The pig's flesh was cooked on the spot. To take it into the house was '*thianglo*' (unlawful – missionaries, unlucky - according to which a certain act would be followed by some misfortune to the doer). Many persons came and ate with the *puithiam* (priest). If the patient did not die during the performance of the sacrifice or during the subsequent feast he would undoubtedly recover".[213]

In some instances, like the *Chhim* sacrifice, chicken and eggs were used to appease the evil spirits. This was generally performed if a woman did not become enceinte (pregnant) in the first year of married life. A white hen was caught as it had laid an egg, but as this was a somewhat difficult feat, and as the demons, though malevolent were supposed to be easily imposed upon, a white hen was often caught and put into a neat basket with an egg and fastened there till the *puithiam* arrived and said, "Oh, ho! So your hen had laid an egg!" Then the hen was killed at the head of the sleeping platform (*Khumpui*), under which the *Serh* were placed in a basket till sunrise the next morning, when they were thrown away. The flesh was then cooked and eaten".[214]

Pre-colonial Mizos also had some ceremonies connected with childbirth but that varied from one clan to another or from family to family. Within seven days of the birth, the sacrifice known as the "*Arteluilam*" consisting of a cock and a hen killed just outside the house, must be made; till this was done the woman could not go to the spring *(tuikhur*) and was '*serh'* and had better not leave the house. Should the woman not observe the custom the child was believed to suffer in health. Three days after the birth of a child a small chicken and seven

[213] Shakespear, pp.73-74.
[214] Shakespear, p.76.

small packets of rice and vegetables were suspended under the edge of the front verandah. This was called "*Arte hringban*" or "*Khawhringtir*". The object was to satisfy the '*Khawhring*' and prevent it entering the child. Two days after the birth of a child its parents gave a big drink to their friends and relatives. This was called "*nau*" and seven days later another big feast was given. Some families gave the name at the first feast, some at the second.[215]

Some pre-colonial Mizo sacrifices were connected with agriculture. To ward off the evil spirits and to get good harvest the '*Lo hman'* sacrifice was performed when the *thlam* (jhum house) was completed, this was performed by the owner of the jhum. The *puithiam* was called and he killed two fowls. A small hole was dug in the ground under the house and lined with plaintain leaves and then filled it with water, and three small stones were dropped in. The *puithiam* cut the throats of the fowls, allowing the blood to fall into the hole. The '*serh'* were then cut off and hung under the house, and the rest of the flesh was cooked and eaten in the jungle. The next day was '*hrilh*'. The first day after this on which they work, some rice and vegetables were placed on the top of one of the posts of the house platform as an offering to the *Ramhuai*.

Mizos believed that there was a spirit world beyond the grave, which they called it as *Mitthi Khua* (village of the dead). The soul or ghost of a man left his body at death, lingered for about three months or around the house of the dead person and then left for the spirit world. The spirit world was believed to have two realms, upper and lower, separated by the river called '*Pial*'. The upper realm was called '*Pialral*' where only those who earned the '*Thangchhuah*' title during their lifetime could go. The lower realm was '*Mitthi Khua'* where all the dead excepting those who go to *Pialral* went. The pre-colonial Mizos before their conversion to Christianity had longed for *Pialral* as they thought that in *Pialral* food and drinks were to be obtained without labor.[216] This appeared to be their concept of the height of bliss. From here, it is evident that pre-colonial Mizos either had faced food shortage or they were tired of working too hard to get food for sustenance throughout their lives.

[215] Shakespear, pp.82-83.
[216] Shakespear, pp.62-63.

2.4.1 Reflection of MizoFood in Folklore

The folklore surrounding food habits of people developed from uncertainty and fear in humankind's quest for food. It is evident that some Mizosdelicacies have interesting story behind them. A.G. McCall had written one Mizo folklore regarding the starting of a mushroom. Two sisters together were searching larger cucumbers in a field. The younger picked up a number but the older sister seemed unsuccessful. So the elder asked the younger to give her some, but the younger said she wished to take them home so that all could eat them with their own parents. This greatly upset the elder sister who thereupon called on a clay mound in the soil to swallow her up. Then gradually she actually did sink until at last only the top of her head could be seen.[217]

Shortly when the other sister returned home and her parents came in from the fields she told them the truth that her sister had allowed herself to be swallowed up in the ground because she had refused to give her a cucumber. The parents were of course very distressed and told her to go back at once and try to call her to return. So she went calling -

> "Sister, sister, please do come back,
> Mother will buy you rich amber beads
> Father will buy you great brazen bell".[218]

Her sister then came out rising higher and higher till only her knees remained. Unhappily just at this stage a cry was raised that the hunters were coming and so they wrenched at the elder sister but this caused her to lose her big toe which were left in the ground, turning into mushrooms (*pasawntlung* – an edible fungus, one of Mizo delicacies) which grow in this way to this day. This folklore tells a message that Mizos started eating cucumber and mushroom since olden days. They passed this story from one generation to the next generation through oral means till the coming of the Christian missionaries.[219]

Mizo taste covered wide range of different tastes from sweet to spicy to sour. They were actually very fond of sour taste which is evident from folklore. The story goes like this.

> "In the Lushai hills there was a tree which went by the name of *Chengkek*. This tree did not grow very well but its fruit was beautifully red, the outer

[217] McCall, p. 76.
[218] McCall, p. 76.
[219] McCall, p. 76.

cover, however being sour to the taste, though the pulp was juicy and sweet. One day a man called *Chhura*, who was very famous in legendary Mizo, was passing by this tree and he became very pleased when he anticipated the taste of the fruit which should be his. He came up to the tree and pulled down the branches laden with the fruit but somehow he could not disassociate from the idea or the act of climbing to reach it. In the case of *Chengkek* tree the trunk is too slender to bear the weight of a man. So there was silly old Chhura going on pulling down the branch but not pulling the fruit, yet murmuring to himself that if only Nahaia, his friend, was here, he would so easily be able to tackle his problem".[220]

2.4.2 Food and some Mizo Sayings

Both in pre colonial and colonial period there were some sayings related to food which can sometimes be taken to discriminate children. Eventhough parents loved their children they had some way to fool the latter in terms of eating. Some portions of meat that they considered more delicious than other parts were reserved for adults while children were given the less palatable parts of meat. For example, they would say to the children:

I. '*Ar ke ei chu tlan chakna'* (if one eats chicken feet he would run fast).
II. *'Ar ngum ei chu phunchiarna'*(if one consumes lower end of chicken spine he would become grumpy).
III. '*Ar chhuang ei chu zaithiamna'*(eating of the comb of a cock or hen would makes one a good singer).

It is generally perceived by Mizos that there was equality in traditional Mizo society. However, this became quite debatable when we read Mizo sayings. The Chief and his elders along with the village priests were given privileged position in pre-colonial Mizo society. Besides *hnamchawm* or the commoners there were certain group of people who were socially looked down. This group consisted of women and children who were assigned lower status and very often society neglected their roles as mother and children. As mentioned earlier children were supposed to eat whatever was given to them by adults who reserved all the

[220] McCall, p. 77.

tasty food for themselves. When adults felt disturb by children they would turn them away by using abusive language like 'you smell like puppy' and shooed them away.

From the above mentioned Mizo sayings, it can be asserted that chicken could have been the most common meat available to Mizos. Every Mizo household was supposed to keep fowls both for sacrifice and food. Due to easy domestication of fowls and some economic and religious reasons chicken assumed the position of most common meat consumed by the people. The sayings related with chicken bear testimony that almost every parts of a fowl were considered edible which range from the comb to the feet.

2.4.3 Reflections of Mizo *Tlawmngaihna* through food habits

The Mizo word *Tlawmngaihna* does not have an exact equivalent in English. Colonial writers and the Christian missionaries made an attempt to define its meaning in English. According to J.H. Lorrain, '*Tlawmngaihna* means self sacrifice or unselfishness'.[221] In his attempt to describe the meaning of *Tlawmngaihna* John Shakespear said that this word represented the Lushai's code of morals and good form. A person who possesses *Tlawmngaihna* must be corteous, considerate, unselfish, courageous, industrious and he must always be ready to help others even at considerable inconvenience to himself and must try to surpass others in doing his ordinary daily tasks efficiently.[222]The elders of the village always kept their eyes open to find out those who possessed the greatest *Tlawmngaihna*. In recognition of their selfless, sacrificial services to the community, they were always rewarded by public acclaim and were often invited to share special / select feasts held by the chiefs.[223]

Pre-colonial Mizos expressed their *Tlawmngaihna* through different food habits. They held that gluttons could not be called *Tlawmngai*(self sacrificing) as these kind of persons would accept every invitation to a feast or a meal with unmannerly alacrity. They never accepted simple invitation to a feast as they felt that it was shameful. Young men, when they went out for hunting, ate very little food if they thought that food was too little to feed them all. They never ate to their hearts content.[224] One of the popular Mizo heroes, Vanapa,was said to have been '*tlawmngai*' in terms of food and drinks. On one occasion he went hunting with other

[221] Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, p. 514.
[222] Shakespear, p. 19.
[223] C.L. Hminga, p. 30.
[224]Thanga,p. 138.

young men of his village. They could not return to their village within their expected time and they were about to run out of food. So, everyone of them decided to spare rice so that it would last them for a few more days. Towards the end they prepared rice porridge instead of boiled rice which they distributed with *tumphit* (Pandean pipe).[225] Vanapa then took just half of his share and gave the other half to his friends.[226]

When an animal was killed in the village Mizos never accepted simple invitation to eat the meat as they said that it was just "*Koh-va-uk*" or 'simple invitation.[227] If people really wanted them to eat they would pulled the invitee's hand till they reach the inviter's house. It was considered shameful to accept when people offered them things to eat. For this reason, they never allowed their children to go where people killed a pig or a dog or where feast was held. Children who failed to obey this were usually beaten up.[228]

At feasts the young men and girls in the village help the giver of the feast in many ways by pounding rice, collecting materials, dancing and in other ways. They were expected to do these things as matter of *Tlawmngaihna*. The giver of the feast for his part was expected to give them food and drink in the same way. The more and better food and drink he gave the more *Tlawmngaihna* he was said to possess.[229] Among the Maras when a feast was held , the unmarried men and girls sat next to each other, a man to each girl. On these occasions neither men nor girls must feed themselves with their own hands. The girls put the food into the man's mouths and the men's into the girls'. It was considered disgraceful for unmarried persons to take their food themselves in public; if they did so they would feel shame.[230]

Another point that proves that *Tlawmngaihna* was expressed by Mizos through food habit is the saying 'eat less and work more' which was the main aim of all the young men.[231] Besides this, young men were taught not to be too fastidious about food as this character was considered unmanly and '*tlawmgai lo'*(not following the morality of *tlawmngaihna*).[232]*Tlawmngaihna* was supposed to enter into every sphere of Mizo life. A person who practiced the precepts of *Tlawmngaihna* was looked up to and respected by the society.

[225] Lorrain, p. 530.
[226] Thanga, p. 138.
[227] Thanga, p.138.
[228] Thanga, p.139.
[229] Shakespear,p. 20.
[230] Parry, p.85.
[231] Thanga, p. 139.
[232] Thanga, p.141.

Every Mizo village had *Zawlbuk* (the young men's barrack or quarter) which was constructed near the Chief's house. It was usually situated in the center of the village. All the young unmarried men slept there at night. The *Zawlbuk* was the centre of traditional Mizo village life and it was the most important institution. All the boys in the village from a time not long after they were weaned until they reached puberty were responsible for the supply of firewood for the *Zawlbuk*. It was a place where boys and young men received their training in wrestling and other exercises and heard stories of brave and noble deeds from the older folks. N. Chatterji commented on *Zawlbuk* as,

> "a superb institution of the Mizo society which succeeded in building up their unique style of life. While it prevented crude conformity and economic Laissez-faire on the one hand, it implanted in them a deep love of freedom and a real respect for their community - based social organization on the other".[233]

Besides the teaching of their parents at home which was usually received during meal time young boys and men learned moral code of conduct viz. *Tlawmngaihna* at *Zawlbuk* from *Val Upa* (elders). K.L Khama had mentioned that young men with greatest '*tlawmngaihna*' woke up early and did whatever was necessary before their inmates got up.

The pre-colonial Mizo modes and techniques of food production, preparation, consumption and preservation were simple yet to them they were healthy and nutritious. Food manifested itself in their social, religious, economic and cultural lives in various forms. They maintained their social values and morality through food culture and habits. They were fond of giving and sharing and gifts were essential in maintaining their kinship ties and social bonds. The functionalists, such as Evan Pritchard argue that every habit has a social value and helps to maintain social bonds. The food habits of the Mizosin pre-colonial period too had intrinsic social and cultural value.

[233] Chatterji, *Zawlbuk as a Social Institution*, p. 9 as cited in Hminga, p. 29

CHAPTER 3

FOOD CULTURE IN COLONIAL LUSHAI HILLS

The coming of Europeans to India opened a new era in Indian history. The tremendous changes that came with these Europeans paved the way for the emergence and introduction of new food items that were hitherto unknown in India. Even before India was colonized and dominated by the 'whites' western vegetables were introduced in different parts of the Indian sub-continent. By looking at the whole scenario one can observe that there was cultural interaction between East and West through food exchanges. In India, the influence of European food culture was strong throughout colonial regime. For instance, the habit of drinking evening tea which is continued till date had its origin in British India. Not only the British but also other European nations had left remarkable imprint in Indian food culture through the introduction of new food item as well as through new culinary skill. The Portuguese have been credited with bringing a variety of new crops and fruits to India;[234] among them tobacco, pineapple, cashew- nut and potato were the most important.[235]During colonial times, Europeans introduced a number of western vegetables to the hill stations at higher altitude. The carrot - Daucas Carota sativas - is an example. It was carried from Persia to India and then to China in the 13th century.[236] Some food items, thus, have travelled across different countries. K.T Achaya writes in '*A Historical Dictionary of Indian Food'* that potatoes in India were first accepted only by Europeans, and then by the Muslims. Remarkably, in contrast to cabbage, cauliflower and beet, even orthodox Hindus had no qualms about letting the potato into their kitchen.[237]

Foodways is one way of looking at the porous boundaries of colonialism in areas of race and domestic relationships. The colonial table neither comprised only dishes that were British or European nor comprised only local dishes but the salient characteristics of the hybrid colonial cuisine were evident. Sydney Mintz regards cuisine as legitimate when the community claims ownership of it through knowledge of and familiarity with, the dishes. Indian cuisine is

[234]Asad Beg Qazwini, Memoirs, BM Or 1966 as cited in Ashan Jan Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture AD 1498 - 1707*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, p. 117.
[235] Asad Beg Qazwini, p. 117.
[236]Kippleand Ornelas (eds.), *Cambridge World History of Food*, Volume-2, p. 1157.
[237] 'Potato:Historically Important Vegetable', *The Hindu*, October 16, 2008. Available from: www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sci-tech-and-agri/Potato-historical-important-vegetable/article15411441.ece, (accessed 6 April 2017).

influenced by European cuisine and vice versa. This is reflected in the publication of Indian cook books. The early Indian Cookery books were first published in Britain from the 1830's.[238]

Curry is the single most important dish that defined the culinary history of British imperialism. It is often said that food distinguishes the colonials from the colonized. Contrary to this – British did not eat only British foods but foods strongly influenced by Asian cuisines. The colonial cuisine was a hybrid cuisine with some elements of British foodway and components of foodways from the colonies. Jeffrey M. Pilcher argues that the colonial rulers often acquired a taste for the foods of their subjects. Indian curry and chutney, for example, became mainstays of British diet.[239]

3.1.1 Colonialism – India and Lushai Hills

The British East India Company which had an object of establishing trade relationship with India gradually took keen interests in becoming the master of India. After the Battle of Buxar 1764 and the Battle of Plassey 1757 they increased their sphere of control in different parts of the Indian sub – continent. After subduing Indian princes / rulers one after another sometimes through war or sometimes through diplomatic contrivance they even set up themselves in the north eastern region of the country. Colonialism was a catalyst in many fields, not the least in the social and the cultural. The changes in the cultural domain had multiple sources of inspiration, ranging from direct intervention by the colonial state to the activities of voluntary agencies. Their modes of intervention also varied, appropriation and hegemonization being the most important of them. As a result, indigenous social institutions and cultural practices came under critical scrutiny and, in some cases, even encountered total disapproval and rejection. While some of them were incorporated into colonial practice, others were so radically transformed that they lost their original identity.[240]

As mentioned in the first chapter, after the annexation of Assam to British Indian territory the British administrators as well as the Christian missionaries came to hear about the hill dwellers of the Lushai Hills. They made many attempts to curb the problems and dangers

[238] Cecilia Leong Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, Oxon, Routledge, 2011, p.
[239] Cecilia Leong Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia,* p. 34.
[240]Panikkar, p. 19.

posed by them as they continuously raided Cachar and Chittagong hill tracts as they believed that the British and the plain people destroyed their elephant hunting ground. To solve this problem, the British government of India (Assam) sent numerous military expeditions to the Lushai hills and finally annexed it in 1890 with great difficulty.

As stated earlier it was quite difficult for the British to suppress the rising Lushai problem. But the situation turned to their favour as disastrous famines –*Mautam*[241] famine of 1861 and *Thingtam*[242] of 1880 - hit the Mizoswhere numerous lives were lost due to food shortage. This natural calamity broke the back of the Mizos and thus, they gave up their struggle against the British.

The annexation of the Lushai hills in 1890-1891 and the subsequent consolidation of the colonial rule brought about significant changes in the traditional food and drinking habits of the Mizos. Though many indigenous writers and historians wrote about how colonial rule was established, andits effects on the political, social, religious, economic and cultural life of the Mizos, the colonization of traditional Mizo food still eludes historical enquiry. Colonialism was not just confined to politics or economics. It could be seen on food as well. The change in traditional food habits of the Mizos was basically due to the pioneering work of the British government and the Christian missionaries. New food items that were hitherto unknown to the indigenous people became popular. For instance, the introduction of milk brought along with it a far reaching effect on the diet and immune system of the Mizos. Likewise, the particular brand of Christianity introduced by western missionaries made the consumption of *Zu*, which was hitherto a part and parcel in Mizo culture, as a sin.

In this chapter, an effort is given to explore new food introduced by the colonial administrators and Christian missionaries, how these colonialists perceived Mizo delicacies, how did they try to popularize the new foods and what were the responses of Mizos. An attempt is also made to study the attitude of the colonialists towards *Zu* and its prohibition

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[241] *Mautam* literally means the death of Bamboos. Every fifty years the *mau* / bamboo flowers and bear fruits and then eventually dies. This is followed by the multiplication of *Thangnang* (beetles) that devoured all the standing crops. With the increasing multiplication of beetles the whole *Lushai* country remained devasted and before and after the British rule terrible famines broke out and food became scarce. The first of such famine occurred in 1861, the second 1911 and the third in 1958.

[242] *Thingtam* on the other hand refers to the dying out of a species of Bamboo known locally as *Rawthing* (Bambusa Tulda or Valgaris) after their flowering. Oral testimonies testified that the fruits of such *Rawthing* helped in the reproduction of rats. With the increasing multiplication of rats the whole country was devoured and famine followed as the rats destroyed all the stored as well as standing crops leaving nothing for the people. The first *Thingtam* occurred in 1880, the second in 1929 and the third in 1977.

among Mizo Christians. Also, the impact of colonial rule on Mizo food culture is analysed in the last section.

3.1.2 British Administration and New Food

One way, through which colonialism and its impact on Mizo society and culture can be studied and a means, of understanding the nature of cultural change is by studying the introduction of new food items - vegetables, fruits, culinary skill etc. which were hitherto unknown among Mizos prior to 1890. Before the British annexed Lushai hills the people settling in the hills had their own way of establishing trade / economic relationship with the 'others'. When Mizos first carried out trading with the plain people of the neighbouring areas in the beginning of the 19th century they exchanged their materials like dried skins of elephants, deer, boar etc. with that of salt, utensils, guns and gunpowder.[243] From here it is evident that even before the advent of Europeans and Christian missionaries to the Lushai hills Mizos had done some economic exchanges with the neighbouring tribes.

When the British administration was consolidated in theLushai hills, the British officials made many attempts to introduce new food, some of which were welcomed while some others failed to attract Mizo responses and attentions. It is possible to draw an idea about indigenous Mizo fruits and vegetables from missionary records. For instance, J.H. Lorrain listed trees, fruits and vegetables encountered on the journey to Lushai hills on the 9th of May, 1894 as plum, breadfruit (jack), bananas, mangoes, lemons, coconut, palms, betel nut, date palms, sugar cane, guavas, bamboos, castor oil plants, nukvomica – creepers with berries red, white and black. In cultivated patches near villages - chillies, mustard, potatoes (sweet potatoes), radishes of gigantic size, some as much as 2 feet long and several inches thick[244]. Besides these edibles it is obvious that the Lushai hills was quite rich in terms of food as the people could obtain them from their jhums, rivers and forests.

The attempt of the British administrators of the Lushai hills to encourage the cultivation ofnew crop is evident from the letter sent by N.E. Parry, the Superintendent of the Lushai hills to the Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar in 1897. Parry mentioned that the soil was very fertile and the people should be encouraged to grow potatoes and other

[243] Sangkima, p. 93.
[244] Lorrain, p. 33.

crops. During that period Mizos grew practically nothing except rice and maize. Most of the villages were located at descent height; usually athigher altitude and for this reason he believed that apples, pears, cherries would do well in the Lushai hills. He also suggested that a special agricultural demonstrator should be sanctioned. Parry, moreover, recommended the introduction of a sheep and a larger breed of goat.[245]

One of the most important vegetables introduced by the British was Potato, it was introduced in 1907 and it was a new colonial food hitherto unknown in the hills. According to Liangkhaia, the cultivation of potato was first started by Major Cole in 1907 before that Mizos never cultivated the plant. Initially Mizos called potato as 'the white men's arum bulb' (*SapBal*). With the passage of time they took its Indian version and call it *Alu*[246] till date (they have not yet given it any Mizo name). The administration took the initiative in the promotion of the new vegetables and pulses (*dal*) cultivation among Mizos. It was held that the administration would instruct / guide Mizos in the cultivation of the new plants[247]. This plan needed longer time than the proposed period as even in the 1920's and 1930's the British administration still tried to encourage its cultivation. But there was very little response from Mizo as they seemed to be not interested in the new food. This is evident from the order given out by the Superintendent of the Lushai hills, H.W.G. Cole, from time to time since 1909.[248] In the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* Cole had written thatMizos did not like the taste of potato in the beginning because they did know how to cook it but with time, he believed, they would start liking it. Though potato and attempt for its inclusion in Mizo diet failed to impress the Mizos in the initial years, yet after India's independence potato became part and parcel of their everyday diet.

In 1908-09 Major Cole also introduced new breed of fowls (Turkey breed - *Vai ar lian*, *Satikang Ar* and others etc.) He established poultry farms and appointed caretakers; the eggs were then sold in many different villages. He tried to popularize the farming of new breed of poultry among Mizos as he felt Mizo poultry was too small in size and should be replaced by the new breed which he had introduced.[249] The initiation of Cole seemed a failure during colonial period as most Mizo household continued the farming of their indigenous poultry.

[245] MSA, G-78, CB-7, Dated Aijal, the 17th March, 1927.
[246] Liangkhaia, p. 106.
[247] *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*, 1909, pp. 220 – 224, ATC Archives.
[248] MSA, G-164, CB-13, Camp Samang, 14th March, 1909.
[249] Liangkhaia,pp. 106 – 107.

Above all the other British administrators, Captain Cole made the most enormous and remarkable attempt to introduce new method of cultivation in the Lushai hills. For this, he created *Chite* garden/green house in the eastern part of Aizawl to inculcate the art of cultivating mustard, pineapple and oranges to Mizos. The seeds of these vegetables and fruits began to spread throughout the entire Lushai hills through the initiative taken at *Chite* garden.[250] There is some assumption among Mizos that mustard (*antam*) is introduced in the Lushai hills when some Mizo soldiers brought the seeds of mustard from France to help British army in the First World War. Since they brought the seed from France that particular variety of mustard came to be known as '*feren antam'* (the French mustard). The Colonial administrators initiated some undertakings to change Mizo method of cultivation, thereby, they made indirect attempt to change Mizo food habits and colonise the same as they did politically. But they justified all these by saying that they had been working for the welfare of Mizos. The earlier British attempt towards this is evident from a remark on Major Cole:

> "The objects of the Government and the Mission are on the secular side of the work, and he was eager to do all in his power to assist the Mission in the work of improving the people's welfare, by providing them a mental and moral training, and by securing greater supervision over them in their work, and specially by teaching them modern methods of agriculture".[251]

In 1910 Major Cole established a new market inAizawl known as Dawrpui Bazar. In the beginning they called people in *Parwana* (warrant/permission) and asked them to sell whatever they had produced; they fixed a date for shopping in the market. In 1946, markets began to be set up not only in Aizawlbut in certain villages like Saitual, Champhai etc.[252] With the increasing number of markets it is obvious that greater varieties of food items other than fruits and vegetables began to be sold in the markets. This is evident from Government order that instructed that neither dried fish nor rotten flesh be sold in bazaars.[253]

K.L Khama Chhakchhuak is of the opinion that potatoes, onion, cabbage, cauliflower, different varieties of mustard and fruits like orange, pear, apple, passion fruit, gooseberry etc. were introduced by the British in the Lushai hills. He also opined that Mizosobtained most seeds, both vegetables and fruits, from the Gurkhas and Mizos copied the art of cultivation

[250] Liangkhaia, pp. 106-107.
[251] *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, p. 34.
[252] Liangkhaia, p. 159.
[253] MSA, G- 392, CB-31, *The Lushai Hills District Cover* -1929.

from the Gurkhas.[254] It was, according to him, the Gurkhas who inspired Mizos to cultivate plants and vegetables.[255]

In the 1910's the Government had introduced 'gardening' in the curriculum of the primary schools of Assam. Some teachers of the Lushaihills) tried to do the same , but it had cause a decrease in the attendance.[256] This poses many questions – why was there a decrease in the attendance of the students due to the introduction of Gardening? Were the Mizos not interested in new method of gardening? Was gardening out of Mizo understanding of education? Here assumptions can be made from oral testimonies that many parents did not yet know the importance of sending their children to school to receive education. When Gardening was introduced it failed to attract the attention of Mizos as this was something which was already known to them and hence, considered it unnecessary in school. Probably, they were not aware of the importance of more efficient and productive skill development.

Major Cole made another attempt to promote potato and *Behliang*(pigeon pea) cultivation in 1910 by ordering all circle interpreters of Aizawl and Lunglei to tour their circles immediately and arrange for the potato cultivation and *Behliang* cultivation in all the villages. The villages near Aizawl and Lunglei were expected to plant out as much as possible especially at Durtlang, Reiek, Hmuifang, Sailam, Baktawng, Hualtu and Chalfilh in the Aizawl sub-division and on the hills near Lunglei in that division. He also notified that the *Alu-pu* (potato cultivators) would get *Kuli-awl* (free coolie) if their crops were successful for 6 months.[257] On 24th December, 1912 the Superintendent issued an order to all Mizochiefs to introduce new crops and improve their methods of cultivation –

> "The attention of all chiefs is drawn to the importance of introducing improved methods of cultivation and new crops within their *ram*s. The area of land suitable for jhuming is becoming less and less every year and soon be exhausted. Unless chiefs make an effort to improve the system of cultivation and grow other crops besides paddy they will find within a comparatively short time, their villages depressing for want of jhuming land. Each chief should try to introduce some permanent kind of cultivation in his ram. Where land is suitable the terraced cultivation of rice and wet rice cultivation of rice should be taken up and the

[254]Chhakchhuak, p. 66.
[255]Chhakchhuak, p.86.
[256]*Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, p. 43.
[257] MSA, G- 178, CB – 14, Order No. 26, dated Aijal, the 11th January, 1910.

> growing of new crops such as potatoes, wheat, barley, dell vegetables and fruit".[258]

One of the most common beverages round the world but unknown to Mizos as food prior to the arrival of colonialists and missionaries is milk. The colonialists and Christian missionaries noted these deficiencies amongst Mizos soon after their arrival. For instance, although from time immemorial, the gayal or Sial was domesticated; its milk was never part of their diet. In 1861, when T.H. Lewin was invited by the Mizochief, Rothangpuia to visit his village for the purpose of maintaining cordial relationships, he commented on the manner of domestication of the gayal by the Mizos as;

> "They were the indigenous wild cattle of the hills….the Lushais make no use of the milk, regarding that fluid, indeed, as an unclean excrement; but they would slaughter a gayal occasionally, on high days and holidays, for the sake of the flesh, which is esteemed as a great delicacy among them".[259]

The absence of milk in Mizo diet was also noticed and jotted down by J.H. Lorrain that white ants as they came out fully trouped in fountains were caught by children and were either eaten them there raw or taken home and fried. Fruits and maggots were said to be very nice raw or fried. Milk, however, was considered unfit for human consumption.[260]As it was an unfit food milk was very hard to get in the Lushaihills and it was only after two years of their arrival that the Pioneer missionaries began to get cow's milk. Their Lushai boys ran for it every morning. Some they had with porridge, part was made into butter, the rest for tea. Butter milk was used for making pudding.[261]

Sugar, class maker in colonial Lushai hills, was also introduced to Mizos during colonial regime. Lack of evidence makes it difficult to establish when sugar was introduced. The only sweet food that provided calories to Mizos in pre-colonial period was honey. With colonial regime and interaction with other communities Mizos came to know about the art of making jaggery from sugarcane. Crystalized sugar was another notable food introduced during colonial rule. The manufacture of crystal sugar from sugarcane is one of world's oldest industries. Its history is markedly episodic, with periods of technological innovation and

[258] MSA, G-196, CB-16, Dated Aijal, the 24th December, 1912.
[259] Thomas H. Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*, pp. 200-201.
[260] Lorrain, p. 46.
[261] Lorrain, p. 52.

geographical expansion separating periods of comparatively little change. The first evidence of crystal sugar production appears at about 500 B.C. in Sanskrit texts that indicate it took place in northern India. They describe in rather vague terms the making of several types of sugar for which the principal use seems to have been medicinal. Knowledge of this technique spread from northern India eastward to China and (along with the cultivation of sugarcane) westward to Persia, eventually reaching the east coast of the Mediterranean about 600 A.D.[262] In the Lushai hills, sugar was perhaps used on regular basis in military camps. It was out of reach of the common people. Very few had access to it. Even jaggery (*Kurtai*) was available only for the well to do Mizos or government *babus*. Even in the 1940's not only sugar but also jaggery was a rare food item and was considered a luxury food.[263]

The government officials made numerous attempts to introduce new food and popularize their new foods by issuing some orders which had been sent out to different villages of theLushai hills. The introduction of milk by the British is one of the best / remarkable thing ever done by the British as far as food is concerned. The still-born babies as well as motherless babies could use it as a supplement of nutrition. Naturally, it raised the immune system of Mizos as it contains valuable nutrients. Milk is good for the bones because it offers a rich source of calcium, a mineral essential for healthy bones and teeth. Cow's milk is fortified with Vitamin D, which also benefits bone health. Calcium and Vitamin D help prevent osteoporosis.[264] In the mean time what is very debatable is that they had tried to promote their food by exploiting Mizo food culture (for example, by popularizing that Mizo fowls be replaced by new breed of fowls introduced by them as there is no scientific proof that theirs was better than indigenous breed) and colonised the latter as they did politically and socially.

3.1.3 Colonial Perception of Mizo Delicacies

Perception is the process by which physical sensations such as sights; sounds and taste are selected, organized and interpreted into a meaningful whole. Interpretation is the meaning people assign to sensory stimuli, and this interpretation can be different from one person to

[262] Kipple and Ornelas (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food Volume 2*, pp. 442-443.
[263] Chhuanliana BVT, interviewed by Lalrofeli, Bethlehem Vengthlang, 2019.
[264]Meghan Ware, *Medical News Today*, updated December 14, 2017. Available from: http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/273451.php, (accessed 6 March 2016).

another, according to internal and external factors.[265] In this section an attempt is made to study the kind of thinking and interpretation developed by both the colonial administrators of the Lushai hills as well as the Christian missionaries. Their interpretation and perception towards Mizo delicacies and food habits differ from one person to another. Some made judgements on Mizo food by relying on the 'white men's burden theory' of Rudyard Kipling and, therefore, perceived Mizo food as a 'primitive food' which needed their help to bring it to the realm of 'civilization' or 'civilized food'. But some missionaries deserved to be called cultural relativists in their treatment ofMizo delicacies.

Colonial perception of Mizo food is best represented by the *Lushai Chrysalis* of A.G. McCall. He observed that Mizo food items are a good source of energy which were generally amply available but protective foods were not sufficient. He suggested the necessity of the improvement of Mizo diet through the inclusion of preventive purposes like meats, milk, fats and oils, cheeses, liver, millet, maize and fish, fish bones, and onions. Most of these food items were comparatively scarce in theLushai hills. He also felt the need to encourage the broadening of fruit consumption. To him, with the possible exception of oils these dietetic deficiencies could be easily remedied and in the rectification of these dietetic deficiencies laid one of the Lushai's greatest sources of wealth.[266]

N.E. Parry observed the absence of fat or greased of any kind in the culinary practices of the Lakhers (Maras). The Lakhers were, according to him, certainly fed less well than the Luseis who cooked with oil or fat. They ate practically any kind of meat, from a rat to an elephant, and were not particular to its freshness.[267] This perception proved wrong the conception towards the absence of oil inMizo food and its preparation. In the meantime, he talked about the lack of cleanliness in the food culture of the Maras.

Reginald A. Lorrain, Lakher Pioneer Missionary, also made an observation of the Lakher (Mara) food ways. Like many other colonialists he perceived the Lakher food culture as 'primitive' consisting largely of cyclical rotation between rice, maize, cucumber, pumpkin, and various other vegetables including the cultivated yam and the '*Bia*' - a species of arum lily bulb which practically took the place of potato in the country.[268]

[265]www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability,(retrieved 12.05.2016).
[266]McCall, pp. 187-188.
[267]Parry,p. 83.
[268] R.A. Lorrain*, 5 years in Unknown Jungle*, New Delhi, Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd, 2012, pp. 83-84.

J. Shakespear perceived Mizo food and their preparation as 'simple' consisting mainly of rice and herbs which was sometimes garnished with a little meat, dried fish, or some savoury vegetable. He described parental love and fondness towards their children 'in times of scarcity and what rice can be got is reserved for the young children, the rest of the people living on yams, jungle vegetables, and the pitch of sago palm'.[269] Shakespear also stated that boiling was the only culinary art known to the Mizos. Regarding drinks, the Mizos had very simple tastes, he argued,

> "With his meals he drinks nothing but the water in which the food has been boiled, which he sips sparingly, washing the meal down with a draught of cold water. Intoxicating drinks he only takes when he has full leisure to enjoy them and in company with a party of friends".[270]

Like the colonial administrators the Christian missionaries made their own observation of the Mizo delicacies. In the initial years the pioneer missionaries were very critical of the kind of food culture existing in the Lushai hills. The colonialists' perception of Mizo food as filthy and unfit for eating is reflected by J.H. Lorrain by saying,

> "If I were to think too much of the filthy ways of the people I should starve myself to death rather than eat a fowl or vegetable from these Lushai houses ".[271]

J.H. Lorrain also described his observation ofMizo food where one old woman, then a girl, then a boy, then a woman with a baby and a man were sitting on the floor round a huge wooden dish into which the old lady from time to time ladelled lumps of boiled rice which was eaten up by the whole company who used their hands. One boy had at his side a pot of *Chawhmeh* (dishes) from which he occasionally took out a spoonful and placed it on the central dish. They all took a pinch of it occasionally and ate it with their handful of rice. In the evening they ate by the light of fire. Feeding place was always just in front of the fireplace. Sometimes they had soups in a pot from which the people took an occasionally spoonful, all using the same spoon.[272]

Some Christian missionaries did not altogether perceive Mizo dishes as filthy and tasteless. In fact, some of them were fond of it. The Christian missionaries of both North and South

[269] Shakespear,p. 17.
[270] Shakespear pp. 36- 37.
[271] Lorrain, Log Book, p. 80, ATC Archives.
[272]Lorrain, Log Book.

Lushaihills occasionally dined with Mizos on certain special occasions like Christmas, New Year and Mizo festivals. Some of them had been eagerly waiting for such occasions to arrive. Gwyen Rees Roberts (*Pi Tei*) and Katie Hughes *(Pi Zaii*) savoured all Mizo dishes. *Pi Tei* sometimes even took the intestines of pig and cow and she found them scrumptious. She once said 'Mizo know delicious food'. Early Christian missionaries of the Lushai hills probably never tasted Mizo dishes but later missionaries accepted Mizo habits (as far as food is concerned) and consumed Mizo fare.[273]Zosiami, the daughter of another missionary, Samuel Davies had befriended Mizo boys and girls during their stay in the hill. She had accompanied to their jhums and even participated in the harvest day. Moreover, she also joined her Mizo friends to the forest in search of wild fruits. She seemed to be really fond of Mizo food which she often tasted in her friends' houses. She often said to her Mizo friends that 'We, the *Sap*,consume only *chawhmeh* / side dishes but not realfood'. She complained the food prepared in her home and hence, secretly went to her friends houses for Mizo food which she savoured heartily.[274]

Zohmangaihi Nu (Joan Lloyd), in her diary, described her life among the Mizos and expressed that life in the Lushai hills was very different from that in Britain. Servants became a necessity not a luxury in the hills as they had many extra chores that had to be done. Water had to be carried to the bungalow and all drinking water had first to be boiled. No milk or bread deliveries, milk was reconstituted from powder and bread was made in their kitchen. There was no gas or electricity in those days. Thus, cooking was done on a wood burning stove with fluctuating temperatures and paraffin burning lamps to be filled and trimmed each evening for illumination. Fruits like oranges, pineapples, papayas, mangoes and bananas were plentiful in season and were a valuable source of vitamins in their diet. They relied mostly on tinned goods but some fresh foods were available in the bazaar.[275]

J. M. Lloyd also made an analysis of Mizo food in his records that,

> "Mizo diet was a poor diet but not so poor as you might think. The rice they grow was hill rice - better than the plain rice. They husked it but never by machines so that all the goodness remained in the rice. They did not throw the goodness of the

[273] C. Rokhuma, interviewed by Lalrofeli,2015, Mission Vengthlang.
[274]Zahmingthangi D/O Rokunga (L), interviewed by Lalrofeli,2019, Bethlehem Vengthlang.
[275] J.M. Lloyd's Documents, Mizoram Concern, ATC Archives, Aizawl.

rice away by throwing away the water it was boiled in - because they boiled it till was was solid. You might not like but they did - so did I!".[276]

3.1.4. Colonialists (Administrators and Missionaries) Attitude Towards *Zu*

Consumption of *Zu*, traditional rice beer, was a common phenomenon in Mizo society. In Mizo culture *Zu* was made from husked rice through a process of distillation. Earlier the entire villagers gathered to drink it on festive occasions like *Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut*, marriage ceremonies and village feasts given by the chief or person of high dignity.[277] The British attitudes towards Mizo alcoholic beverage - *Zu* is reflected in both the government as well as the missionaries reports. In the Report of the Lushai hills, 1899 – 1900 given by the Edwin Rowlands where he talked about the tours that he undertook with David E. Jones.

> "During our first tour, we witnessed one of the Lushai feasts, in which, as they say they worship their God. They generally sacrifice to demons, of whom they are in great fear; two feasts are held; one after the clearing of the land for sowing, and the other after the 'harvest home'. This was a sight of the degradation of religion not to be forgotten; for two or three days the large village was 'given to drunkenness'; old women and old men would mutter in drunken accents. They were worshipping God".[278]

From here it may be observed that *Zu* drinking was common among the Mizos. In their second tour of the Lushai hills the missionaries were accompanied by some Mizo boys. They once again witnessed the commonality of *Zu* drinking among the people and to them Mizos were addicted to it, making every occasion the time for drinking the alcoholic beverage;

> "During the second tour, in which I was accompanied by our Lushai boys I was struck by the way the Lushais are addicted to drink; everything is made the occasion for drinking… the return from a journey, a death, a marriage, a piece of work completed, &.; the chiefs, because they have more time, seem to be rather

[276] J.M. Lloyd's Documents, Mizoram Concern, ATC Archives, Aizawl.
[277] Grace Lalhlupuii Sailo and Henry Zodinliana in Singh, N. William and Malsawmdawngliana (eds.), *Becoming Something Else: Society and Change in North East India*, p. 41.
[278] *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894 – 1957*, p. 7.

> worse than the villagers. The people are steeped in drink, superstition, ignorance and carnality. But they are interesting people to work among…".[279]

The British attitude towards *Zu* and its drinking can also be seen from the Annual Report of Baptist Christian Mission on Mizoram from 1901- 1938. In one of the reports given in 1904 F.W. Savidge shared one of his experiences when they sang a hymn on the verandah of their residence, the people came flocking to see and to hear, and several asked 'Where is the beer pot?' They (Mizo) seemed astonished that anyone could sing without drinking.[280]

In 1905 J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge made another report which throws light on Mizo drinking habits. To quote them –

> "Drink is one of the curses of this land. The Lushais do not know what moderation is where rice-beer is concerned, and the only course open for the converts is to abstain from it altogether".[281]

They perceived Mizosas not knowing their limits and could not control themselves. According to them the newMizo converts to Christianity had to abstain from drinking rice beer probably to draw a line of demarcation between Christian and non-Christians. Perhaps by seeing the evil effects that the intoxicant had on the people, on the family, society etc. they urged their new converts to totally abstain from it. It is interesting to note here that British administrators of the Lushai hills held a rather different opinion from the Christian missionaries towards *Zu* drinking and its prohibition in North and South Lushai hills. It is learnt that when there was acculturation and cultural contact between Mizos and British (Christian missionaries and British Civil Servants) an attempt to change Mizo indigenous food practices was one of the area that was being touched.

R.G. Woodhorpe, on the other hand, liked the taste of Mizo *Zu* and compared it with cranberry wine. He argued that the Mizos manufacture a kind of wine from fermented rice and water, and a fruit which he could not identify. The ingredients were placed in a large clay jar, and pressed down for several days, when the wine was fit to drink. In one of the northern villages Mizos were found sucking the wine out of the jar, by means of a long reed, which was passed from mouth to mouth; in the south they found in the houses a kind of syphon,

[279] *Reports of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, p. 7.
[280] *The Annual Report of B.M.S on Mizoram 1901 – 1938*, Serkawn, Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, 1993, p. 12.
[281] *The Annual Report of B.M.S*, p. 17.

made by joining a couple of reed together. That was used for drawing off the wine from the rice in the jar. The wine was thin, and in flavour somewhat resembled cranberry wine[282] of the western countries.

According to Shakespear Mizo had a very simple taste regarding alcoholic drink which they only consumed when they had full leisure to enjoy them and in company with a party of friends. There are two kinds of such drinks, both home made from rice. The commonest is known as *Zufang* and is a simple partially fermented drink; the other being called *Rakzu* or *Zuthak*, is distilled. This is hardly consumed but only on special occasions. Good *Zu* takes some time to prepare. After being well bruised, paddy is damped and packed away in several layers of leaves and kept for some months, the longer the better. When the *Zu* has to be brewed the bundles are opened and the contents placed in a large earthen jar and well pressed down, with a layer of leaves on top, and the jar filled up with water. After standing a few minutes the liquor was drawn off by a siphon into a brass or wooden bowl, out of which it was handed round to the guests in horns or small bamboos.[283]

Shakespear after his departure sent a letter to M. Suaka, Durtlang Chief, in 1938 in which he confessed that one of the most regrettable deeds done by the British in the Lushai Hill was the banning of *Zu* drinking as a sin. He stated that traditional Mizo rice beer was a medicine for Mizos who had been deprived of good / nutritious food and medicine. Rice beer, a good source of protein and nutrition, was banned as a sin. This act of the administration was regretted.[284].Shakespear considered well prepared *Zu* was by no means an unpalatable drink and it was never the source of crime among the Mizos. He had written in *The Lushei Kuki Clans* that,

> "It contains much nourishment, and Savunga, one of our opponents in the 1871-72 expedition, whom I found still living in 1898, was said to have taken little else during the last two years of his life. The drink naturally varies much in strength, but even at its strongest it is not very intoxicating, and it has not the exciting effect which the drink brewed from maize and millet seems to have on the eastern

[282]Woodhorpe, pp. 86-87.
[283] Shakespear, p. 37.
[284] C. Hermana, *Mingo leh Mizote (Political History of British in Mizoram*), Aizawl, Mizoram,Lamtluang Publication, 1994, p. 21.8

tribes, among whom violent crimes, committed during drinking bouts, are very common".[285]

On the 25th of June, 1908 Major Cole, the Superintendent of the LushaiHills issued an order that 'any person manufacturing rice spirit (*Zuk-zu* or *Rakzu*) (the scholar translated it as distilled rice liqour) in either Aizawl or Lunglei within a radius of five miles from the post offices of these two places without the permission in writing from the Superintendent or Sub-Divisional Officer Lunglei would from 1st July, 1908 be liable to prosecution under Section 188 I.P.C. The manufacture of *Rakzu* within the areas above noted was strictly prohibited'.[286]

N.E. Parry, in his remarkable ethnographic work on the Lakhers (Maras) who resided in the southern part of theLushai hills, left a good amount of information for the particular section. He protested against the prohibition of *Zu* drinking for Lakher and Lusei Christians who were not allowed to drink wine, beer or spirits, as no one could become a Christian who ever had touched alcohol. In his opinion that was 'going much too far' as he believed that the people had few pleasures, and after strenuous work a stimulant was rather a good thing.[287] Believing *Zu* to be a kind of 'upper' and a source of protein for hardworking Mizos, Parry thus protested against its prohibition and he felt that it would be better to encourage temperance than to insist on prohibition. The Lusei whom he thought to be more advanced than the Lakhers saw many Christians who had used alcohol, naturally they asked why their particular brand of Christianity prohibits all alcoholic drinks. He also predicted that there would soon be trouble as the Luseis had become more and more enlightened and they would inquire deeper into this *Zu* prohibition thing. For this reason, to make abstinence from drink an essential tenet of Christianity was, according to him, entirely wrong and was bound to lead to trouble. He made the suggestion that Christian Missionaries should encourage temperance in *Zu* consumption and to not base their teaching on a false foundation.[288]

A.G. McCall also made an observation on *Zu* and the prohibition of *Zu* drinking among Mizo Christian converts as well as its role in Mizo diet. He observed that *Zu* (the Lushaibeer) made from fermented rice was a frequent part of the day's diet, and as that *Zu* was strong in vitamin B and he predicted that the abandonment of *Zu* drinking would call for some counter

[285] Shakespear, p. 38.
[286] MSA, G-8, CB – 12, Dated Aijal, the 25th June, 1908.
[287] Parry, p. 21.
[288] Parry,pp. 21-22.

measure. But *Zu* was never a daily item of diet for the ordinary home; it was a mark of some real festa. The chiefs and more well-to-do people would drink it daily, usually to excess, but amid a very natural conviviality.[289]

Regarding *Zu* drinking there is difference of opinions among Mizo writers. While many believe that it was drunk by all the members of Mizo villages during festive season there is another group which argues that *Zu* drinking was not visible among the younger sections of Mizos. According to the latter, "It was only after colonial rule that Zu drinking became visible among young Mizosnot to mentionchildren"[290]. This is proved by Thanga in his *'Hman Lai Mizo Awm Dan'* when he said that prior to the establishment of colonial rule the young folks of Mizoram hardly consumed this alcoholic beverage with the exclusion of certain special occasion. But in those occasions they never got drunk[291]. Distilled alcoholic drink (*Rakzu*) was unknown in pre-colonial Mizo society. It came to be a common drink amongst Mizos only after the Lushai Hills Expedition.[292]

There is, thus, different opinions and attitudes towards *Zu* and its prohibition among the administrators and Christian missionaries. While some considered it as a sin to consume Zuothers believed it was a source of protein and energy for hardworking Mizos. Both these groups tried to justify their points to promote their interests. No concrete conclusion can be made, and the debate is still on till today.

3.2.1 Food and Christian Missionaries – Gospel Through Food

During the period between 1894 and 1968, fifty-five (55) British missionaries served in the Lushai hills; some for a long period of over thirty years, while some others remained only for a short period. They were instrumental for the rapid change in Mizo culture[293] in general and Mizo food culture in particular. The significant role played by the missionaries was acknowledged by the colonial officials. Commenting on the role of the Christian missionaries

[289] McCall, p. 187.
[290] Thanga, 144.
[291] Thanga,p. 144.
[292] K.L. Khama Chhakchhuak,p. 72.
[293] C.L. Hminga,p. 39.

in changing Mizo culture A.G. McCall had said that it was left more to the mission to impose culture and political influence among the people.[294]

In the Lushai hills the sword represented by British Indian army was followed by the cross represented by the Christian missionaries. The first ever Christian missionary to visit the country was William Williams of the Welsh Calvinistic Church in 1891. He was a young Presbyterian missionary in the Khasi and Jaintia hills which lie several hundred miles north of the Lushai hills. Among the Khasis there was already a very sizeable Christian following. He wanted to establish such a church among the Mizosand decided to travel south to visit the country. In early 1891, William Williams took an ardous journey to the Lushai hills and stayed at Aizawl for a month. Williams found the Lushai hills to be a potential area for missionary activities.[295]

In the following year, 1892, the Lushai territory was formally adopted by the Presbyterian Church of Wales as their Mission field.[296] Shortly after this, two missionaries of Aborigines Mission came to the Lushai Hills in 1894. These missionaries - J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge left remarkable imprints in the history of Mizoram. Prior to their arrival the Mizos had no written language, and therefore no literature or records. They compiled a grammar of the Lusei language with a vocabulary of about five thousand words, and they had translated portions of the New Testament.[297] In accordance with the resolution of the General Assembly of 1897 the David Evan Jones proceeded to Lushaihills to continue the missionary operations begun by Lorrain and Savidge who received and welcomed him when he reached the hills on the 30th of August, 1897. They remained in the Lushai hills till the end of the year and offered valuable help to D.E. Jones.[298] These pioneer Christian missionaries initially concentrated themselves on evangelization and education. With the passage of time they began to consciously or sometimes unconsciously change the food habits and practices of Mizos through preaching, education and health care.

Food was one way through which the gospel was preached, it was also a way that opened the minds of Mizo towards the Christian missionaries. When the pioneer missionaries F.W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain came to the Lushai hills they were looked down by Mizos as they

[294] McCall, p. 235.
[295] V.L. Zaithanga, *From Head Hunting to Soul Hunting*, Aizawl, Synod Publication Board, 1981, p. 11-16 as cited in Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers of North East India*, p. 166.
[296] J.H. Morris, *The Story of Our Foreign Mission*, Aizawl, The Synod Publication Board, 1990, p. 80.
[297] *Reports of the Foreign Mission of Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894 – 1957*, p. 2.
[298] *Reports of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894 – 1957*, p. 2.

had no political power like other British officers. They built a house without any help from indigenous people. They, thus, requested C.H. Loch, the then Administrator / Superintendent of LushaiHill, to grant them permission for counter signature for the purchase of salt. Loch acceded to their request and accordingly it became compulsory to take the signature of the missionaries for the purchase of salt. It was only after this that Mizos changed their attitude towards Christian missionaries.[299] The Missionaries, therefore, used salt as a mean to reach out to Mizos and later preached the gospel among them.

One informant said that the term '*Zosap*' (Sahib for Mizos) was given to the pioneer missionaries as they used to give out salt which was deeply appreciated by the Mizos. However, there is another view that the pioneer missionaries J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge trusted the Mizos implicitly, and soon won their confidence by simple kindness and by medical services. Because of their loving concern and services, the Mizos on their part conferred upon them a title '*Zosap*' meaning 'Sahib for Mizos' (the British were known as Sahibs), a name by which all the Christian missionaries who followed them were also called by the Mizos.[300] This is evident from the report of David Evan Jones and Edwin Rowlands (1899 – 1900) that there was no sign of mutiny although the natives (Mizos) had always been suspicious of other Sahibs , the '*Mizo Sap'* (missionaries) soon gained their confidence. Some of them stated that they would like all the sepoys and their officers to leave, but that they would wish the missionaries to remain.[301]

As stated before, the pioneer missionaries used salt as the best instrument to reach out to the Mizos. The scarcity of salt in theLushai hills made is easier for them to open the hearts of Mizosas the latter valued and treasured this commodity more than gold or other valuable commodities. This is evident from the diary of J.H. Lorrain which said,

> "The Lushai's eyes sparkle when we give salt out in the evening as a present with the ways just as though we were giving out pots of gold – only they like salt better than gold".[302]

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[299] V. Hawla, *Mizoram Hmar Chan Zosapte Chanchin*, Synod Publication Board, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1980, p. 16-17.
[300] D.F.Glover, *Set On a Hill (The Record of 50 Years in the Lushai Country*), London, Carey Press, as cited in C.L. Hminga,p. 49.
[301] *Reports of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894 – 1957*, p. 5.
[302] Lorrain, *Log Book*, p. 30.

Similarly, salt was also used to win over the hearts of Mizos and they even believed that it was God's means of helping the mission work in the hills. Lorrain once again remarked;

> "To bring a refractory chief to his senses the government stopped the sale of salt in the bazaars… we gave out that we would pay workman in salt (when building our house) … we thus got all things up from Sairang by giving salt….also plenty materials for building our house… Thus, the way was prepared for turning our way to the hearts of the people.This was God's way of helping us".[303]

The early Mizo converts often faced persecution from their Chiefs and families. The number of Christians increased year after year despite the persecutions meted out to them. Some converts were driven out of their houses and their villages. The measures of persecution also found its expression in food as David E. Jones had reported in 1906 that 'Christians were not allowed to buy food, and things were made so uncomfortable for the Christians in Vanphunga's village that, towards the end of the year, it was reported that over 80 had ceased public profession. Some chief fined their villagers for listening to the preaching of the Gospel'.[304]

Katie Hughes (called by Mizos asPi Zaii) who came to the Lushai hills in 1924 was one of the most noteworthy Christian missionaries working in the Lushaihills. Her contribution towards women empowerment / upliftment was worth remembering. She tried to promote the importance of child care and nutrition. Besides teaching natives the art of knitting and tailoring she started the first ever cooking class for women in the hills. She even organised tea party for her Mizo counterparts. For her meritorious work and contribution for the upliftment of women the British Government of India conferred her the prestigious Kaisar-I-Hind[305]. It is heard that she even dined with Mizos many a times and also took part in Mizocommunal feast. Perhaps other missionaries inter-dined with natives however there has been little reference to other British officers and missionaries inter-dining with Mizos.

In the southern part of the Lushai hills the attempt to educate Mizos was more or less under the Baptist Missionaries Society which looked after mission school. The Missionaries introduced domestic training for the students and received support and cooperation of the administrators as the report of 1924 says that they had a visit from Parry, the Superintendent

[303] Lorrain,p. 31.
[304] *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957*, p. 34.
[305] *Reports of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, p. 53.

of the Lushai Hills, and his wife who really appreciated the domestic training given in the mission school. She offered a valuable prize for domestic economy that included theoretical and practical work in goat keeping, gardening, first aid, weaving, needle work, cookery, laundry and household management. Even Mizo parents seemed to appreciate cookery and weaving imparted by the missionary school teachers.[306]

Culinary skill improved after the coming of Christian missionaries who hired indigenous people to cook for them. They taught them how to make pudding, custard, biscuits, cake, fries etc. which were hitherto unknown in Mizo diet. J.H. Lorrain described how their cooking was done by local boy who could serve up a duck or fowl or even a fruit or meat (when they got one) nicely with gravy. Mizosquickly learnt the art of cooking which is evident from Lorrain's dairy as he commented on his native cook as, 'The butter he makes out of the milk by shaking it in a bottle for a considerable time, and when it appears on the table in glass, rich prettily decorated in the form of a rose, it looks as if it might have come from a town dairy'.[307]

Besides the initiation of new culinary practices among Mizos the Christian missionaries started the inclusion of a separate kitchen in house set up. Many missionaries had their own kitchens which had a remarkable influence on Mizo society and culture. Though pre-colonial Mizo houses had devoted some area within their household for cooking purposes, they never had established separate kitchen while building their houses. Some missionaries, in fact, set up separate kitchen not only for cooking but also for the higher purposes of maintaining hygienity. This new style of keeping the kitchens in segregation did influence Mizos, many of them began to build their own separate kitchen in the southern part.[308]

In the North Lushai hills, the same practice of housing was also seen particularly in Mission Veng which seemed to have been purchased by the Presbyterian Mission Society from the chief of Tlangnuam, Sonar. The area was reserved only for missionaries and Mizo Christian workers and it was stipulated that there should be houses not more than 75. Pastors, Sunday School leaders, employees of Synod Press, and churchmen resided. It was planned that there should be at least 10 metres distance between each house. It was a must for each house to have covered pit latrine for which inspectors, Ch. Pasena and Lianhranga, were appointed. In

[306] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901 – 1938*, p. 205.
[307] Lorrain, p.50.
[308] L.T. Muana Miller, interviewed by Lalrofeli, 2015, Serkawn, Lunglei.

the Mission Veng area Mizo settlers also built separate kitchen for cooking purpose. However, only the well to do groups could construct and maintain separate kitchen though the missionaries desired each household to have the kitchen house.[309] The construction of kitchen house became status and class maker as well as marker.

Missionaries of both North and South Lushaihills had domestic helpers. Many of these 'native cooks' were taught western culinary practices including frying, roasting, baking etc. One of the missionaries' acquaintances, V.M. Dawngliana was interviewed on the 15th of March, 2013. He worked for J.M. Lloyd who provided him with education and shelter. J.M. Lloyd hired a cook named Taipuia who worked on daily basis. The informant mentioned that Taipuia cooked three times a day for breakfast, lunch and dinner. For breakfast the diet consisted of white or quaker oats mixed with either potato or pumpkin. They usually cooked rice as the main course of their lunch. The Lloyd's hardly consumed pork which was the most favourite meat of the Mizo and they preferred beef and chicken.[310]This suggests that beef eating introduced by the British in the Lushai hills took a large part in the diet not only of Christian missionaries but also Mizos in the 1940's. It also carries a message that cattle were plenty in the hills and beef eating took a large part in Mizo fare also.

According to J.H. Lorrain, there was a tendency among Mizo Christians to abandon all their ancient customs, good and bad alike, and to adopt western ideas. That appeared to them to be a very great pity and thus, they were trying to teach them how to be Christian and still be thorough Lushais. They wanted them to discard only their bad customs but to keep up all the innocent ones. Mizos were fond of singing but one which was somewhat remarkable was that Mizoboys and girls did not sing in their natural state. It was the middle aged and the aged only who attempted to fill the air with music and then only when they were drinking beer. Lorrain in the Baptist Mission Report of 1904 said,

> "I remember when we sang the first hymn on our verandah, how the people came flocking to see and hear, and several asked, "Where is the beer pot?" They seemed astonished that anyone could sing without drinking.[311]

The missionaries did not actually introduce new food item as the role of introducing new food was more or less taken up by the colonial administrators. Yet the missionaries were the

[309] Chhuanliana BVT, interview.
[310] V.M. Dawngliana, interview.
[311] *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram 1901-1938*, p. 12.

one to be credited for introducing new style of cooking, eating manner and new way of cleaning up vegetables and dirty dishes. They were the one to introduce pudding and the art of baking. The various significances of milk and milk products were also disseminated by them.

3.3.1 Food, Famine, the Government and Christian Missionaries

1911- 12 and 1930 Famines:

Mizoram is prone to natural calamities particularly famine due to its geographical location in the tropical area. It is blessed with rich forests. But the plentiful bamboos often created problems to the people as the seeds of bamboos helps in the reproduction of rats in large number. It is said that famines of two kinds – *Mautam* and *Thingtam* have visited Mizoram after every fifty and thirty years respectively. These two famines and their impacts in the process of annexation of Lushai hills to British India have already been mentioned in the first chapter. After the establishment of colonial rule in the Lushai hills the famines once again struck the whole of Lushai hills in 1911 – 1912. The Christian missionaries called this disastrous calamity the means to extend the Saviour's Kingdom as J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge had reported in 1912,

> "The gaunt spectre of famine has been spreading distress and sorrow all over this fair land, but we have been spared the still more terrible experience of pestilence which at one time seemed to seep the country, and the trying times through which we have been passing have strengthened our faith and have been the means of extending the Saviour's Kingdom".[312]

The famine of 1911 – 12 was the first famine experienced byMizos under the British rule. The missionaries had written that some Mizos were still nursing the feelings of resentment against those who have occupied their country but the famine had surely dispelled any such thought. This periodical flowering, seeding and dying down of certain species of bamboo all over Lushai hills was followed by an enormous number of jungle rats. Most of the various kinds of bamboo flower and die only once in about 50 years. This does not happen to all the species simultaneously. There are two distinct groups. The *Mautam* group flowers and dies

[312]*The Annual Report of B.M.S. on Mizoram*, 1993, p. 81.

down after every 50 years while the Thing- tam group flowers and dies down after every 30 years. The connection between the flowering of bamboos and the invasion of rats is a disputed point, but the theory which seems to be most satisfactory is that the bamboo fruit has the property of making the rats which eat it extraordinarily prolific [313] and helps in the reproduction in a prolific rate.

Food scarcity caused by the famine made many natives turn to the missionaries for help and support. As Mizos were used to having plenty to eat, the scarcity caused by the ravages of the rats had been felt very acutely. The Government provided some relief work which was co-operated by the missionaries. The relief work done by the missionaries and its result is described by J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge as –

> "In many ways we have been able to alleviate the want anddistress around us, and the gratitude of the poor has most pleasing to witness. Scores of men and women who had no food to have been enabled to down to Demagiri to a fresh supply of food by the loan of a few pounds of rice apiece. Many others have been kept from want by being employed in building, road making, jungle cutting, gardening and other works about the compound. While not a few who have been unable to work have been assisted with gifts of rice. It has been a peculiar privilege to be living inthe Lushai hills this year and thus be able to help the people in their hour of need. They have always looked upon us as their friends, and at such a time as this the poor especially find our presence a source of real comfort and strength, for they feel that they can come to us in their extremity and be sure of a helping hand".[314]

Another report of the missionaries also testifies that Mizos struggled hard during the famine of 1911 -12. Many children, women, decrepit, blind and paralysed, had gone to the Mission Compound in search of help. Some came from a great distance. The missionaries claimed that they tried to help as many as possible of those poor people as they hoped that by rendering help to Mizos in their time of distress there would be greater possibilities for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.[315]

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[313] *The Annual Report of B.M.S. on Mizoram*, pp. 85-86.
[314] *The Annual Report of B.M.S on Mizoram*, pp. 87 – 91.
[315] *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram, 1894- 1947*, pp. 48-49.

In the Baptist Missionary reports it is mentioned that the Mizos were traditional rat eaters. Captured rats would be used as food. But during the *Mautam* famine, there was an abundant supply of rats. Such abundance perhaps diminished the utility. Moreover, the dried rats would hardly make up for the loss of rice, which was the staple food of the Mizos. Thus, they began to search the forests for roots, jungle yams and other wild produce. They depended on wild sago palm, wild yam[316] and other jungle products. There is a writing that poses a somewhat different perspective towards the eating of dog meat amongst Mizos. Laithangpuia had written that in pre-colonial Mizoram dog meat was hardly consumed because of its unpleasant proclivities / smell. It was only after the *Mautam* Famine of 1911 that they began to take it as a part of their dish[317]. But oral as well as most available data informs that dog meat was one delicacy of Mizos even before the establishment of British rule in the Lushaihills. However, this point proves the fact that food shortage during the famine was quite acute so much so that dog meat like any other source of food other than rice or vegetables was taken on a large scale.

When the famine once again struck the Lushai hills in 1930 the government and the church combined to fight the menace. On the initiative of the administration, Mizos set and reset rat traps in their fields. Individual farmers could trap as many as 500 rats in a single night. As the agricultural consumables became rare, the community would fall back on their forest resources. By this time, they had not yet developed banana plantation. In the devastating *Mautam* famine of 1930 Mizos found themselves helpless. The marginal tribes would be starving from the very beginning of the famine. Such families would be dependent on the community for food and were among the first to surrender to the chief as *Inpuichhung bawi* (people who due to poverty, food shortage, sickness or distress surrender as lifelong slaves against food and shelter to the chiefs). These families would also migrate to the plains and beg even before the community had decided in favour of it.[318]

Thus, serious famines were witnessed by the colonialists in theLushai hills who learnt the disastrous consequences of the famines on the Mizos. They had the full opportunity to learn and observe that Mizos had to change their staple food from rice to jungle yams and shoots. When such natural calamity struck Mizo hills they never made an attempt to change the food culture of Mizos by switching the staple food of rice with that of flour or grains like wheat.

[316]*The Annual Report of B.M.S on Mizoram*, as cited Sajal Nag, p. 72.
[317] Thanga,p. 121.
[318]Nag, pp. 81 – 83.

Instead Mizos were sent to take a long journey to Assam to gather rice.[319] The attitude of both the administrators and the missionaries gives the impression that their indifferent/inaction towards food shortage in the Lushai hills was one way of their attempt to consolidate colonial rule in the Lushai hills.

Since the famine of 1911 there was a profound change in the attitude of Mizos towards the administration and the missionaries. The relief measures provided by the administration had a profound effect on the overall image of the British Raj in the minds of the people, who began to look it upon as a kind and merciful system manned by the white – skinned Europeans. "The administration was looked up as a paternalistic, and in a matter of two decades the white men were now addressed as *Sap pa* (white father / white lord / Lord of the Lushai slaves)".[320]However, this quotation is erroneous in its assumuption yet literally correct because *Sap* in Mizo language refers to white people / a sahib or government official while *pa*can be either translated as man or father. But in Mizo language structure to use *pa*as a suffix todenote 'father', the preceding noun should always be a proper noun; such as *Awithangpa*, father of Awithanga. In case if the preceeding noun is not a proper noun, such as *Sap*, which is a common noun, then the suffix *pa* would simply mean 'man' and therefore, the accurate translation of *Sap pa* in Mizo usage is 'white man'.

After receiving help from both the administrators and the missionaries Mizo began to rechristen the white officers and missionaries with Mizo name. One British officer T.H. Lewin, for instance, was so popular among the Mizos that the villagers called him as Thangliana – a Mizo name. D.E. Jones the Welsh missionary who pioneered the Presbyterian church in the Mizo hills was called Zosaphluia and J.M. Lloyd, the late missionary of the Presbyterian mission, Zohmangaihi pa. Similarly a number of British officers and missionaries were given fond names[321]. The missionaries are often called 'Zosap Missionaries' till date. This has great and interesting connotation – ***Zo*** literally mean high / remote, it is a shorten form of Mizo, and sap means white man. When combine *Zo* with *Sap* (*Zosap*) it means the *Sap* who were part of Mizo society. Or it can be said, ***Zo – Sap*** means 'white man for Mizos'. This word, *Zosap*, is a term of endearment which shows that *Zosap* were Mizo own white men. What is noteworthy is that all such names had paternal implications. This is what the British always tried to achieve; to conquer the Mizos morally

[319] P.C. Rokhuma, interview.
[320] Nag, p. 146.
[321]Nag, p. 146.

so that they were ethically bound to them. This was what they achieved. They wanted to project the British as paternal figures who protected the subjects, secured them from enemies, provided them succor from calamities and the colonial administration as a paternal system. From the results it was obvious that the Raj had been successful in manufacturing the desired consent to their rule and implanting that image[322]. Food shortage caused by the *Mautam* and *Thingtam* famine of 1911 and 1930 won the battle for the British and Christian missionaries who had assumed the status of benevolent as well as friendly helpers of the Mizos.

3.3.2 Mizo Response to Newly Introduced Food

Before the coming of the British, Mizos considered all foodstuffs as both nutriment and medicine. In principle, the dietary regime was supposed to provide all that was needed to maintain the body's vital energy. It was believed that the first step in treating an illness must be a change of diet and that medication (the help of traditional Mizo priest *Bawlpu* – who was like a doctor and thus offered sacrifices to appease the devil spirit presumed to have caused the illness) should be brought to bear only if diet proves ineffectual.

Mizos responded well the abundance of salt which was patent by J.H. Lorrain and F.W. Savidge. Mizoresponses to new food culture represented by European and Indian food culture were varied from one food item to another. While some were readily accepted some other failed to gain their ground till 1947. One example of positive response towards new food is the introduction of biscuits in the hills. In the initial period, of all the new food the Europeans introduced Mizos loved biscuits the most. They loved it perhaps because of the taste and it made them long for 'heaven' instead of '*Pialral*' (the final abode of spirits in pre-Christian Mizo belief). This is a point to ponder as those acquainting themselves with the missionaries had developed likeness for western food. This is evident from J.H. Lorrain's Log Book that has a title like 'Biscuits in Heaven',

> Khawngaihbula asked Challiana, "Has Jesus got many biscuits in heaven, because if He has I want to go there".[323]

[322] Nag, p.146.
[323] Lorrain, Log Book, ATC Archives.

On the other hand, there are evidences showing Mizo refusal to accept the goodness of new food culture that includes the increasing consumption of oil and sugar and there was some attempt to spread the message among themselves through the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*. In the 1906 issue there is an article that tells the reader that the consumption of sugar and oils can increase saturated fat in the body and this was harmful for health as a whole.[324]Mizosdid not welcome the introduction of new breed of fowls in their land. In fact, there are many Mizos who still preferredMizo chicken prepared in indigenous style over bigger breed of fowls, such was also the case in colonial Lushai hills as there is no evidence to show that new breed was welcomed and liked by Mizos.

However, Mizo responded well the fusion of Indian and Mizo food preparation particularly in the cooking of meat. In the 1936 issue of the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* there was cooking guide providing recipes for different meat dishes. It is interesting to note that such recipes were provided by a Mizo, Makthanga.[325] It appears that Mizoswere against the intervention of 'alien food culture' in the initial years but with the passage of time they began to develop a taste for those 'alien' food and accepted its inclusion in their food preparation.

When the lady missionaries taught Mizo women new style of cooking,such as, the making of chicken broth and egg flip in 1931-1932. Mizo women readily welcomed their new skill of cooking besides learning many other things like sewing and tending their kids. The missionary report of the North Lushai Hills of the year 1931-32 reported that,

> "We also teach these mothers to sew. At the beginning of the year they could not hold their needles properly; now they can hem stitch and cut out small frocks for their babies. We also teach to keep their homes tidy and to cook. They learnt how to make chicken broth and egg flipduring the year. At the end we had a competition day, and it was great to fun to hear twelve eggs beaten all at same time".[326]

In some cases, Mizos had also showed positive response to the introduction and consumption of beverages like milk and tea. By 1927 milk and tea took a large part in Mizo eating habits and spread across the length and breadth of the country.[327] Sugar received warm welcome

[324]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*, 1906, ATC Archives.
[325]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*, 1936, pp. 174 – 168, ATC Archives.
[326]*Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, p. 106.
[327]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*, 1927, p. 167, ATC Archives.

although ordinary natives did not afford to consume it on a regular basis. Jaggery, another sweet food, was well received and it assumed great place in the hearts of Mizos as luxurious food item. Thus, there were positive as well as negative responses from Mizos on the coming and development of new and colonial food culture in their country.

CHAPTER 4

IMPACT OF COLONIALISM ON MIZO FOOD CULTURE

The impact of colonial rule on Mizo society, polity, economy, religion and culture was not at all minimal in all spheres. The cultural consequences of colonialism are of some relevance to the ongoing discussion on the nature of colonial impact. Scholars ranging from the radical to neo-colonial persuasions have attempted to revise the nationalist and Marxist critiques of colonialism. The well - known thesis that imperialism is good for the human race, and especially good for its victims has surfaced recently. It is argued that colonialism is a 'robust force of social transformation and technological advance' and under its influence the colonies experienced greater development than they might have otherwise. The revisionist historiography, pointed out by K.N. Pannikar, argues that colonial rule did not represent a fundamental break from, rather it marked a continuation of prior indigenous culture in more ways than one.[328].

In the case of the Lushai hills, on account of the popularization of the colonialists' culture which was ultimately forced to the colonized culture colonialism had far reaching consequences on the food culture of Mizos. According to A. G. McCall, it is almost sure that the Mizos were deeply influenced by varied contacts with pre-dominantly stronger civilizations through the earlier ages for, even in such a desert culture superficialities, indigenous society produced some of those traits of nobility, bravery and hospitality, which are common to the most cultured perceptions of human relationships.[329] What has been implied by McCall as 'the earlier ages' is not known due to non - availability of sources but it is evident that Mizos had cultural contact with other people. But, none of those contacts with other people had touched the lives of Mizos as the British rule did. As the colonial administrators and Christian missionaries constituted the harbingers or the protagonists in the introduction of new food items and new culinary skill, there was considerable deviation from the existing food culture and also a deviation from indigenous perception and conceptualization of food, culture and health, because the missionaries and colonial administrators had been trying to hegemonize Mizo culture.

[328]Pannikar, pp. 25-26.
[329]McCall, p. 34.

In this chapter an attempt is made to understand the impact of colonialism on Mizo food culture. By consulting existing literature and archival sources, and by conducting interviews the following points derived as the impact of colonialism on various aspects orbiting Mizo food habits.

4.1.1 Change in the Method of Preparation:

The first and foremost impact of colonialism on Mizo food culture could be seen in the sphere of the method of food preparation. There was a paradigm shift from the traditional method of food preparation to a new hybrid of 'Indo-European-Mizo' food preparation. The change in the method of preparation also include the change in the ingredients, the heating part as well as the method of preparation. When new food items like, potato, milk, new varieties of vegetables and different spices had been brought to the hills a new method of cooking also emerged. It is obvious that for the preparation of potato, simple boiling, to which Mizos had been familiar, seemed not enough. Though the missionaries conducted cooking class in the mission school, most of which were presumably western style of cooking, Mizos were obliged to invent new method of getting those new 'raw' foods into a 'cooked' form. In that process, a new concept of cleanliness and hygienity also sprang up.

One unique feature of pre-colonial Mizo food was its simple preparation. Boiling was the predominant cooking style. However, colonial rule brought out great deviation in the food preparation with the increasing availability of salt, oil and sugar. Frying was never practiced by Mizos in pre-colonial times. Though there is no direct evidence to prove the practice of frying method after colonial rule it is clear that frying method was colonial introduction. Frying might have been unpopular due to scarcity of cooking oil in the hills however it constitutes a new method hitherto unheard of. Besides frying, there seem to have been new method of using oil in food preparation. The Indian curry had crept in. Though Mizos used oil in their food preparation up until the British rule the way oil was used greatly changed.

The colonial impact is visible from the usage of *'Chawtani'* as one of the food item. Mizos localized chutney as '*Chawtani'* to suit their understanding of the dish which was previously called '*sawh*'. '*Chawtani*' took the place of '*sawh*' as one of the important dish of Mizos. The ingredients also became richer and were more diversified. Salt began to be used increasingly in food preparation and took the place of the traditional wood ash which was

used to add saltiness to the food. The increasing availability of salt greatly alteredMizo taste buds who more or less switched over to it in their food preparation. The method of meat preparation underwent a change however boiling still took the dominant room.

The preparation of a sweet food, *Kurtai* (jaggery), from sugarcane plant was another colonial introduction. The only sweet food known to Mizos in pre-colonial period being honey, in such situation jaggery attracted Mizos like a beautiful jewellery. Whosoever afforded to consume jaggery was considered 'high' in the society. The same situation occurred when crystalized sugar was introduced. Though villagers did not afford to consume these sweets on a regular basis it created in them the effort to make jaggery. By 1930's jaggery was made and sold by the villagers of Lungleng village.[330] Tea drinking became widespread in the Lushai hillsand assumed the status of a social drink consumed by every household. When increasing amount of *Kurtai* became available it was consumed simultaneously with the tea (red tea without sugar was the popular form of drink in the Lushai hills during this period due to scarcity of crystallized sugar and milk). Therefore, a new style of drinking tea with *Kurtai* emerged, and this may be considered one of the unique feature of Mizo food habit which is purely colonial in its origin.

The colonial officials and Christian missionaries relied heavily on tinned food imported from England and elsewhere. As they could not adapt themselves with the existing food and method of food preparation many tinned foods consisting of meat, milk products, creams, baking materials etc. were brought in the Lushai hills. As many of them relied on indigenous people to prepare their food, they taught the preparation of the tinned foods to native cooks thereby, learnt the skills of preparinf food in European style. Taipuia and Hmingliani, for instance, served the missionaries and their families as cooks thereby learning the skills of preparing new foods. They were greatly influenced by the western method of food preparation imparted by their European employers that eventuallyconvinced them to adoptit in their own kitchen.[331]

[330]Chhuanliana BVT interview.
[331]Nupuii D/O Hmingliani (c/o Hmingliani Bakery), interviewed by Lalrofeli, 2016, Chawnpui &V.M. Dawngliana interview.

4.1.2 Change in Pattern of Eating / Consumption

As food is the most important need of humankind it acts as bond maker by binding people together. Each culture / nation has a unique set of customs for how to act before, during and after a meal. What one thinks as appropriate and good manners in his/ her culture may not be so in another culture. Like any other people Mizos developed their own dining customs which was, in pre-colonial period, simple and less flamboyant. The family would sit together on the floor sharing rice, vegetables, meat or other dishes from one big plate made of wood. The eldest male member of the family would take the first bite and only then other diners would feel free to savour the food. No one, except the head of the family, would talk during the meal as they considered meal time was not only a good time for teaching and for distribution of family work but also it was the only time when all the family members were available. No one would intrude the diners during meal time because intrusion was considered ill mannerism. The young ones were supposed to eat their food as fast as they could because using lots of time for eating was considered as bad habit/manner. But after colonial rule there was remarkable change in the dining manner of Mizos. They started using tables, stools and short stools. Instead of sharing food from the same bowl they also used separate bowl/plate for each individual diner. After being exposed to the culturalpractices of their colonial masters and their neighbouring communities under colonial rule many began to use spoons and forks in place of hands. Thus, they required more time to complete their meal time because the usage of spoons and forks required more time, and the missionaries did not approve eating without proper chewing.

In pre-colonial Lushai hills food was shared by the family by using the same bowl *(Chawthlengpui).* There could never be a distinction between the rich and the poor in meal eating style. All the diners sat together and shared the food. Generally,*Thlanvawng* (Gmelina arborea) was used for this plate. The size varied in accordance with the size of a family.[332] It not only nourishes their bodies but it also strengthens their bond as family and friends, and so food became a medicine for the heart and soul.

Like other non-literate societies Mizo children received their primary education at home. Boys learn their traits from their fathers and girls learn theirs from mothers. At meal time when the whole family would sit in a circle on the floor, eating food from a large common

[332] *Mizo Thilhlui Thenkhat (Objects of Mizo Antiquity),* Aizawl, Mizoram Tribal Research Institute Directorate of Art and Culture, 1993, J & J Press, p. 4.

wooden plate, the father who is head of the family would give assignments of work to the family members and would speak words of advice or caution to his children.[333] Meal time was, therefore, used by Mizos for counselling and guidance.

Eating food/dining in other people's houses without proper invitation was considered to be a way of ill-mannerism particularly for women. When they received invitation during community feast they usually pretended that they could not accept those kind of invitation or they showed that they did not like to eat by saying "*Ka chak lo ve, ka puar e*" (I have no appetite for food, I'm already full). If the inviter/ host really wanted them to accept the invitation, then he would take the hands of the invitee and dragged him to his house. When he failed to drop them to his house the invitees would return.[334] Thus, in pre-colonial period this kind of attitude was considered well-mannerism as far as food eating is concerned. Actually they contemplated that this attitude was one way of showing "*Tlawmngaihna*"[335] (self-sacrifice, unselfishness etc.).[336] When they ate food the eldest took the first bite of rice, he / she then drank vegetable soup or broth, it was only after this was completed that others would join him/ her in consuming the food. Those who failed to abide by these manners were considered *Zaktheilo* (immodest, shameless and indecent).[337]

Among the Maras (then known as Lakhers) cold water was never drunk at meals, but the food was washed down with the water in which the vegetables had been cooked. When a family was having its meal the door was usually closed, and if a visitor came while people were at a meal it was etiquette for him to go away and return later, even if pressed to stay, as it was bad manners to interrupt people at their food. When a child wandered into a house while meal was in progress a little rice was put into his right hand and a little meat into his left and was sent away. It was considered by the Maras the height of stinginess and bad manners to send a child away from a meal without giving him something to eat. At the end of a meal anything left over was put back into the cooking pot for use at the next meal.[338]

Such pattern of eating that had been followed by Mizos even after the consolidation of British rule in the Lushai Hills steadily changed under the influence of Christian missionaries and colonial administrators working in their country. As mentioned in the first point, the

[333] C.L. Hminga, p. 28.
[334] V.L. Siama, p. 25.
[335]Siama, p.25.
[336] Lorrain, p. 513.
[337]Siama, p.25.
[338] Parry, p. 84.

maintenance of hygienity was considered one of the most important significance of education imparted by the missionaries as well as the government. Presumably, hygienity in pattern of eating was one of the most important aspects of education, thus, their new conceptualization of cleanliness automatically demanded a change in their pattern of eating in which sharing food from one common plate had to be discarded.Mizos working as domestic helpers and government and mission employees were the first to discard traditional mode of eating.[339]

Thus, colonialism had brought significant change in Mizotraditional way of dining which eventually paved the way for the evolution of a new dining manner. For instance, the tradition of slurping while sipping vegetable soup and broth and, which was in fact one way that Mizos showed their positive responses to the food that had been prepared, but became bad manner as per the new food etiquette. Furthermore, the mouth should be closed while chewing the food as the habit of opening one's mouth while chewing was considered as bad manner.

In the meantime, the most active and prominent non-government association (N.G.O.) viz. the Young Mizo Association (Y.M.A.) played remarkable role in the changing pattern of eating. The organization was formed with the initiative of missionaries. Three years after the end of colonial rule, that is, in 1950 Crystal Jubilee of the Y.M.A. was celebrated. The 1950 Y.M.A. General Conference held in April passed the resolution of local or branch wised instructions to be done in every village or locality that had Y.M.A. branch on topics like –the usage of lavatory, consumption of food and *Zu*. Regarding food people were asked to give up the traditional mode of food sharing from one bowl as it was unhealthy, disgraceful and uneconomical. Mizos were a small tribe blessed with good health and thus remained untouched by contagious diseases. Due to interaction with others as well as greater exposure beyond Mizoram diseases previously unknown now became widespread. As it was believed that food sharing from common plate, using common spoon and hands for dining were one of the causes of the spread of new diseases. Mizos hospitality include inter-dining with guests from common plate. If the guest had incurable or contagious disease there was a good chance of acquiring the unknown disease by all the family members.[340]

[339] C. Rokhuma interview.
[340] C. Vanlallawma, *YMA History 1935-1995*, Aizawl, Central YMA in collaboration with NFA, 1998, pp. 38-39.

The Y.M.A. urged the people to discard the tradition mode of eating as it was 'primitive' and argued that it did not exist amongst civilized society. Moreover, the traditional pattern of eating was perceived to disfavor women and the server particularly in big family as they had to attend to the need of other family members and were thus deprived of time and rice throughout meal time. It was uneconomical as the rice was put on large amount resulting in a large amount of left overs. Therefore, it was desirable for all the diners to have a separate plate or bowl which was more healthy and economical.[341]

There was, thus, a tendency on the part of educated Mizos and N.G.O.'s to change the traditional mode of eating and replaced it with western style. The traditional Mizo dining pattern was considered 'primitive' and 'uncivilized'. Instead of preserving the age long tradition of food sharing educated Mizos and NGO's, the most influential indigenous group, desired to do away with it. As a result, the traditional mode of dining perished. There might have been complete change and complete dispense of the traditional dining manner in big villages or headquarters of the government officials and Christian mission during colonial rule while the traditional pattern perhaps continued in remote villages till the 1960's.

4.1.3 Accentuating Clean and Hygienic Food

One of the most important impact of colonialism on Mizo society was the change in Mizo understanding and practice of cleanliness. What was considered clean and hygiene was not clean and hygiene at all for the colonialists as both the parties had been using different parameters to scale the level of hygienity. Maintenance of certain standards of conduct were required of those wishing to become Christians and in order to remain Christians in good standing. This was such a clear and repeated emphasis that we can safely assume that the converts themselves understood Christianity as, at least in part, involving a specific and different way of life. Areas in which 'Christian' standards affected life-style included such things as opposition to the use of intoxicants, stress upon hygienic living conditions etc.[342] The unhygienic living conditions often prompted Mizos to move from one place to another. Such condition was noted by the missionaries and the colonial officials and therefore took

[341] C. Vanlallawma, *Y.M.A. History 1935-1995*, p. 39.
[342] Frederick S. Downs, 'Faith and Life – Style: How Christianity was Understood by the 19th Century Converts in North – East India'in Milton Sangma &David R.Syiemleh (eds.), *Essays on Christianity and Change in North –East India*, New Delhi, Indus Publishing Company, 1994, p.148.

immediate steps to put an end to the unhygienic living style of Mizos. John Shakespear also talked about how the insanitary habit contributed to frequent shifting of village site when he said,

> "Their custom of burying their death within their village tends to make a site unhealthy, especially as the water supply is usually so situated as to receive the drainage of the village, and when the rate of mortality rises unduly high, a move is at once made".[343]

The foremost impact of colonialism on Mizofood culture is the stress laid on hygienity/cleanliness to preserve mental as well as physical health. In the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* (1922) emphasis was laid on hygienity that urged the Mizo Christian to - 'Wash their face , Clean up their teeth, Comb their hair, Pile their nails and Worship God every day'.[344] Such simple teachings seemed to have big consequences. The people of Lushai Hills started cleaning up vegetables, fruits and meats before cooking. In the Lushai HillsDistrict Cover of 1929 general section contain orders that tried to promote hygienity among the people. It said "Houses within the *Vengs* (localities) of the Aijal reserve will not exceed seven *hlams* (Mizo measurement by using arms as per which one *hlam* is an equivalent of 1.2 metre) in all length and three *hlams* in breadth. Cook houses shall not exceed three *hlams* in length and two in breadth. Shop owners are responsible that all roofs of cook houses are made of corrugated iron, as a preventive against fire.[345]In that order instructions were also issued that the selling of dried fish or rotten flesh in the District Bazaars was prohibited and that milk for sale must be carried in fly proof cans with tight fitting lids, and on no account may open receptacles be used.[346]Great emphasis and stress were, therefore, laid on hygienic living and food selling in the market.

K.L. Khama Chhakchhuak noted the improvement in meat preparation towards the end of British rule but he attributed the interaction with other people like Indians and Burmese as the main factor for the improvement. In both pre-colonial and colonial period, before the 1940's, Mizos never used boiled water to clean up pig and fowl skin and meat as they used fire for

[343] Shakespear, p. 22.
[344] *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1922, Account No. 10647 / 079.5418 ATC Archives.
[345] MSA, G-392, CB-31, *The Lushai Hills District Cover* - 1929, Hill Officers' Conference.
[346] MSA, G- 392, CB-31, *The Lushai Hills District Cover* - 1929, Hill Officers' Conference, No. 6 & 7.

the said purposes. After 1945 they began to use boiled water for cleaning the meat after their interaction with *Vai* (Indian) and *Kawl*(Burmese).[347]

Before the establishment and consolidation of the British rule in the Lushai hills Mizosmigrated to new unoccupied places after every 5-6 years. Their migratory nature was besides many other factors, somehow, an important consequence of their low level of hygienity. After settling in one village for four/five year, without maintaining cleanliness in and around their houses, they often face the outbreak of epidemics due to their poor sense of hygienity. When such epidemics broke out the village elders would suggest that it was time for them to move to a new place (*Khua a hlui ta, thing bul lung bul a mawih zo va, kan zun leh ek hing kan tuar ta lo anih hi, khawthar I sat ang u").* Their habit of moving to a new place saved them from virtual extinction.[348]After colonial rule such habits of moving from one place to another stopped as the whole Lushai country was under the single administration of the British.

Soon after the spread of Christianity, Mizo converts began to observe Sunday by devoting it to God. They also considered Saturday as '*Inrinni*' (literally translated as preparation day) for the coming Sunday and therefore, they were taught to clean their houses, wash their clothes, takebath and clean up their edibles/food items so that they could devote the next day for God without any fracas.[349] That kind of new habits brought a lot of change in the Mizo concept of hygienity and cleanliness that also manifested in their method of food preparation.

The stress laid on hygienity in food preparation is also evident from the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* of 1906 in which one Mizo by the name of R.D. Leta had urged Mizos to clean rice thoroughly before cooking. He also mentioned that since many of the rice that they had been consuming came from plain areas one needed to wash it with great care because those rice were believed to have been old, dirty, and could also spread different diseases. When Mizos faced *Thingtam* famine many of them went to plain areas to buy rice but this happened to cause many fatal diseases and loss of many lives. During the course of their journey many of them just drank water presuming that those were fit for drinking and they also just savoured rice without washing them. Their ignorance towards hygienity, thus, resulted in the outbreak of epidemics. Many lost their lives not because of starvation caused by famine but

[347] Chhakchuak, p.70.
[348] Thanga, p.81.
[349] L.T. Muana interview.

because of epidemics. To avoid the reoccurrence of such disastrous incident he urged women, who did cooking for the family, to wash rice coming from plain areas with hot water.[350] The awareness on hygienity was, therefore, preached not only by the missionaries but also by educated Mizos.

In the *Kristian Tlangau* (monthly magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, published since 1914, the name maybe translated as the 'Christian Herald') November issue of 1941 the Red Cross Committee sent out messages to the Mizos to change their child feeding pattern, that is, mouth to mouth feeding by the mother. The article pointed out that this method of feeding could easily spread diseases which are contagious. So, Mizos were asked to use spoon instead of mouth to feed their children.[351]

Missionaries like May Bounds and G.M. Evans described the improvement in house construction, and food preparation. They described that the typical Mizo house had walls, floors, doors, all made of bamboo. Very strong and heavy bamboo for the floors, plaited bamboo for walls – two layers fairly strong, and a lighter type plaited bamboo for doors and an open weave type of plaited bamboo above the door to allow smoke to escape. The roof was made of straw. There would be raised baked mud cooking area and the cooking would be done on a wood fire with three large stones to support the cooking pot. The rice would be cooked first, then the vegetable or whatever was to be eaten with the rice. The family would sit round in circle for the meal and after this the floor would be swept and very simply any bits of rice from the floor would be directed to a special 'small hole' in the floor and underneath chickens would be waiting. The standard of housing gradually improved, out-house for cooking meals, hygienic latrine outside, pre-fabricated wall panel and corrugated iron roofs. These helped to collect rainwater and were a great help to a family.[352]

As mentioned in the previous section hygienity in food sharing was promulgated by Y.M.A. (previously Young Lushai Association). Sharing food from common plate or bowl was considered unhealthy and the basic of contagious disease among Mizo. The changing concept of hygienity resulted in the change of the dining manner.

[350]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* 1906, pp. 381 – 382, Acc. No. 10837, 079.5418 M 618, ATC Archives.
[351]*Kristian Tlangau, November 1941,* No, 362, Account No – 10915, ATC Archives.
[352] May Bounds & Glwadys M. Evans, *Medical Mission to Lushai*, Chester, Great Britain, Handbridge Printing Service Ltd., 1986, p. 37.

The importance attached to hygienity and cleanliness in food preparation became more and more intense in the post independence period, for instance, when Mizos started baking in the 1970's they followed the baking style of the Europeans/the missionaries instead of Indian style of baking. In Indian method of baking, the flour is usually kneaded through foot but Mizos never do their flour kneading in Indian style. They preferred hand kneading over foot kneading before the coming of machine.[353]

4.2.1. Change in Mizo Food Ethics

Ethical eating or food ethics had a large impact on Mizo food choices for consumption as well as on their eating pattern. Those food ethics had served as an indicator of '*Mizo tlawmngaihna'*. Mizovalue system and their morality towards others had been manifested by the ethics that revolved round food consumption. Mizo saying "*Upa berin a bar hma chuan, Naupangin an bar khalh ngai lo*" is a good illustrator of the lives and society of theMizos in pre-colonial period. The saying may be translated as - 'the younger ones should not start eating lest the eldest one started'. It carries a message to all Mizos to show respect towards people older than themselves. But during colonial and post- colonial period this phrase cannot be said to be applicable in Mizo society as compared to pre-colonial period due to wholesale change in the eating pattern of Mizos. The pattern of food sharing by a large wooden plate was replaced by separate plates, bowls, and in post independence by spoons and forks and the diners began to help themselves without waiting for the eldest member to start eating. A new table manner had crept in. This change in the eating pattern affected Mizo society to a great extend so much so that Mizo traditional ethics and moral, respect for elders, underwent considerable variation.

Mizo concept of food sharing and its significant symbolism also came to be less valued after colonialism. According to Mizo folk wisdom, people who share food with others live longer and those who do not, die early – '*sem sem dam dam ei bil thi thi'*. That folk wisdom had been dearly followed by Mizos when the British established their rule over them. It seems that Mizo folk wisdom came to be less followed and less valued after colonial rule. Collectivity came to be replaced by individualism. Thus, the Social Darwinist concept of survival inadvertently developed in Mizo hills after the establishment of colonial rule.

[353]Lalpanmawia, interviewed by Lalrofeli, 2017, Electric Veng, Aizawl, Mizoram.

J.V Hluna has written that Mizos in pre-colonial period ate to the fullest they could without saving food for future.[354] This was probably because of their perception towards life which was very simple where they believed they would live in peace and could hinge on *faisa* (husked rice/prepared food) when encountering their lives end in their next world (*pialral*). But after colonial rule was established, through modern education, Mizos started saving food for future consumption. This happened particularly after the *Mautam* Famine of 1911.[355]

4.2.2 Change in Mizo Concept of Health

Education became one of the 'accepted values' of Mizo life after colonial rule. In the old days 'value' was summed up in the sense of achievement brought by performing certain rituals and sacrifices, and to be the possessor of a gun. But there was a growing sign that one of the greatest desire of Mizos in the 1930's was to be educated.[356]Such change provided an opportunity for the discontinuity of some Mizo concepts towards food. The traditional Mizo concept of health had changed. Traditionally health had been defined as the absence of diseases and if someone was free from a disease he was considered healthy. That biomedical concept[357] of health was the prevailing conceptualization of health by Mizos.

For instance, "*Chaw kan ei teuh chuan kan chak ang*". The concept that the eating of more food provides energy to the body was no longer accepted after the coming of the British. After the introduction of modern western education Mizoswere exposed to the world of 'Balance Diet' or a diet that contains the proper proportions of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water necessary to maintain good health.Mizo traditional belief that the eating of rice was a sort of medicine or energy giver thus came to be discarded during and after colonialism.

The importance of a healthy and balanced diet was explained by the missionaries to the Mizos. In pre-colonial period egg and fowl were entirely used for the purposes of divination and sacrifices, but now they were eaten on a large scale. By explaining the importance of milk as a nutricious item of food, the missionaries were able to break the taboo on milk.

[354] J.V. Hluna, in *Mizo Hnam Zia leh Khawtlang Nun Siam Thatna*, Aizawl, Synod Publication Board, 1988, p. 92.
[355] J.V. Hluna, p.92.
[356]*Reports of the Foreign Mission of Presbyterian Church of Wales*, p. 137.
[357] Shivananda Reddy, '*Concept of Health'*, published on October 3, 2015. Available from: https://www.slideshare.net/sivanandareddy52/definition-concept-of-health, (retrieved 13 September 2017).

Instead of *Zu*, tea has become a popular drink among the converts[358]. The drunkenness which characterized the old Mizo society has very largely been disappearing. However, drinking of *Zu* (alcoholic drink) still forms a part of the life of many Mizos despite the fact that the missionaries considered them evil and no church member is allowed to drink. Sophisticated drink common among the westerners were introduced to the affluent Mizos.[359]

In the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* of June,1906, where a separate column was given to the Mission school teacher, great stress was laid on the consumption of food like rice, sweets and oils as they warm up the body temperature while meat, *Vai buh* (rice from plain areas) and Peas were believed to be energy giving foods. In the meantime, the June, 1906 issue of *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* urged the readers to consume bread instead of rice as the former was believed to be good food for body growth. The consumption of oil and sweets could create fats in the body and thus these foods weakened the body [360] and had to be avoided. The message that it carries is the importance of balance diet for health and physical growth. When their colonial masters, *Zosap* missionaries and educated Mizos continuously taught and propagated balance diet the efforts had eventually borne result and Mizo began to embrace scientific understanding on diet and hygiene.

4.3.1 Meal time prayers

As Christianity took its firm ground in the Lushai hills new tradition of do's and don'ts in food eating began to develop under the guidance and teachings of the Christian missionaries. One of the changes that came along with the spread of Christianity is meal time prayer. Prayer is, in fact, an important essence of Christian teachings. The Mizo Christians were, from the beginning, keen to pray. J.H. Lorrain had recorded the an early instance of prayer among Mizos on 10th February, 1897 that ' the children learning the Lord's prayer, seems so strange to them to close eyes and fold hands and speak to God just as to father and mother'.[361] In pre-Christian Mizo society Mizos had sometimes offered prayers to their tribal gods before consuming sacrificial foods. With the advent of Christianity and the introduction of education in the Lushai hills it became a tradition for Mizo Christians to offer prayers

[358] Lalrimawia,p. 130.
[359] Lalrimawia, p. 131.
[360] *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1906, p.84, Account No – 10837. ATC Archives.
[361] Lorrain, Log Book, ATC Archives.

before and after food. The prayer was as simple as it could be- thanksgiving and asking for God's blessings (*Aw Lalpa, chaw tha leh thil tin reng min pek avangin chibai ka buk a che. Mal min sawm sak ang che. Jisua Krista avangin. Amen).*[362] Mizo Christians frequently offered thanksgiving prayer to God for the food and for all his provisions in their lives. Obviously, it was the Christian missionaries who taught their students how to pray which is evident from the *Mizo Zirtir Bu.*[363]

C.L. Hminga made comments on the impact of Christianity on Mizo social and religious lives as the fearful element in the old religion was replaced with a new kind of fear, i.e. the fear of hell. The most important element of the old religion, the costly sacrifices of animals to the evil spirits, was replaced by prayer. The early converts were well instructed to pray constantly so that in times of sickness and danger prayer took the place of animal sacrifices. Hence, from the earliest times up to the present, prayers have a central place in the lives of MizoChristians.[364]

4.3.2 Change in the attitude of Mizos towards *Zu*

Another impact of colonialism and the mission work in Mizoram is prohibition of Zu drinking for Mizo Christian converts. Sunday was strictly observed and they refused to take part in community work on this day for which they were fined. Non- Christians considered them lethargic and wondered when they could not produce enough food if they had to stop work one day in every seven days. Today much has been written, particularly in India in favour of indigenization of worship and adoption of cultural forms. However, the danger of insidious syncretism has always to be fought. The early Mizo church was uncompromising. Discipline was strict. Alcoholic drinks made from rice were always served in public gatherings and festivals. Among some tribal groups such drinks formed part of their daily diet. The missionaries were teetotallers yet they found it difficult to make a ruling. However, the new Christians, seeing the evils of drunkenness decided for a complete prohibition for Christians. Drinking rice beer was one temptation many new converts found difficult to resist

[362]*Mizo Zirtir Bu*, Account No. 5043, ATC Archives.
[363]*Zirtir Bu -1967*, Exhibit List, Mizoram State Archives.
[364] C.L. Hminga, p. 271.

and many of them slided back to the old life. If you as much as lick your fingers dipped in rice beer, you are liable to excommunication.[365]

There seemed to have existed different opinion amongst colonial officials regarding the prohibition of *Zu*. Commenting on the prohibition of *Zu* drinking for Christians McCall had written, 'The main mission impact fell upon the ordinary people. Many were too poor to take *Zu* regularly, as a diet, like the Nagas of the Naga hills do. Their sacrifice chiefly meant not drinking *Zu* at sacrifices and feasts, which, in turn, became increasingly rare, as conversion and attendance at church dispensed this costly need. The missionaries applied themselves with fervor. But fervor is no certain guarantee for scientific treatment of a difficult problem'.[366]

However,the restrictions laid on *Zu* drinking brought significant change in Mizo customs connected with death. In the pre-ChristianMizosociety, when people died the corpses were buried close to the house they lived. In the case of chiefs and chief's wives the corpse was put inside a wooden coffin which was placed near the wall in the dead person's house and a special hearth built near to it. A bamboo tube was fixed to the bottom of the coffin and the other end of the tube runs into the ground. The coffin was sealed airtight. The flesh rot in the heat and was drained off through the bamboo tube into the ground underneath the house. The process usually lasted for about three months by which time only dry bones were left in the coffin. Those who watched the fire had to be provided with the best food and ample supply of rice beer. Ordinary persons also had to supply rice beer to those who came to console them, and they had to kill at least one domestic animal as a kind of parting gift to the departed. It was an expensive and time consuming custom. Those who could not supply beer had very few to console them. But Christianity changed this custom. When a person died young ladies collected firewood and rice from every family in the village for the bereaved family who could not do their normal work at least for a few days.[367]Thus, *Zu* was no longer needed when such incident happened, it now became less expensive for ordinary people to face such inescapable episode.

Mizo historian, B.Lalthangliana, also discusses the impact of colonialism on Mizo habit of *Zu* drinking. On social occasions of sorrow or joy; when the chiefs met together; or when

[365] Zairema, *God's Miracle in Mizoram (A Glimpse of Christian Work among Head- Hunters),* pp. 10-11.
[366]McCall,p. 208.
[367] C.L. Hminga,p. 295.

entertaining prominent and important guests; *Zu* was used constantly more than anything else. Drinking it was a must and was customary. After they became Christians all this was rejected and changed completely. Those who drank *Zu* were despised, condemned and looked down upon. Their opinion and idea towards the rice beer began to be altered and changed completely.[368]

Another Mizo historian, Sangkima also commented on the place enjoyed by *Zu* in pre-colonial / pre-Christian Mizo lives and the change that came along with the avoidance of *Zu*drinking in the following words:

> "in former days drinking of *Zu*, Mizo rice beer, was very common. It was a part and parcel of any ceremony performed in the community feasts. Hence, its drinking was a common feature in the Mizo society. When Christianity came to Mizoram, the missionaries were fully influenced by the negative role of *Zu* in the society. Thus, they decided to take a stringent measure to stop the harmful influence of *Zu* in their society. Then they began to teach the new converts not only to avoid drinking of *Zu* but to regard it as their arch enemy as Christians. Such strict measures were necessary for the new converts to show as examples to the non- believers. *Zu* was then condemned and forbidden by the Church. This action turned the people to the drinking of tea in the society.[369]

As mentioned before, in those days *Zu* was offered to visitors and guests, but after Christianity Mizos particularly converted Mizo Christians now gave tea to their visitors. Thus, *Zu* drinking as a social practice was largely replaced by tea.[370]

4.3.3 Growing Importance of Tea as popular Beverage

Tea, a drink made from the buds and leaves of the shrub *camellia sinensis*, is the most culturally and economically significant non-alcoholic beverage in the world. Originating in China, it had spread to surrounding nations before contact with European nations, after which it was made a commodity of world importance by the British and the Dutch East India

[368] B. Lalthangliana, p. 102.
[369] McCall, p. 209.
[370] Sangkima,pp. 245-246.

Companies.[371] The true origins of tea are unknown. Wild tea leaves are still used by the tribes of Burma to prepare a beverage and a 'tea salad' (made from leaves that have fermented underground for several months and are then mixed with mushrooms, oil, garlic, chilli peppers and perhaps other ingredients). In that part of the world, tea is also chewed or sniff as snuff, and many surmise that use of the tea plant originated there and spread to China by the Han dynasty period (206 B.C-A.D. 221). However, the wild tea plants of nearby Assam, in India, do not produce a palatable brew, and present day Indian tea culture is wholly the work of the British.[372]

Mizos economically depended largely on agriculture through slash and burn method. They worked really hard throughout the year till they reaped the fruits of their hard work. During harvesting they invited their friends and relatives to help them. On the last day of harvesting they consumed '*Hah Zu'* (rice beer) to celebrate the good harvest of the year. After the coming of the Christian Missionaries many converted Mizosreplaced their age old traditional '*Hah Zu'* with Tea - sometimes served with milk, jaggery and sugar. They brought tea to their jhum and distributed it to all the harvesters. Moreover, they celebrated the last harvest day by preparing special dishes including chicken and others (pork etc.) and spent the day as happy and extravagant as they could.[373]Besides tea, coffee was also introduced in the Lushai hills as the pioneer missionary J.H. Lorrain had noted in January, 1892. In his note he had written that he had scolded his native servant for straining coffee through his socks.[374]However, this note gives the impression that Mizos had not yet accustomed to coffee drinking and preparation because even his native servant, who was supposed to have better acquaintance with new food, did not have the slightest idea of preparation.

McCall, the Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, in his *Lushai Chrysallis*, also noted the increasing popularity of tea drinking in the Lushai hills as 'the condemnation of *Zu* drinking by the Lushai church has had definite results on society. It had given wide impetus to the drinking of tea. But this in turn had also led to an increase in dyspepsia and bowel complaints, as much of the drunk was not the best , and the evil practice soon arose of stewing the tea rather than infusing the tea with boiling water'.[375]

[371]Kipple and Ornelas (eds.),*Cambridge World History of Food Volume 1*, p. 712.
[372]Kipple and Ornelas (eds.), p. 713.
[373]*Mizote Khawsak Phung*, Tribal research institute, Aizawl, Directorate of Art and Culture, 1993, p. 54.
[374]*Pu Buanga Log Book*, ATC Archives, Account No. 4772.
[375]McCall,p. 209.

The growing popularity of functional substitute of rice beer, i.e. tea, is also evident from C.L. Hminga's work- *The Life and Witness of the Churches in Mizoram*. According to him,

> "In place of the multi - purpose rice beer, tea and coffee drinking was introduced. In all big gatherings and festivals like Christmas, Easter, and Conventions, tea began to be commonly served. In the old days sacchrin was used for sweetening tea, but real sugar and locally made brown sugar were used by Mizos. In the birth, marriage and death ceremonies also, the ceremonial use of rice beer and killing of animals in some cases was replaced by tea and cookies".[376]

According to the Baptist Missionaries Reports of 1924 tea parties happened to be regular practice in the mission school. The most interesting part is by that time it was not the missionaries who gave the party but Mizogirls as the report mentions,

> "We have also enjoyed several tea parties; that which gave us most pleasures was the one suggested and arranged entirely by the prefects, and paid for by all the school girls as an expression of thanks to the staff".[377]

4.3.4 Prominence of cooking soda over*Chingal* (distilled ash)

Mizo cuisine is defined by certain dishes, by the frequent use of certain modes of cooking, by the use of specific ingredients and in short, by the tastes that set the Mizo cuisine/food apart from all the others. Traditionally Mizos used *Chingal* (distilled wood ash) in making one of their special dish - *Bai*(a mixture of boiled vegetables/leaves with salt and distilled wood ash). *Chingal* is distilled filtrated ash and is used as an important seasoning item in Mizo food reparation. An inverted conical shape container with a minute opening at the tip is made from bamboo thinly splitted and woven, which was locally called '*Chingal thlawrbur'*. To this, ashes are placed and clean water is poured onto and it was then hung. The opening at the tip allows the filtrate to pass through which is then collected and stored for further use.[378] They put a small amount of *Chingal* to boiled vegetables along with salt, the addition of

[376]Hminga,p. 271.
[377]*The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram*, 1901-1938, p. 205.
[378] P.B. Lalthanpuii, B. Lalruatfela, Zoramdinthara & H. Lalthanzara, *'Traditional Food Processing Techniques of the Mizo People of North East India'*, *Science Vision* 15(1), pp. 39-45, Available from: www.sciencevision.org*Traditional Food Processing Techniques of the Mizo people of Northeast India,* pp. 40-41, (accessed 23 April 2017).

Chingal completely transformed the taste and interestingly it gave a foamy colorful look to the dish. It actually enhanced the taste of *Bai*.

Every Mizo household was supposed to keep *Chingal* since'*bai*' was part and parcel in every banquet. The use of this item as an important ingredient of Mizo dish continued even after the establishment of British rule and continued till 1960's in the northern part of the Lushai hills. One of the informants said that cooking soda (sodium carbonate) replaced *Chingal* only after 1980 in the southern part of the country.[379] As modernization touched the lives of Mizos they began to invent new ingredients to their delicacies. The increasing popularity of cooking soda is one good example. The new development in cooking skill was more visible in big villages like Aizawl and Lunglei since these were the headquarters of both the government and the missionaries who developed their social as well as cultural contacts with the people around them.

4.3.5 Insistence of abstention towards the consumption of certain meat

Special privilege position enjoyed by the Welsh Presbyterian Mission, the Baptist MissionarySociety and the Lakher Pioneer Mission went out with the British administration of the country when India became independent in 1947. Other missions were not slow to take advantage of the new freedom. Of these mention may be made of the Seventh Day Adventists. Lallianzuala Sailo joined the Seventh Day Adventist Church in 1941 while studying in the high school at Shillong. He translated its book 'Christian Doctrine' into Mizo language and started distributing the same in Mizoram. In 1946 he and ten other high school students were touring extensively in Mizo hills selling Seventh Day Adventist books, and they made a few converts here and there. He was then sent to start work in Mizoram in the same year. Converts were few due to their insistence on abstinence from pork eating and tea drinking.[380]

All the available sources both primary and secondary testify thatMizo were meat lovers and they continue to be till date. With the advent of a new Christian denomination, i.e., the Seventh Day Adventist Church, certain taboos towards the consumption of some food items particularly meat, began to attract the attention of Mizos. In 1947 the first Seventh day

[379] L.T. Muana Miller interview.
[380]Hminga, pp. 197- 198.

Adventist church of Mizoram was established at Zokhawsang village under the supervision of Lallianzuala Sailo.[381] The Adventists advocate vegetarianism or temperance in eating. They urged their fellow Adventists to adopt healthful diet and abstain from unclean foods mentioned in the Bible. Their religious belief system, thus, controls their food culture and treatment to food. The Seventh Day Adventist, for example, prohibits the consumption of certain food like pork, fish (some species) and tea based on religious ground such as – Leviticus 11: 13 – 46. Some of the verses include clean and unclean food like –

> "Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud. There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them."

These include the camel, the hyrax, the rabbit and the pig. The Bible says,

> "You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you".[382]

There are restrictions on the eating of certain species of fish and birds. Being members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church many Mizos who had previously been lovers of pork, dog meat, sea food etc. they had to abstain from eating them. Probably, the low growth rate of the Seventh Day Adventist in Mizoram is due to their insistence of restriction on certain meat like pork which is the most favoured meat of Mizos till date. The growing trend of vegetarianism in Mizo food culture and the abstinence on pork, dog meat, certain fishes etc. which formed the constituent part of Mizo delicacy may be attributed as one important impact of colonialism and Christianity on Mizo food culture.

4.3.6 Growing importance of certain vegetables

The British administrators especially Captain Cole made enormous attempt to introduce new method of cultivation in the Lushai hills. For this, he created *Chite* garden / green house to inculcate the art of cultivating mustard, pineapple and oranges to the Mizo. The seeds of these vegetables and fruits began to spread throughout the entire Lushaihills through *Chite* garden. There is a common assumption among Mizos that mustard (*antam*) was introduced in theLushaihillswhen some Mizo soldiers brought the seeds of mustard from France to help

[381] K.C. Thanga, *Mizoram Seventh Day Adventist Kohhran Chanchin*, Aizawl, Mizoram, Gospel Publishing Centre, 1996, p.18.
[382] *The Holy Bible*, (New International Version), Michigan, USA, Zodervan, 2001, p. 59.

British army in the First World War. Since they brought the seed from France that particular variety of mustard came to be known as '*feren antam'* (the French mustard). It is generally known that Mizos used mustard and other leafy vegetables in their everyday diet in pre-colonial period. The exposure to the outside world had given them the opportunity to bring a particular variety of mustard to their country which they called *Feren Antam* and this particularvariety of mustard have assumed an important place and it more or less replaced the indigenous variety in the post- independent Mizoram as far as the preparation ofMizo most favoured dish *Vawksa/ Vawksa rep chhum* (stewed pork/smoked pork) is concerned.

Tomato, potato, cauliflower, cabbage and pulse gained ground in the diet of the Mizos. These new vegetables became part and parcel in their food preparation though there might have been variation in the availability in villages and towns. In the school established by the Christian Mission, a pulse (*dal*) was served with rice to the students[383]. Two informants recalled the days of their schooling at mission school (*Sikul Sen* / Boys M.E. School, Aizawl) where pulse was often served to the students in the 1920's and 1930's.[384] One informant talked about his attempt of propagating the use of vegetables and pulses in the diet of the Mizos after independence. Thorough study of the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* also bears the testimony that the vegetables both native as well as newly introduced had gained importance in the diet as the writers of those articles were not always Europeans but Mizo themselves.

4.3.7 Chewing of Betel Nut

Both before and after colonial rule Mizos were accustomed with the use of tobacco after food either by smoking or putting tobacco water (*Tuibur*)[385] in the mouth . Both men and women were great smokers and they used home – grown tobacco, which has an aroma/smell that many Europeans disliked. The pipes of the men and women differed. The men used a bowl made from a special bamboo connected with a stem, while the women's pipes were more complicated and fanciful. Their pipe had a metal container, in which the nicotine water was collected and given to the smokers. Guests to the house were also honoured by being given a

[383] Chhuanliana BVT, interview.
[384] C. Rokhuma, interview.
[385]'A woman's pipe or the nicotine water from a woman's pipe. This water was used as a luxury. It was carried about in a little gourd or a small quantity of it is retained in the mouth of the user until it loses its savour, when it is ejected'. *Pu Buanga Dictionary*, p. 522. 'A Kind of small hookah, that is, the smoke is drawn through the water', J.M. Lloyd, *On Every High Hill*, p. 32.

mouthful of this nicotine water from the family store, kept in a gourd, and after washing it round the mouth for a minute or two, it would be ejected none being swallowed.

After the establishment of colonial rule one new habit was beginning to creep in, as a result of contact with the plains of India, and this is the chewing of the Betel Nut from the Areca Catechu palm.[386] In the Indian subcontinent the chewing of betel leaf and areca nuts dates back to 2600 B.C. Formerly it was used as a custom of the royalty, and lovers because of its breath refreshening and relaxant properties. While a paan has a symbolic value at ceremonies and cultural events in south and southeast Asia, day -to- day use is as a palate cleanser and breath freshener after a meal, and also often offered to guests and visitors as a sign of hospitality.[387]Mizos also developed the habit of chewing *Paan* (betel nut and leaf) after food after colonial rule as a result of their contact with other Indian people. Infact, their new habit of chewing paan after food replaced their old tradition of smoking or using nicotine water after food.

4.3.8 Emergence of Baking and Confectionaries

The lady missionaries and the wives of the missionaries, as mentioned in the previous chapters, were the one to introduce baking in the Lushai hills. However, baking and confectionaries did not attract Mizos till India's independence which is evident from the letter sent by the Political Assistant to the Superintendent of Lushai Hills to the Secretary of Department of Supply, Government of Shillong. The Political Assistant of the Lushai Hills reported that there were no confectionary manufacturers in the Lushai hills district and there was no necessity to reserve sugar for them.[388] But after 1950's Mizos developed their baking skills and some bakeries and confectionaries came to be set up in Aizawl, Lunglei and Champhai. In the western part of Aizawl, a new local name was furnished as *Chhangur Kawn* (Baking Square). But that happened only in the 1970's. Before Lalduha and his family did baking in that area, the area around that square was known by Mizos as Vaihleia[389] Kawn. Pu Lalduha and his family provided bread and other confectionaries to Mizos for some time. But

[386]McCall,p. 189- 190.
[387] '*Paan*' available from www.spiritualjourneys.net/Paan.htm, (accessed on 18 September 2017)
[388] MSA, G- 813, CB – 66, *Forthnightly Confidential Report on food situation for the Forthnight ending the 15th October*, 1950.
[389] Vaihleia was a palmist and he was quite popular. Ruaihmingthangi, interviewed by Lalrofeli, 2017, Zotlang (Chhangur Kawn), Aizawl.

they could not continue the work after the next few years. However, *Chhangur Kawn* (Baking Square) still continue to exist till today.[390] One of the most famous bakeries in Mizoram is Zote Bakery, it was established in 1985. After conducting interviews with people who are linked with baking it is found out that the popularity of baking and confectionaries began only in the 1990's.

Rokhuma, on the other hand, agreed that Mizo started using sodium carbonate (known to Mizos as cooking Soda) in the 1920's or 30's. Initially it was used not for cooking but for baking. Colonial as well as indigenous bakers used baking soda which is evident from the local baked bread that was served to Middle School students. Most of these breads were baked by colonial rulers as well as missionaries' cooks.[391] Whatever be the case, one issue that prove to be quite obvious is the dawn of new skill of cooking, viz., baking amongst Mizos. This is another considerable impact of colonial rule on Mizo food practice. Sticky rice flour was no longer the lone standby of luxury food item when bread was introduced.

4.3.9 Birth of Potato Generation

Potato (Solanum Tuberosum), the fourth most important world food crop surpassed only by wheat, rice and maize was initially anti-famine food in Europe but then became a staple. In Asia and Africa, it has been a vegetable and cost-able crop. The potato popularity has never stopped growing after the World War II particularly in its forms of standardized industrially produced potato fries, chips and other frozen and processed 'convenience' food. Potato, originated in the South American Andes, is the best example of globalization of diet.[392]

The introduction of potatoes, the most produced and consumed vegetable in the world, in the Lushai hills have far reaching impact on Mizo food culture. After its introduction in the Lushai Hills by H.W.G. Cole in 1907 [393] the colonial administrators made numerous attempt to popularize it in the Lushaihills . The then Superintendent of the Lushai Hills, H.W. Cole, allowed four household in every Mizovillage to get free of coolie for the government on the condition that they would grow potato.[394] Those advertisements were done in the *Mizo leh*

[390]Ruaihmingthangi interview.
[391] C. Rokhuma, interview.
[392]Kipple and Conee Ornelas (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food, Volume II*, pp. 187 – 188.
[393] Liangkhaia, p. 106.
[394]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1907, (Alu Thu) Acc. No. 10758, pp. 183-184, ATC Archives.

Vai Chanchinbu where an article was written askingMizos to cultivate potato because of its health and economic advantages and that it could serve as staple food for Mizoswhen they faced shortage of rice in the hills. It was considered tastier and more delicious than arum bulbs. Moreover, it was also believed that potato was a good source of income for Mizos. Despite various criticisms against its introduction it also gained numerous support from many Mizos which is evident from the article published in 1907 that favoured the cultivation and consumption of potato bythe indigenous people.[395]

Though initially not so popular this food item had been gaining its ground in Mizo dishes. Potato consumption in the Lushai hills had to wait many years before it became an integral part in the diet of the people. Initially Mizos did like the taste of potato as they lacked the knowledge of how to prepare this vegetable.[396] In the post - independence period it became more and more important as it was served in the millitary camps. On account of scarcity of oil in the Lushai hills, deep frying or the preparation that requires more oil Mizo preparation of potato was quite simple which was done through simple recipes like, little oil, salt and water. However, the 21st Mizoram have young people who may be referred to as "potato generation" since potato became part and parcel in their everyday diet.

4.4.1 *Zirtirtu Buhkhawn* (Rice Collection for Village School Teachers)

Like many other tribal communities in India, the traditional Mizo social organization centered around the village. Mizo chiefs were recognized as the ultimate owner of the land and all other properties in his village. They were entitled to receive certain dues from their subjects such as –

1. *Fathang* (paddy due): The chief was entitled to paddy due after every harvest from each cultivating family which was generally two *phur* (basket). It was not only sufficient to provide food for the chief and his family but also to help those of his subjects who were in extreme poverty because of sickness or any problem.

[395]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1907, (Alu Thu) Acc. No. 10758, pp. 184 – 185. ATC Archives.
[396]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1909, Acc.No – 11092, pp. 220 – 224 ATC Archives.

2. *Sachhiah* (meat due): A share of every animal shot or trapped by anyone in the village.
3. *Chichhiah* (salt due): Any one getting salt out of the village salt spring had to pay one-tenth to the chief as salt tax.
4. *Khuaichhiah* (honey due): The wild honey was the chief's property. Those who gathered were obliged to bring their collection to the chief who would keep his share and return the rest to them.
5. *Sechhiah / Sekawt hawn man* : If a villager sold his domesticated mithun to a person who lived in another village, he had to pay a young pig to the chief as mithun was considered valuable village property.[397]

Shortly after the establishment of British rule a new tradition of using the staple food ofMizo, viz., rice as a means of payment/remuneration to teachers was commenced. Formal education in the Lushai hills started with the arrival of the Christian missionaries who abridged Mizo language into writing. For more than half of the 20th century i.e. from 1895-1952 the church through honorary inspector of schools looked after elementary education. Primary school was opened at Aizawl in 1898 while in rural areas elementary education was introduced in 1901.[398] Since then education in theLushai hills did not take a halt. The tradition of rice collection for school teachers was started by A.G. McCall. In order to let Mizos understand that in schooling and education they had responsibility and actually it was their duty to promote the same he started this tradition as per which everyMizo household was required to collect two tins of rice in lieu of Rs.2. All the primary school teachers, hence, received such collection of rice. It became difficult for small villages to meet the requirements while it was quite easy for those in big villages. However, this tradition of using rice as a means of payment to school teachers was less beneficial for the teachers as they could always buy more than 3 tins with Rs.2.[399]

In traditional Mizo village the privilege class consisted of the chief, his *khawnbawl upa* (elders) andvillage priests (*sadawt and bawlpu*), the *zalen* (privilege jhum cultivators), the *ramhual* (expert jhum cultivators) and the t*hirdeng* (village blacksmith). Rice was collected

[397] Lalthangliana (1992, 'Hmasang Zonun, Studies in Mizo Culture, Tradition and Social Life', Aizawl, M.C. Lalrinthanga, p.8) & Vanlalringa2001, p.3) as cited by Nancy Lalrinmawii Rokhum in Malsawmdawngliana & Rohmingmawii (eds.) *Mizo Narratives: Accounts from Mizoram*, pp.29-32.
[398] Mizoram Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan Mission. Available from http://mz.ssa.nic.in/scenario.html,(accessed 06 September 2017).
[399] Liangkhaia,p. 120.

for the privilege class (excepting the *Ramhual* and the *Zalen*) and when an animal was hunted in the village some portions were reserved for these privilege classes.[400] But after the introduction of education the new privilege class comprised of government employees and rice were thus collected from the villagers for the village school teachers. The new tradition of rice collection, therefore, marked the birth of a new social class who were now assigned high status in colonial Lushai hills.

4.4.2 New Dichotomy of High and Low Status food amongst Mizos

The establishment of British rule in theLushai hills in 1890 prompted British officials and Christian missionaries to acquire knowledge of Mizo language, of the structure of Mizo society and of values and manners of Mizos. The British rule shook the prevalent socio-cultural life of Mizos. The introduction of modern western education gave birth to the desire of material advancement and better amenities and living conditions of individuals. In such situation Mizo society began to have new division between the well to do and the poor that was manifested in the food culture of the Mizos.

Local educational practice soon gave rise to the belief that education and Christianity was the passport to "salaried jobs", relief from the wearisome toil of cultivating a hard land. These conditions have combined to precipitate a kind of various circles. Black coated occupations became synonymous with progress. Christianity led towards black – coatism. Christianity and material independence from the soil were clearly two main characteristics of the new "white Chiefs", and their assimilation would eliminate the difference between the 'primitive' and the all - powerful. From the start it was the children and relations of the new rich for whom the new and novel experience of middle and higher education became possible. Among the new rich, in addition to mission workers, included the salaried employees of Government. A new kind of oligarchy or intelligentsia had, thus, sprung up, which had no place in the indigenous society of the Mizos. While a material independence, based on money, provided mainly by the government or the missions, was promoting an indigenous oligarchy, Christianity was imposing great changes among the ordinary people.[401]

[400] Nancy Lalrinmawii, 'Social Stratification of Mizo Society', in *Mizo Narratives*, pp.34-36.
[401] McCall,pp. 205 – 207.

In pre – colonial Mizo society meat and salt were considered as the 'high status food' due to their rarity. The Village chiefs and some high status people (village elders, blacksmith and good hunters) were often referred to as '*Bai al liak pha'* which means those who had enough/plenty salt for consumption. Due to shortage of salt wood ash were often used in cooking to add saltiness to the dishes. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the geographical feature made salt a luxurious food item for Mizos. James Dokhuma had written that Mizos used to exchange dogs with salt with the Paites. Salt was then kept in the shelf above the hearth and out of reach of the children. The salt was used only in the food when they had special guests who appreciated the warm hospitality of their hosts and proudly told others that, ' I am very lucky to have received the good will of my hosts who prepared '*bai'* with salt'.[402]

Though meat was the most favourite food of the Mizos ordinary villagers did not have enough to eat up to their satisfaction. They could do that only on special occasions and festivals. After social and cultural interaction with colonial administrators and Christian missionaries their conception of high status food changed as salt had become available to most Mizos and it became less valued, and the new high status food consisted of oils, sugar and meat. Mizos in colonial period grew fonder of beef and milk products. On 13th January, 1910 Major Cole issued an order prohibiting the export of cattle including bullocks from the Lushai Hills as the local demand exceeded the local supply.[403]A.G. McCall also had noted this new dichotomy as modern well-to-do Lushais had rapidly been improving their diet with obvious result. Oil specially, also spices and much more meat were all being taken in increasing qualities.[404]

Before the establishment of colonial rule Honey was a luxurious food, but Mizochief of the land was, by custom, entitled to ownership. Hornbill was also a great favourite on account of its great fat and oil content.[405] But honey and hornbill meat were no longer a luxury after the consolidation of the British rule and the subsequent abolition of chieftainship. They were replaced by cooking oils, spices and sugar. One of the informants recalled the day of his wedding in 1956 and the usage of sugar in the tea. Even in those day sugar was still a rarity in

[402] James Dokuma, *Zokhaw Nun,* Aizawl, James Dokhuma, 1998, p.22.
[403] MSA, G – 177, CB – 14, Order No. 27 of 1909-1910, dated Aijal, the 13th January, 1910.
[404]McCall, p. 187.
[405] McCall,pp. 186-187.

Mizoram, only the affluent group could afford to consume it.[406] Government and mission employees had greater avenue to new luxurious food as compared to ordinary people.

4.4.3 Exposure through food

Many Mizos were exposed to the world beyond the Lushai hills through food. The Mizo chiefs had some exposure when they attended meetings or conferences organized by the British Government of India. Before the British rule was established in the Lushai hills T.H.Lewin had persuaded seven Mizos chiefs to meet the Governor General and the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. 27 men including the chiefs and their selected followers accompanied him to Calcutta in 1873.[407] This was the first ever exposure of Mizos to wider world. After colonial rule some well to do native Mizos could also receive education in other states due to their favourable economic condition. Food, also provided an opportunity to Mizos who had served as Government officials and missionaries cooks to expose themselves to the world they had never known before. On 20th September 1911 there was a Durbar of Indian officials and rulers at Delhi. To attend the Durbar the *Bawrhsap*/Superintendent of the Lushai hills, W.M. Kennedy, went to Delhi and, with him he brought his cook Lalliana.[408] Another Mizo who got the chance of exposure through her role in food preparation is Hmingliani (the owner of Hmingliani Bakery, Aizawl).[409] She worked for Samuel Davies and his family as domestic helper.[410]

Those Mizos who aligned themselves with the British administrators and the Christian missionaries got social, economic and individual advantages. Many of them were uneducated who served as domestic workers for the administrators and missionaries which was generally perceived as low work but it opened wider possibilities and opportunities for those cooks and their families. For instance, L.T. Muana Miller's father, John Miller, had worked for the missionaries as cook and he got the opportunity to visit Germany.[411] By tracing their families' histories, it seems that those missionary cooks'descendants are successful and they

[406] Chhuanliana BVT interview.
[407] T.H. Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel*, p. 40.
[408] *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1911, Acc. No. – 14206, ATC Archives.
[409] Pi Nupuii D/O Hmingliani (L) interview.
[410] C.Lalhmangaihtluangi, *Zonu Chhuanawm – Hmingliani*, Lalengmawii, Chawnpui, Aizawl, 2014, p. 5.
[411] L.T. Muana, interview.

acquired both social and economic advantages as compared to people who did not acquaint themselves with the missionaries.

Cuisines often carry with them the traces of their colonized past.[412] Colonialism produced some of the new foodpractices adopted in the Lushai hills, but they had minimal effect on local attitudes towards food and taste preferences for most of the Mizos. Nevertheless, colonial rule and the work of Christian missionaries did bring certain changes in Mizo culture specially in the food culture of the Mizos. But Mizo food culture was strong throughout colonial period and continued to survive. To understand the nature of change and continuity, the scholar explored Mizo social structure and traditional ways of life - including a religious system, ritual practices and political and economic systems.

The change in the food culture took a major turn in 1907 since the time of H.W.J. Cole who was the main protagonist in the new *Colonial - Lushai* hybridfood culture. Within the first 25 years of their domination the colonial administrators and missionaries brought remarkable changes in the conceptualization of food, its cultivation, preparation and consumption. This is evident in the 1911 issue of the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*where there is an article describing the new 'good food' which discarded the use of rice as staple food.[413] Besides many other changes, through the intervention of colonial rule one can see the emergence and the growing importance of a hybrid cuisine in the Lushai hills. The introduction of new food, new cooking method, new method of consumption, new cutleries and new attitude to food are indeed substantial development. However, it is very interesting to emphasize here that despite those changes and the numerous attempts of colonial administrators Mizo food culture continued to survive. Some actually flourished and continued to play important part in Mizo fare. The traditional use of food as medicine still continued in the colonial period even though medical services were provided to the people. For instance, *Arsa Buhchiar* (chicken porridge) had been considered as a medicine for dysentery (*santen*) [414] in the prime of colonial rule in the Lushai hills.

Wild foods from the forest, including wild ferns, bamboo shoots, and roots, provided food in times of emergency, food shortages or regular expected hunger seasons, and they add unique tastes - often bitter or sour - as well as nutrients not always available cultivated plants. After

[412] Esterik, p. 12.
[413]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1911. Account No. 14206, ATC Archives.
[414]*Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*, 1912, Account No.- 14206, ATC Archives.

colonial period, as fewer people gathered wild foods, the knowledge about locating and processing these food was being lost; at the same time, the environment where they could be found was changing due to the destruction of forests.[415] Like many South East Asian people Mizos depended on wild foods, in fact, those wild foods constitute their delicacies till today. But colonial rule transformed their simple lifestyle into a complex one where many of their daily needs could be procured from the bazaars. The transformation, obviously, led to the losing of Mizo indigenous knowledge of locating and processing various food items.

Due to the European colonization of the Mizos, the latter had lost their freedom and more importantly their dignity in choosing how to grow their own food which contributed to the decline of Mizo food culture as well as colonization of Mizo food. Mizo food culture succumbed to the consequences of British colonialism. Missionaries and British administrators forced their food culture on the native people by introducing domestic science subject in both government and mission school. The consequences of this ignorant mindset of the British is that they were too willing to fulfill a 'white men's burden' role to the Mizos, and try and convert them to Christianity, when in fact they did not even have the slightest clue of Mizooriginal religion and customs. This sometimes caused friction between the missionaries and the people. The British lack of understanding of Mizo culture caused many instances of disdain, coming from the British, to be felt by Mizos. After India's independence from the British rule in 1947 Mizo struggled hard to maintain their identity as their customs and traditions had lost their value in the colonized world. All these effects of colonization are eradicating a rich and rare culture that the world will never see again.[416]

[415]Esterik,p. 30.
[416] Biniyam Asnake, '*Examining the Social and Cultural Impact of European Colonialism in Chuna Achebe's Things Fall Apart'*, May 20, 2016. Available from: http://www.writersalon.com/literary_criticism/examining_the-social-and-cultural-impact-of-colonialism-chinua-achebes-things-fall-apart, (retrieved 11 September 2017).

CHAPTER - 5

FOOD, IDENTITY AND GENDER IN THE LUSHAI HILLS

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are"– Jean Anthelme Brillat Savarin

One of the most important roles of food in the Lushai hills during the colonial period was it brought people together and gave them a sense of community. Sharing food strengthens bonds among family and friends by establishing intimacy in the social relationship. The popular saying 'you are what you eat' has never been more important than it is today. The food we eat reveals what we like, believe in and where we have come from.[417] This chapter tries to focus on how Mizo food culture reveals the identity of the Mizos and how it distinguishes them from "others". Many changes were brought about by colonial rule as far as Mizo food culture is concerned. However, the fact remains that Mizo identity is more or less related to their food, and this continues even in the age of globalization.Mizo traditions and rituals that they have been practicing everyday and on special occasions have meal at their centre. The chapter, once again, attempts to show how Mizo food, cooking style and the generational handling down of food knowledge are essential to understanding themselves in the midst of change and globalization.

In this chapter it is also endeavoured to emphasize the role and importance of food history in tracing Mizo identity. Food plays a central role in the cultural identity of any nation. It defines us.[418] Since everyone must eat, what we eat becomes the most powerful symbol of who we are. To set oneself apart from other by what one will and will not eat is a social barrier. One identifies oneself with others by eating the same things in the same way. To achieve such identification, people will struggle to eat things they loathe, and avoid perfectly tasty food that is in the forbidden list. There are as many kinds of food identification as there are the same in fashion, speech, music, manners and the like. The obvious ones are ethnic, religious and class classifications. Ethnic food preferences only become identity makers in the presence of gustatory 'foreigners' such as when one goes abroad, or when the foreigners visit the home shores. When various ethnic groups are forcibly thrown together, there is both

[417]www.slv.vic.goc.ac/learn/teaching0materials/inquiry-units/food-identity-overview.html, (accessed on 17 December 2012)

[418]*Taste Like Home: 'Losing FoodIdentity'* june 6, 2009. Available from: www.tasteslikehome-org/2009/06/losing-food-identity.html, (accessed 17 December 2012).

an intensifying of food identity and a growing mishmash[419]. In colonial Lushai hills food identification exhibited itself through ethnic and religious classification. The first part of the chapter deals with identity issues in general, different approaches to Mizo identity, how culture determines food culture, how Mizos were assigned different identity by colonialists and also with the effects of the 'cultural bomb' which was thrown at Mizo food culture. Here, Mizos and their tribal identity are used as a core of the first section. Tribal identity as a phenomenon has reference to 'tribalism', which is more or less synonymous with ethnicity.[420]

The chapter is divided into two sections, the first part deals with food and identity while the second section is devoted to food and gender.

I. FOOD AND IDENTITY

5.1.1 Identity

Studies in ethnic identity, or what is now generally called ethnicity, have advanced considerably since the mid-1950's, and a voluminous literature has sprung up around this concept, much of it concerned with the problems of how ethnicity should be defined in relation to concepts such as gender, class and state. The term ethnicity seems to be rather new, first appearing in English as late as the 1950s. The meaning of the term is still subject to discussion.[421] To have a deeper insight into the meaning of identity the scholar takes recourse to Anthony D. Smith definition of ethnic group or ethnies which he said to have the following characteristic features –

1. a common proper name, to identify and express the 'essence' of the community;
2. a myth of common ancestry, a myth rather than a fact, a myth that includes the idea of a common origin in time and place and which gives an ethnie a sense of fictive kinship, a super-family;
3. shared historical memories, or better, shared memories of a common past or pasts, including heroes, events and their commemoration;

[419] '*Food and Eating: An Anthropological Perspective'*, Social Issues Research Centre. Available from www.sirc.org/publik/food-and-eating-2.html, (accessed 28 December 2012).
[420] R.K. Das in B. Pakem (ed.), *Nationality, Ethnicity and Cultural Identity in North- East India*, p. 253
[421] Hutchinson and A. Smith (eds) 1996,p. 4 as cited in Sakhong, Lian H., *In Search of Chin Identity: A study in Religion, Politics and Ethnic Identity in Burma*, , Copenhagen, Denmark, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2003, (introduction).

4. one or more elements of common culture, which need not to be specified but normally include religion, customs and/or language;
5. a link with a homeland, not necessarily its physical occupation by the ethnie, only its symbolic attachment to the ancestral land, as with Diaspora peoples; and
6. a sense of solidarity on the part of at least some sections of the ethnie population.[422]

5.1.2 Approaches to Identity

There are different approaches to identity of different nations or different ethnic groups. To get a clear perspective on identity one needs to acquaint with those differing theories and perceptions. The term ethnicity first appeared in the 1950's in the English language. It is first recorded in a dictionary in the Oxford English Dictionary of 1953. The meaning of the term is equally uncertain. It can mean the essence of ethnic group or the quality of belonging to an ethnic community or group or what is it if you have an ethnic group generally in the context of (opposed) other ethnic groups. Alternatively, it may refer to a field of study: the classification of peoples and the relations between groups, in a context of 'self - other' distinctions. The term ethnicity had its origin in the English language in the Middle Ages. It derives from the ancient Greek term ethnos; it was used as a synonym of gentile, that is, non-Christian and non-Jewish pagan in New Testament Greek.[423]

Ethnic identity and ethnic origin refer to the individual level of identification with a culturally defined collectivity, the sense on the part of the individual that he or she belongs to a particular community.[424]

The first approach is made by the 'Primordialists'. This is a term first used by Edward Shils, who sought to distinguish certain kinds of social bond - persona, primordial, sacred and civil ties – and to show how even in modern, civil societies the other kinds of social bonding persisted. This idea was also taken up by Clifford Geertz, who spoke of the overpowering and ineffable quality attaching to certain kinds of tie, which the participants tended to see as

[422] Smith, and Hutchinson, *Ethnicity*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, pp.6-7.
[423]Smith and Hutchinson, *Ethnicity*, p. 4.
[424] Smith and Hutchinson, p. 5.

exterior, coercive, and 'given'. Thus, primordiality is attributed by individuals to the ties of religion, blood, race, language, region and custom; it does not inhere in these bonds. The primordialists thus present a static and naturalistic view of ethnicity.[425]

The second approach to ethnicity, which is stark contrast to Primordialists approach is presented by the Instrumentalists who treat ethnicity as a social, political and cultural resource for different interests – and status groups. Instrumentalists like A. Cohen, Homi K. Babha, Stuart Hall, Paul Brass and R. Cohen believe in the socially constructed nature of ethnicity and the ability of the individuals to cut and mix from variety of ethnic heritages and cultures to mix cultures to forge their own individual or group identities.[426]

Few scholars in practice adhere to either the primordialist or the instrumentalist pole tout court. Alternatives to Primordialism and Instrumentalism of enquiry to ethnicity are provided by Barth, Horowitz and Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith. For Barth, ethnic groups must be treated as units of ascription, where the social boundaries ensure the persistence of the group. It is not the cultural content enclosed by the boundary, but the boundary itself and the symbolic border guards (language, dress, food etc.) that perpetuate the community and require intensive anthropological study. Nevertheless, Barth regards the boundary as permeable, indeed transactions across the boundary help to render the boundary more durable.[427]

5.1.3 Different Approaches to Mizo Identity

There have been different theories and approaches to Mizo identity. There are some scholars who trace the origin of Mizo tribe through the *'Chhinlung myth'* while some historians approach Mizo identity from cultural and geographical context. Still there are others who try to identify Mizo from 'others' from religious context.

According to Joy L.K. Pachuau, the opening of the Mizo to wider world provoked in Mizo historians and writers the need to locate their people within larger cultural and geographical context. She suggests to categorize the location of Mizo identity in three ways - first, it took the form of linking themselves to the neighbouring 'tribes' based on a classification which

[425] Hutchinson and Smith,p. 8.
[426] Hutchinson and Smith, pp. 8-9.
[427] Hutchinson and Smith, p. 9.

assembled people into tribal groupings based on language, 'race', culture, and so on. She believes that Liangkhaia and K. Zawla tried to speculate about their location within the larger network of tribes within prevalent racial (really linguistic) categories. Secondly, the historicizing had to have a proper linear aspect as a result of which the *Chhinlung* aspect of the origin myth came to be stressed. And lastly, Mizos also felt the need to be placed within the new biblical narrative; aspects of their myths were, hence, related to the Biblical story, and on other occasions they placed their stories within Biblical schemas.[428]

According to C. Nunthara the origin of the term 'Mizo' is obscured. It literally means highlander or hillmen. However, to the mass of the people, it ordinarily refers to the fluency in the use of Lusei language. Thus, the definition of the term may include all those who identify themselves as Mizos including all the related branches or sub-groups of the Mizo tribes who are now scattered over the neighbouring territories and who are fluent in the use of Lusei language. Thus, being identified as Mizo presupposes fluency in the use of Mizo language (Lusei). However, this has given rise to tremendous political debate particularly in the face of trying to build a greater Mizoram subsuming all the adjacent Mizoinhabited areas.[429]

Liangkhaia was perhaps the firstMizo historian to trace the original home of the Mizos. Being one of the first Mizo church / Christians to be ordained as Pastor his perception was greatly influenced by Christian teachings and principles. He believed that Mizo origin could be traced from the descendants of Japheth who was one of the three sons of Noah. From this Biblical perspective he turned to the physiological factors and argued that Mizos are one of the Mongolian races which is evident from their physical texture. Among the Mongolian race Mizos belong to Tibeto - Burman group. Around 750 A.D. the king of China named Chhinlunga had misunderstandings with his father and as a result he migrated from China with many of his subjects. There was westward movement from China to Burma, and a village was built at '*Awksa Tlang'*. The population increased and the settlers dispersed after the death of Chhinlunga. Those who had once lived in that village called themselves '*Chhinlunga chhuak'*or came from *Chhinlung*. These people constitute the present settlers of Chin Hills, Manipur, Mizoram, Satikang hill tribes and Cachar (Assam).[430]

[428] Joy. L.K.Pachuau, *Being Mizo, Identity and Belonging in North East India*, New Delhi, OUP, 2014, pp. 112-113.
[429] Nunthara, *Mizoram Society and Polity*, p. 33.
[430] Liangkhaia, p.1.

According to V.L. Siama, Mizos belong to Tibeto - Burman group of the Mongolian race. He used the physical texture in his analysis and judgement regarding the origin of Mizos. He believed that the ancestors of Mizos came from north eastern region of China, those people seemed to migrate from there to Tibet region to Burma and finally to Mizoram. He was of the opinion that Mizos migration to present Mizoram was quite recent and they seemed to have settled in the present state not long ago. He drew parallel and similarity of Mizoswith some groups like the Kawl/Burmese, Metei, Pawi, Paite, Lakher, Biate and Darlawng.[431]

B. Lalthangliana is of the opinion that Mizo are of the Assam-Burma sub group that branches from Tibeto – Burman group of the main Tibeto - Chinese race. Because of the affinity of language Mizosare classed as Tibeto - Burman group though tradition ascribed them as people who live in Chhinlung.[432] Tibeto - Burman probably once inhabited the T'ao valley of Kansu province on the north west of China. Because of many disturbances made by the Chinese these people might have moved to the north east of Tibet. The Chinese under Ching in 1000 B.C. made further depredations and in order to avoid them, the Tibeto Burman travelled across ridges and forests and escaped into south. That journey probably took hundreds of years and eventually they came to the border of Tibet and Burma.[433] Early Mizos were also of the same stalk and they might also form part of the people who came to the Tibet Burma border. Perhaps it was through the Hukong valley thatMizos came to the Chindwin valley.[434]B. Lalthangliana, thus, traces Mizo identity through cultural context and draw similarity and parallel between the Burmese and Mizos which could be seen in children's games, musical instruments, dresses and customs[435] etc. The suddenness of Mizo departure from Burma and the difficulties of terrain in the Chin Hills must have hindered their growing of rice. At this time, they had to subsist on other crops - millet, maize, and large beans called *Ra*. The Mizooriginally sowed the rice seeds by scattering them with the hand. Then it was found that the seeds that fell on the small hollows of tracks of deer and other animals grew better. From then on holes were made for the seeds. At this stage, tools were simple and crude. Dibbling sticks and animal horns were used for digging holes in sowing.[436]

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[431] V.L. Siama, p.7.
[432] Chhinglung whereabouts is still unknown, B. Lalthangliana, *History & Culture of Mizo*,Aizawl, B. Lalthangliana, 2014, pp. 1-2.
[433] Than Tun, *Early Burma*, pp.105-107 as cited in B. Lalthangliana, *History and Culture of Mizo*, p. 2.
[434] G.H. Luce, *Old Kyaukee and the Coming of the Burmans*, JBRS XLII, 1959, p. 89 as cited in B. Lalthangliana, p. 2.
[435] B. Lalthangliana,p. 4.
[436] B. Lalthangliana, *History of Mizo in Burma*, Aizawl, B. Lalthangliana, 1975, p. 19.

Despite confusions over who constitute the Mizos, the Mizos rely on 'cultural practice' as the chief determinant of identity and as the boundary marker of identity. Broadly speaking, various tribes that were referred to as the 'Kuki-Chin-Lushai' group in colonial times and that spread across parts of the present day states of Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur, and Assam, as well as Bangladesh and Burma, at varying points of time and places have been incorporated as Mizo. At the same time, 'Mizo' may also refer to the inhabitants of the state of Mizoram alone. While Mizo tend to see 'tribes' outside their state as '*Mizo hnahthlak* or branches of the Mizo' and thus Mizo, this ethnonym has not always been accepted those thus called, who at times have preferred the use of the ethnonyms such as Kuki, and more recently, *Zo*. In many ways, therefore, Mizo identity is a perfect example of what may be called a 'situational identity'.[437]

While fluidity and situationality may define Mizo identity in practice, contemporary political discourse attempts to frame the Mizos territorially and politically. One of the ways in which this discourse is practiced is with reference to what is known as the Inner Line. The Inner Line is an inheritance from Mizoram's colonial past, a policy that the British instituted in the North East in as early as 1873 but initiated in the case of Lushai Hills in 1904. Lines as markers of territory were employed by the British to separate different kinds of governance. Initially the line was used to denote areas beyond which the British had no form of jurisdiction or involvement, in other words, the limits to their own expansion. In course of time, the line drawn signified the type of governance that was introduced, under the category of Excluded and Partially Excluded Territories. The line in a sense, fix and frames the Mizos in a geographical space, within a political entity called Mizoram.[438]

5.1.4 Culture and Identity

Identity is the sum total of all the peculiarities which constitute one into a concrete individual. Culture on the other hand may be described as the mould of physical, psychological, intellectual, moral and spiritual endowments, values and their manifold expressions in art, artifacts, literature, customs, manners, beliefs, philosophies and attitudes to

[437] Joy L.K. Pachuau,p. 11
[438] Joy L.K. Pachuau, pp. 12-13

the world and invisible. It is a whole way of life. Man is being constantly cultured by his total environment and he is also culturing it.[439]

According to Chris Baker, "Culture is a complicated and contested word because the concept does not represent an entity in an independent object world. Rather it is best thought of as a mobile signifier that enables distinct and divergent ways of talking about human activity for a variety of purposes. That is, the concept of culture is a tool that is more or less usefulness to us as a life form and its usage and meanings continue to change as thinkers have hoped to 'do' different things with it".[440] Oxford English dictionary defines culture as the arts, customs, and institutions of a nation, people or group.[441]

Any human identity is a multi-layered reality. We have multiple identities, some of which are 'given' and hence non-erase able and others which are acquired and permanent; yet others are acquired and discarded. Thus given identities are determined by ethnicity, nationality, gender, language, culture, class, race, religion, etc. Others are acquired by education, citizenship, ideology, profession, politics, cultural affiliations, employment etc.[442]

It is the common cultural traits which make members of ethnic groups a distinct class of people. Thus, the Mizo is a Mizo, whether he be in Burma, Bangladesh or Mizoram, through the sharing of a common cultural identification which is symbolized by the term 'Mizo' and which is overtly expressed in language, dress, social customs and other social interactions and which structurally binds them together as one separate ethnic group.[443]

Food is a significant component of cultural sustainability in that it is one of the many life rituals that play an important role in helping reinforce the norms that we embody. The smell of familiar foods can instantly evoke a series of emotions and desire because food and food customs are carriers of identity, memory and tradition. Food habits are part of our cultural identity, and they, like language, are among the makers of identity that are seldom relinquished. More than sustenance, food in rituals and customs, as ingredients and in

[439] Sebastian Karotemprel, 'Reflections on Identity, Culture, Cultural Change and Christianity', p. 45 in T.B.Subba, Joseph Puthenpurakal & Shaji Joseph Puykunnel (eds.), *Christianity and Change in North East India*, New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company, 2009.
[440] Chris Baker, *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*, London, Sage Publications, 2004, p.44
[441] *Oxford English Dictionary and Thesauras*, Indian Edition, New Delhi, OUP, 2005, p. 208
[442] Sebastian Karotempel, p. 47
[443] C. Nunthara, p. 19

processes of preparation, are symbolic for what they convey about our racial and ethnic identities.[444]

Food is instrumental to the processes of self identification, place making, and agency building. Consequently, for many migrant, the smell of familiar foods encodes an entire semiotic system of political, cultural, and social significations". Home cooked slow food can instantly evoke emotions and desires – 'Migrants preserve their ties to the homeland through their preservation of and participation in traditional customs and rituals of consumption. Expatriates are adamant, entirely passionate about such matters as the eating habits of the motherland." Food in the migrant / diasporic subject cosmos, becomes – whatever it might have been at its place of putative origin - tenaciously tethered to economies simultaneously and irreducibly national and moral.[445]

The term 'regional cuisines' refers to the cookery and foodways of specific geographic areas whose borders frequently correspond with ethnic boundaries. The emergence of regional cuisines is often explained in climatic, geographic and biological terms, and certainly these naturally caused differences help explain the more or less distinct division between cookeries of different regions. The concept of regional cookery presupposes that common ways of preparing food are cultural specialities that are further developed to become objects of cultural identity. Through these processes, demarcation from other cuisines occurs because of different methods of food preparation. Cooking, then, is a sociocultural phenomenon, and different recipes and foodways are the products of this phenomenon. And when certain recipes become cultural characteristics, the cuisines are distinguishable and can be regarded as independent cultural products. Therefore, cuisines can establish cultural differences as well as common grounds.[446]

Food is one of the ways humans define themselves as civilized. But "civilized" is a slippery concept, very much in the eye of the beholder. For example, civilized people use utensils - forks, knives, spoons, chop-sticks. Unless they're eating with their hands. Civilization has been used as a reason for vegetarianism - not eating meat elevates humans and separates them from "savages." But notorious vegetarians include mass murderers like Robespierre, the

[444] Psyche Williams-Forson, "I Haven't Eaten If I Don't Have My Soup and Fufu": Cultural Preservation through Food and Foodways among Ghanaian Migrants in the United States, *Africa Today,* Vol. 61, No.1, Special Issue: Narratives of the African Landscape: Perspectives on Sustainability (Fall 2014), pp. 69-87, available from Jstor accessed on 20.06.2018, 9:39 UTC
[445] Psyche Williams-Forson, "I Haven't Eaten If I Don't Have My Soup and Fufu", Available from Jstor.
[446] Kipple & Ornelas (eds.), *The Cambridge World History of Food Volume II*, p. 1215.

leader of the Terror that followed the French Revolution, and Hitler. Overcoming prejudices about what is civilized can be difficult or impossible, even when survival is at stake. During World War II, starving American servicemen could not bring themselves to eat nutritious insects.[447]

Identity - religious, national, ethnic - is intensely bound up with food. Every group thinks of itself as special and exceptional and uses food to show it. The French identity is connected to white bread, while southern Italians insist on tomato sauce. This identification can also take the form of a negative, in foods that are excluded: "We don't eat that. They [religion, country, ethnic group] eat that." Some examples are the Jewish and Muslim avoidance of pork, and the Buddhist taboo on beef. In European and American cultures, serving a whole boiled chicken at an important occasion would be an insult, while in Taiwan, it is the centrepiece of a banquet.[448] Mizos too had avoided milk in pre-colonial times as we never had any access to their consumption of milk before the arrival of the missionaries and British officials. The Mizo avoidance of food item like milk might not be considered as food taboo however the real importance lies in the fact that their food culture was a unique food culture and this uniqueness was one of the significant identity marker.

Food can be a political weapon. After the French objected to the United States invasion of Iraq, some Americans refused to eat French fries, but had no problem with Freedom fries - the same food, just re-named. Throughout history, people of one country have used food as a way - usually not complimentary - to refer to people of another country. When the British found that limes were a cure for the vitamin C deficiency, scurvy, they became "Limeys." The French ate frog legs, so they were called "Frogs." Germans' love of cabbage branded them "Krauts".[449]

Everything about how humans cook and eat has meaning: who is allowed to fish for it, farm it, mill it, or kill it; what vessels and utensils are used in the preparation; what time of day the meal is eaten; who sits where at the table (if you're eating at a table), how close to an important person, a certain food, the salt, a person of another gender, race, or class; what order the food is served in; who serves it; whether it is hot or cold, cooked in water or by direct fire. In European and American cultures, serving a whole boiled chicken at an

[447] Linda Civitello, *Cuisine and Culture – A History of Food & People*, Second Edition, New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New 2008, p. xiv.
[448] Linda Civitello, *Cuisine and Culture, - A History of Food & People*, p. xiv.
[449] Linda Civitello, p.xiv.

important occasion would be an insult, while in Taiwan, it is the center - piece of a banquet.[450]

5.1.5 Food and Mizo Identity

To have a clear perspective on identity - cuisine relationship in colonial Lushai hills one needs to move a step backward and have a glance at the effect of colonialism on South East Asian food culture because the food culture of the Mizos have many similarities with that region's food culture. South East Asia as a region or culture has been called a colonial construction, merely lines on a map that serve academics who narrowly specialize in orientalist study of one or more countries within that region. Throughout south east Asia, the capacity to feed others by sponsoring rice meals, ceremonies, and feasts is a means of acquiring prestige and status. In most South East Asian languages 'to eat' really mean 'to eat rice'. Rice is served from a common pot with people taking individual servings on separate bowls, plates, or leaves. Rice is eaten with a variety of side dishes including fish, vegetables, soups, sauces and condiments.[451].

Food became a social factor, sometimes even demonstrating social identity. Tastes and culinary skills do in fact reflect a group mentality - "Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are?" is almost applicable to every culture. While traditional recipes or festive rituals may relate to regional, national and religious characteristics, they also arise from a group's general liking for certain basic foods.[452] The diet and what people consider as 'food' differs from country to country, region to region. For instance, what the Mizos consider as food may not be considered as 'food' by other communities. The choice of food is a product of culture. Ecological, biological and economic conditions affect our choice of food as edible or inedible.[453] Mizo choice of food is indeed a product of their culture. The dominant role play by rice in Mizo food concept and culture is one of the best example. In the pre-Christian Mizo culture, the belief system attached importance to rice even in the life after death. They believed that they would be provided with '*Faisa*'- husked rice, in their next life which gives the impression that Mizos gave prominence to rice in their food culture and they drew

[450]Civitello, p.xiv.
[451]Esterik,p. xxiv.
[452] Toussaint-Samat,p. 38.
[453] Cherrie L. Chhangte, p. 393.

relation between food, that is, rice, and heaven.

Certain foods served as regional and cultural identity markers in various colonized countries. The chroniclers of colonial Perú suggest that in both pre-conquest and colonial Andean society, the consumption and cultivation of Andean foods such as maize and the potato served to mark regional and cultural identities as well as an individual or family's relative access to a varied or high-status food supply.[454]

As highlighted in chapter 2 there is no clear and undeviating reference and primary evidence to traditional Mizofood. Colonial ethnographies are used in reconstructing Mizo food habits. A.G. McCall, Shakespeare and other writers (colonial and indigenous) have given a gist of food and the palate of the Mizos in brief. Most of these writers did not delve much into this area, fortunately, their writings give us certain information to contextualize food in Mizo history. Like many South Asian and East Asian culture, in Mizo culture, rice plays an important role. It is their staple food and other foods (vegetables, green leaves, milk, fruits etc.) are always described simply as 'accompaniments' to it. The cravings of the Mizos cannot be sated or quenched until and unless rice is served and inMizo 'to eat food' really means 'to eat rice'. This unique characteristics or attitude of the people distinguish them from others and give them distinctive identity.

An idea can be reconstructed on the traditionalMizo food from their economic life and their domesticated plants and animals. Although the economy of early Mizos was simple, it was the mainstay of the people. Before paddy was cultivated Mizos used maize, millet, gums, arum – bulbs, sweet potatoes etc. as their staple food.[455] We do not know when rice substituted these items but tradition says that rice was first cultivated only when they came to the Chin Hills of Burma.

In pre-colonial period, domestic animals like pigs, chicken, goats, mithuns, dogs etc. played a very important part in the economic life of the Mizos. In addition to being important items of sacrifices in rituals relating to birth, marriage, death, sickness, festivals and healing ceremonies, they were also extensively used as important sources of food and protein.[456]Meat

[454] Alison Krogel, *Food Production, Consumption and Identity Politics in Tuhuantinsuyu and Colonial Peru*, The Routledge History of Food, Carol Helstoky (ed.), Routledge, 711 Third Avenue, New York, 2015.
[455] V.L. Siama, p.10 as cited in Sangkima, p. 62.
[456] Sangkima, p. 62.

was the favourite food of the Mizos.[457] Meat, however, according to McCall, never played a large part in the diet of the Mizos. McCall had written that domestic animals were not kept for the table, but as currency and wealth, kills only being made on special high days and feast days.[458]

Mizos hypothesized meat as wholesome food. Most families could not afford to eat meat regularly, they had neither the means of preserving the meat nor the lard in modern freezers, thus, family had very few occasions in which to eat fried or fatty foods. Meat was a rare treat reserved for special occasions such as festivals and weddings. Hence, most families' food consisted of a variety of green, leafy vegetables, prepared in the traditional method of 'bai' or simply boiling it (*tlak)* without even the addition of salt.[459] The conceptualization of meat as good food gave Mizo an identity distinct from their neighbours particularly those from mainland India. If being a 'vegetarian' is the way of becoming a 'civilized' Mizos would never be civilized people. In their culture those who had access to meat were given higher status and the regular consumption of 'meat' became a symbol of higher class in the society.

We define ourselves not only by what we eat but also by how we eat. In Mizo society the method of taking meals in ordinary house was simple but after colonial rule there were some changes in the eating manner. Traditionally the food was put on a large dish of either wood or metal placed on the floor of the house, all would sit around and help themselves with their hands, the men taking unchallenged precedence over the women and children.[460] It was generally held that visitors should not intrude at this time as it was the time for parents to instruct their children about morality, civic sense etc. The father being the head of the family would distribute the work for the day.[461] Thus, families met at various meal times. Such every occasion provided the opportunities for the development of sound family relationship and good habits. There has been considerable (or complete change?) changes in the eating pattern of the Mizos after the coming of Europeans. It can't be imagined that today's Mizo families would share food from one bowl. Instead they have been practicing the most 'western' eating manner.

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[457] Lalrimawia, "*Economy of the Mizos (1840 – 1947*)" Studies in the History of North East India, History Association Publication, 1986, p. 166 as cited in Sangkima, p.62.
[458]McCall, p. 186.
[459] Chhangte, p.394.
[460] McCall,p. 187.
[461] Pastor Challiana, *Pi Pu Nun*, Aizawl, Trio Book House, 1978, p. 3 as cited in Sangkima, *Essays on the History of the Mizos*, p. 146.

Eating the same things in the same way expressed Mizo cultural and familial continuity across generations. Mizo affirmed their identity by loving best of their own home cooking. They put home cooking at the top of the culinary hierarchy. Many expressed distaste for other cuisines whether in mainland India or abroad. Their food Chauvinism was an overt expression of cultural identity.[462] When Mizos were sent off to help the Allied Powers in the World Wars some of them were homesick and they refused to take a tour of London city which could not provide them the food the had been longing for. When they got the opportunity to experience western culture they chose to return to their homeland as soon as possible. Though there is no written record on the food chauvinism of Lushai Labour Corps in foreign land the food factor was one that prompted them to return to the Lushai hills at the earliest possible.[463]

What is food's role in marking the conceptual boundaries people create for themselves and others- classes, ethnic identities, social communities, nations? Laws and customs surrounding food demarcate where people draw lines around themselves and others.[464] Mizos created boundaries for themselves and others before and after the colonial regime in their land. The nomenclature '*zo buh'* (rice grown by Mizos in their jhum land) and '*vai buh'*(rice of the vai people / imported from the plain areas) bear their testimony on how Mizo identify themselves from the '*Vai*' whom they perceived to be belonging to other areas different from theirs. Till today, '*zo buh'* is a treasured food item especially in the towns and cities in Mizoram.

The passion that one has for local food culture is not just about eating, it says something about the bonding, pride and lifestyles. People's culture, history, food and lifestyles are linked inextricably. They make up what we call home.[465]'*Sawhchiar*' - porridge made with either chicken or pork is a living testimony of Mizo local food that represent the bonding role of food.*Sawhchiar* still speaks so loud in Mizo hearts that when there is communal gathering-wedding, festivals, birthday party etc. the menu usually have it in the list. Most restaurants and highway 'hotels' in Mizoram also serve '*Sawhchiar*' to their customers. Though Mizos are in a globalized world the food item which is typically of Mizo still occupies an important

[462] Carole M. Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence*, New York, Routledge, p.19.
[463]Chhuanliana BVT interview.
[464] Nancy Shoemaker, 'Food and the Intimate Environment', *Environmental History*, Vol. 14, No.2 (April 2009), pp. 339-344. Available from: http://jstor.org/stable/40608477, (accessed 16 July 2014).
[465] Shirley, Geok –lin Lim, 'Identifying Foods, Identifying Selves', *The Massachussetts Review*, Vol.45, No.3, Food Matters (Autumn, 2004), pp. 297-305. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/25090909, (accessed 16 July 2014).

place. From here it can be assumed that there has been a continuity in food practice though colonial rule tried to destroy the traditional culture.

Mizo identity as a distinct people is also reflected in the method of preparation. Their simple way of cooking and simple ingredients distinguished them from their neighbouring tribes and others. The way they made '*bai*' - a speciality of Mizos with its special recipe, is nowhere to be found among other culture not to say among their neighbouring tribes. The preparation method as well as the ingredients are passed down from one generation to the next though there has been a change in the ingredients after colonial intervention. The inclusion of different vegetables, salt and *Chingal* - distilled ash (in pre-colonial) and cooking soda (sodium bicarbonate) in post independence period make their food culture unique to gustatory foreigners. The home food always includes '*bai*' in the list.

Taste is determined by culture, anatomy, and genetics. Almost everything we eat, and when, and where, is culturally determined, so taste is taught. Some people pay top dollar for escargot in fine restaurants while others stomp on the same snail when they find it in the garden. One person's haute cuisine is another person's pest.[466] As Mizo taste buds were determined by their culture environment and geography and of course genetics most of them preferred their own food over new colonial food which were considered a symbol of being educated, high and civilized. This is evident from the continuous usage of *Chingal* even in post colonial period.

"We are what our ancestors ate and drank", according to Gary Nabhan, Director of the Center for Sustainable Environments at Northern Arizona University. If our ancestors lived in one area for a long time, then chances are good that we are genetically adapted to the food from that environment. When our ancestors moved to a place with different plants and animals, they were exposed to unfamiliar foods. Our bodies can react to new foods negatively, with allergies or illnesses. But we can force ourselves, or cultural conditioning can influence us enough, to overcome our dislike of some foods - even ones that cause pain, like chile peppers. So we come full circle, back to taste is taught.[467]

[466] Civitello, p. xiv.
[467]Civitello, p. xiv.

5.1.6 Colonialism and Mizo Identity

Mizos had been living as a separate and distinct people who identified themselves from others. When colonialism encroached their lives and culture a conscious or unconscious attempts were made to destroy Mizo identity and the feeling 'us' in them. Colonialism many a times tried to annihilate colonists' identity by employing a 'cultural bomb'. According to Ngugi Wa Thiongo, an African novelist, the effect of the cultural bomb is to annihilate people's belief in their names, in their language, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves.[468] Here he did not talk about the annihilation of identity through food. But he emphasized the denial of cultural rights to the indigenous people as integral to colonialism all over the world and a precursor to the cultural transformation of the colony.[469] The cultural bomb of the colonists was very effective in creating new identity amongst Mizos. The new Mizo Christian converts were said to have identified themselves as a separate group with the larger Mizo society. They changed the way of dressing, abandoned the traditional cloths and dresses like *puan* (a cloth wrap around the body, visible more in the dressing style of Mizo men). They began to wear western dresses like pants, shoes and shirts. Mizo traditional festivals - *Mim Kut, Pawl Kut* and *Chapchar Kut* etc. became less valued while Christmas, Easter and Good Friday assumed importance. The Church took the place of *Zawlbuk* as the most important institution in Mizo social and religious lives. The cultural bomb also destroyed Mizo capacities and self esteem. White complexion was considered better than dark ones. In that situation, they began to develop blind imitation of western style of living, worship, dressing and cooking.

According to K.N. Pannikar, "Colonialism denies history to the colonized, in the sense that it deprives the subjected of their own cultural rights and identity, and arrests or interrupts their own trajectory of development. The colonial countries have lost many of their cultural artefacts, as is evident from the collections in the various museums in Europe. This transfer of cultural artefacts effected by colonialism has greater significance than of mere colonial plunder. For it forms part of the denial of cultural identity and the creation of new one." The change of place names during the colonial regime denotes a loss of identity and the formation of new one, forced identity.[470]

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[468] Thiongo, Ngugi Wa, *Decolonising the Mind: The politics of Language in African Literature*, London, 1986, p. 2 as cited in Pannikar, *Colonialism, Culture and Resistance*, p. 20.
[469] Pannikar, p. 20.
[470] Pannikar, p. 21.

The above observation made by K.N. Pannikar is also quite true in the case of Mizos who were being forced to accept new identity. In the colonial Lushai hills a '*cultural bomb'* was being thrown at Mizo culture and society. ManyMizo places lost their identity and a new identity was being given out by the Christian missionaries and British officers. This is evident from the changing of names in the Lushai Hills viz. Mission Veng (previously called *Hriang Mual*), McDonald Hill (*Thingpui Huan Tlang*), Aijal Club etc. These places are at the hearts of Aizawl, the capital city of present Mizoram. Many Mizos of today would not know the previous names of these places. In such a way the effect of the colonial cultural bomb was enormous.

The colonial rulers did not have empathy with the indigenous tradition. The colonial Spanish administrators disturbed intricate cultural and religious aspects of Andean alimentary practices and cycles by disrupting pre-conquest production and distribution systems and by controlling or inhibiting the consumption of certain food items.[471] In colonial Lushai hills, *Zu* drinking in Mizo festivals which had assumed the status of tradition was prohibited for Mizo Christian converts. Instead of instilling moderation and limit, *Zu* drinking or consumption was strictly prohibited. The attempt to establish identity with the traditions of the colonized was only a mode of seeking legitimacy by affirming the culture, at least part of it, of the colonized. Paradoxically, though, it tended to deepen rather than minimize the cultural differences between the colonizer and the colonized.[472]

The Christian missionaries and the British colonial administrators working the Lushai Hills were the one to give a distinct identity to Mizos. We have never heard of the pioneer missionaries nor the colonial administrators inter-dine with Mizos. Instead of inter-dining there was an indifferent attitude towards Mizo food culture. For those who considered Mizo food culture as 'primitive' and 'filthy' it was challenging to have food in any Mizo house. This is evident from colonial ethnographies and Missionary diaries. The pioneer missionary J.H. Lorrain had written,

> "The houses, streets, the people, all from the chief down to the beggar are filthy as filthy can be". It was a big issue for him to inter-dine with Mizos as he said, "If

[471] Alison Krogel, 'Food Production, Consumption and Identity Politics in Tuhuantinsuyu and Colonial Peru', *The Routledge History of Food*, Carol Helstoky (ed.), 711 Third Avenue, New York Routledge, 2015, p.21.
[472] Pannikar,p. 22.

> I were to think too much of the filthy sickening ways of the people I should starve myself to death rather than eat a fowl or vegetable from the Lushai houses".[473]

Such statement was concocted on 26th April 1897.[474]

Therefore, by secluding themselves from Mizo food culture the identity question was brought up by the missionaries and British officials in the first place. When there was no attempt on the part of the missionaries and the colonial officers serving in the Lushai Hills to have social intercourse with the indigenous people feeling of separateness and differences became inevitable. The feeling of the 'us' from 'them' was, thus, the creation of the colonialism in the first place. Moreover, they remained exclusive and did not mingle with the Mizos. Such kind of attitude created differences amongst them and the people they ruled over.

Furthermore, the Christian missionaries and the colonial administrators were very critical of Mizo food preparation and considered Mizo food as technologically inferior which was short of the balance diet concept. In the '*Mizo Miracle'* Majorie Sykes had written that the food was poor – there was plenty of it but very little variety, and as the people ate big quantities of rice and very little else malnutrition was everywhere.[475] Their attitude towards Mizo food and its preparation created differences between them and the Mizos. It is universal truth that if one looks down upon other a distinct identity mental state quickly arises.

It is also found out that Mizos maintained their separate identity from western culture. Towards the end of colonial regime majority of Mizo population embraced Christianity. New festivals like Christmas, Easter gained importance in their hearts. However, Mizo identity was still kept and maintained in the celebration of those festivals as the missionaries had recorded. May Bounds and Gladwys M. Evans described the wayMizo celebrated Christmas in their own way,

> "Meanwhile in Durtlang village a Christmas service would have been held and the Church would be full. Several of the men would then start the cooking for the Christmas feast. The whole village would have contributed towards the cost of an animal for the Christmas feast. The village would usually be divided into six

[473]Lorrain, Log Book 1889-1936, ATC Archives.
[474]Lorrain, Log Book, ATC Archives.
[475] Majorie Sykes, *Mizo Miracle*, Madras, The Christian Literature Society, 1968, p.8.

areas. Mostly each area would have a whole cow, or occasionally they would have a pig".[476]

"The men would have prepared everything needed for the cooking previously, and the animal would have been cut up in small pieces. The cooking pots were very large indeed and except for the offal all the parts were cooked together. The young girls would have collected wood for the fires in readiness, they would also have carried sufficient water for the cooking. Rice sufficient for each family would be cooked in the family home".[477]

"By about 3:30 p.m. the feast would be ready; this was eaten outside by everyone. Each family would have brought a large plaintain leaf (good disposable tablecloth). This would be lain on the ground and the steaming hot rice placed in the centre of the leaf. There would be a cup of juice from the meat for each person and salt and chillies would be placed on the leaf. Young men would come round each family and ladle out plenty of meat and rice. Before they ate someone would lead in prayer. Then they would enjoy the feast and eat to the full. The children always fascinated me as they always made the most of eating to their full capacity, they did not have meat so often in their own homes and this feast was very special".[478]

The admiration of white skinned people by Mizos was noticed by the missionaries. J.H. Lorrain had written that white faces were admired by Mizos. They hade never seen a white lady except in the stereotype and they thought the English girl - especially the pale ones - simply beautiful.[479] As identity had been constructed on the basis of skin colour classification and categorization of the people living in the Lushai hills was also done on the basis of food. The apposition between '*rice - eaters Lushai'* and '*non- rice others'* remained; for all the curiosity of individuals about some items of western food, the food culture ofMizo never gave up rice for bread or potatoes.

[476] May Bounds and Gladwys M. Evans, *Medical Mission to Mizo*, Chester, Great Britain, Handbridge Printing Service Ltd., 1986, p.46.

[477] May Bounds and G.M. Evans, *Medical Mission to Mizos*, p. 46;
[478] Bounds and Evans,p. 47.
[479] J.H. Lorrain, Log Book, ATC Archives.

Though Mizos absorbed western culture and religion the traditional style of eating still found its place in the celebration of festivals which were not their own. The continuity of communal feasting in Mizo way was even followed by most of the later missionaries.[480] It is found that while the 'cultural bomb' conjure up by K.N.Pannikar was very effective in changing the lifestyle, dresses and food habits of Mizos it could not completely destroy Mizo identity. The continuous existence of Mizos as a separate people was reflected in their culture of food - the pattern of eating, preparation, their emotions and sentiments towards Mizo food like *Bai, Bawl, Rawt*, etc.

The British attitude towards people of other cultures was profoundly racist. The same racism appeared in African colonies of the British. The white men's burden concept found its greatest expression there. Cecil Rhodes stated: "I contend that we (Britons) are the first race in the world, and the more of the world we inhabit, the better it is for the human race". These colonial powers caused complete disruption of the life and the land, the cuisine and the culture. They forced the native people to grow non-native staple crops like peanuts and cacao, which displaced native African foods. By the end of the nineteenth century, Africa was the world's leading producer of cacao. This caused the economy to shift from a self-sufficient barter system to cash, because the native people now had to buy food with money, so they had to work for wages. Some went to work on rubber plantations in the Belgian Congo, under the extremely harsh rule of King Leopold. Workers who didn't do their work well enough or quickly enough had their hands or feet cut off. The Congo was also rich in copper and tin. But South Africa was a gold mine - literally.[481] As written in Chapter 3, Mizos were asked and instructed to grow potato, to rear new breed of fowls and to keep cows for milk. That kind of action disrupted Mizo cuisine and food culture. Cooking classes conducted by women missionaries had considerable influence on Mizo cooking style which had resulted in the displacement of native Mizo food in some way.

Another instance of separate identity through food practice is reconstructed through the writing of Joan Lloyd (*Zohmangaihi nu*), she had written that 'the running of the household in the Lushaihills was very different from that in Britain. We had the minimum of help, though family and friends at home thought it sounded grand to have aid. Servants were a necessity, not a luxury, with the many extra chores that had to be done. Water had to be carried to the bungalow and all drinking water had first to be boiled. No milk or bread

[480] L.T. Muana interview.
[481] Civitello, pp.250-251.

deliveries, milk was reconstituted from powder and bread made in our own kitchen. There was no gas or electricity at that time. Cooking was also done on a burning stove with fluctuating temperatures and paraffin burning lamps to be filled and trimmed each evening for illumination. Fruits – oranges, pineapples, papayas, mangoes and bananas were a valuable source of vitamins in our diet. We relied largely on tinned goods'.[482] Instead of adapting themselves to Mizo food the Lloyd's hired their own cook who were taught western style of cooking and most of the time relied on imported tinned goods from Britain rather than the locally available food of the Mizos.

British notions of Christian superiority over non- believers also colored their judgment of African foodways. In 1793 Zachary Macaulay visited Signior Domingo and Pa Sirey, another ruler of Port Loko. Macaulay described Sirey as "a Marabou or Mahometean [Muslim] priest" involved "in assisting" other Africans "at their Sacrifices to the Devil." Immediately thereafter, Macaulay commented that "Their meal consisted of nothing but Rice moistened with Palm oil and washed down with Water." "The warm admirers of patriarchal simplicity might here have gratified their taste," he observed, "but for my own part I felt no inclination to change a piece of cold mutton and a bottle of wine I had with me, for the honour of dining on rice & palm oil even with Majesty." His notion of the Muslim faith may have influenced Macaulay's willingness to eat his host's food, as evidenced by his displeasure that their meal included no alcohol. Still, it is notable that even though Macaulay suspected his hosts of making sacrifices to the devil, he ate their food without comment and saved his reflections for his journal. At least in the early 1790s Britons successfully concealed their disgust with "patriarchal" African religion and foodways.[483] The readings of colonial ethnographies and personal diaries also give the impression that the British including the '*Zosap*' looked down upon Mizo society and culture and most of them were very critical of Mizo customs, food culture and religious belief system. Their attitude towards Mizo culture particularly Mizo food created differences between them and the Mizos. Thus, the colonialists were the protagonists of identity issue in colonial Lushai hills.

[482]Lloyds Document, ATC Archives.

[483]Rachel B. Herrman, "If the King had really been a father to us"- failed food diplomacy in eighteenth century Sierra Leone, *The Routledge History of Food*, Carol Helstoky (ed.), 711 Third Avenue, New York, Routledge, 2015, p.101.

Food practices, like language, possess important symbolic and pragmatic functions and features—attributes which a colonized or subjugated people must often aggressively defend in the face of the destructive ambitions or homogenizing intentions of a hegemonic power [484]. Mizosthrough the formation of non – government associations viz. Young Mizo Association (previously Young Lushai Association) tried to defend and preserve Mizo food culture in the face of the destructive intentions of the Sap working in their land. Colonial hegemonization not only created / generated consent but also contestation. Mizos contested in the cultural war revolving around food and identity by replacing their age old ingredients with new ingredients (for example, cooking soda replaced *Chingal*) without losing its original taste. Mizo food culture was, hence, neither completely hegemonized by the colonial rule nor fully distanced from the traditional.

Furthermore, it is found that culinary colonialism through the 'cultural bomb' created fusion in Mizo food culture. Bread, cookies, salad, fries etc. clearly came from the colonial experience. Mizo food bears the ascriptions of colonial taste preferences and technological innovations, Mizo food was, thus, partly colonized. The colonization of Mizo food may not be visible like the political colonization or the religious change it is clear that the new food technology brought about by the British officials and missionaries altered Mizo taste buds and the gradual change in the taste buds was more visible in the post independence era. Some may attribute Mizo exposure to outside world beyond their own land as the prime factor in changing food habits of the Mizos, however, it is undeniable truth that the colonization of Mizo food remains the most important factor.

[484] Alison Krogel, 'Food Production, Consumption and Identity Politics in Tuhuantinsuyu and Colonial Peru',*The Routledge History of Food*, Carol Helstoky (ed.), 711 Third Avenue, New York Routledge, 2015, p. 20.

II. FOOD AND GENDER

5.2.1 Food and Gender: Overview

For many people, food is a powerful voice, especially for women, who are often heavily involved with food acquisition, preparation, provisioning and clean up.[485] Mizo culinary practices are a meaningful expression of their culture, history, identity, family and gender. Food uncover hidden levels of social relationships. It signifies interaction, mutual bond and communality but at the same time is a sign of division. As a cultural signifier food carries different weight in constructing the values of masculinity and femininity, everyday experiences of men and women, performs different roles in the process of representation and self – representation. Do men and women need different diets? How many of our views on what constitute "women's food" come from how we're brought up, and how many are tied to something genetic. If men are from meat, are women from vegetables? The purpose of this section is to discuss the role played by Mizo women on food production, preparation, processing and consumption and to throw some light on how far gender manifested itself on food habits of the Mizos.

All over the world women played a pivotal role in food production, preparation and preservation. They learned these traits from their ethnic based knowledge system. The parents and grand parents were found to be the most important and credible source that provides an environment to the family members about learning of ethnic food based knowledge systems. Interaction with elders and inter and intra-communal people also imparted in them knowledge regarding preparation and preservation. In the barter systems, during the time of exchanging the goods with with others, women also learned the traditional knowledge. In the remote villages , where women were much dependent on the local foods, were found to be more knowledgeable in processing of the foods, invariably in all the age groups.[486]

It is undeniable truth that food as a field of study has not been taken up by academics and historians but by anthropologists who actually pioneered the study. The French Annales School of History was the first notable school of history to take up the matter. The Annales

[485] Carole M. Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth Century Florence,* New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 2.
[486] Singh, Singh and Sureja, *Cultural Significance and Diversities of Ethnic foods of Northeast India*, 2006, p.88.

included food in their broad geographical and interdisciplinary vision of 'total history', but although Fernand Braudel focused on demography and nutrition by counting the calories in historical diets, he gave less attention to the social and cultural context of eating. The recent burst of historical scholarship on food was inspired largely by anthropologists like Kwang Chih Chang and Sidney Mintz.[487] Likewise, food and its relation to gender studies were not taken up by feminist historians while feminist studies had already gained ground as a discipline or a field of study. It was only recently that the subject has been brought to the fore front as food is the place where gender issues expressed themselves on a large scale.

North Eastern Indian women have a visible role in the economic life of their communities because they are responsible for producing and processing food for their families. Physical mobility, the freedom to work and to take certain kinds of decisions seem to give women a sense of self worth and identity. Yet, throughout the region women have no substantial property rights. The rich diversity of rice in the north eastern region, which has been nurtured by women's knowledge and skills is the result of a gendered division of labour, of roles learnt and practiced over generations. These roles are reflective of the patriarchal ideology that determines gender relations and the value that is ascribed to different spheres of work.[488]

Mizosociety is a patriarchal society. There are many old sayings that imply that women had no status in the society. These sayings reflected gender inequality and gender discrimination in pre-colonial Mizo society. Even though there is no written record on the clear cut division of work between men and women Mizo society had divided men's work from women's work. Some of the old sayings towards gender discrimination and the dominated position of women in the pre-colonial Mizo society are:

I. "*Hmeichhia leh Chakai in Sakhua an nei lo*" (Women and crabs have no religion) which implies that a woman simply follows the religion of her husband or her father and could have no religion of her own.
II. "*Hmeichhia lehpal chhia chu an thlaktheih*" (Women and old fence can be replaced) which means a man is at liberty to replace his wife if he thinks she no longer serves his purpose.

[487] Jeffrey M. Pilcher (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of History*, OUP, www.oxford handbooks.com. 2015.
[488] Sumi Khrishna, Gendered Price of Rice in North East India, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.40, N0.25 (Jun, 18-24), pp. 25555-2562. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/441678, (accessed 16 July 2014).

III. "*Hmeichhe finin tuikhur ral a kai lo*" which means the wisdom of women do not cross the village waterpoint.

IV. "*Chakai sa, sa ni suh, hmeichhe thu, thu ni suh*" meaning women's word is not counted as word as crab's meat is not counted as meat.

Food is intimately connected to classed ideas about health, socialization, and status, and concern over eating habits is central to contemporary debates about what kind of subjects are socially valued.[489] In traditional Mizo society a dominated / subordinated status was assigned to women. This was reflected in their food culture in which cooking and cleaning were considered the sole duty of women. The women folk not only prepared food for their families but also collected and made utensils, gathered vegetables and grains and served the prepared food with love and care. Yet, their works neither received appreciation nor raised their position and status in the family and the society.

Sangkima has written that in early Mizo society there were two agencies which moulded the social life of the people. They were the family and the *Zawlbuk.*[490] After the introduction of Christianity among Mizos the family assumed more importance and even surpassed the *Zawlbuk* in shaping the social life of Mizos. Mizo women were home makers and looking after the family was the sole responsibility of women. In spite of certain prerogatives recognized in the society the husband, being the head of the family, exercised unfittered and autocratic dominance over his wife and other members of the family. Right from her childhood days Mizo girl had to make herself available to the parents. She assisted her parents as much as she could. She had to take care of her younger brothers and sisters, draw water, cook and do any other works whatever the family needed. Sometimes, accompanying her mother she fetched firewood.[491]

Food and gender are deeply and intrinsically related to each other. Here, it should be noted that the affect of culture on food choices and gender roles need to be ascertained. The effect of culture on food choices of the people is undoubtedly predominant. It also affects gender roles in food preparation and consumption.

[489] Kate Cairns, Josee Johnston and Shyon Bauman, Caring About Food in the Foodie Kitchen, Gender and Society, Vol.24, No.5 (October 2010), pp. 591-615. Available from: http://www.j.stor.org/stable/25741206, (accessed 16 July 2014).
[490] Sangkima, p.89
[491] Sangkima, pp.89-90

5.2.2 Division of work in Mizo society

The division of labour around food revealed gender roles and relations. Cooking for some women was an expression of creativity and caring; for others it was a burdensome obligation. In pregnancy and breast feeding, women created relationships with their children.[492] Not only men and women have different corporeal and emotional relationships to eating, but they also have distinct roles surrounding food, and they enact social relationships in food- centered productive and reproductive roles. Many cultures assign women reproductive roles inside the home and men productive roles outside the home, although everywhere there is much permeability and fluidity of these boundaries. However, the production - reproduction, male-female dichotomy has had major implications for gender power.[493]

The division of labour between men and women in Mizo society seems always to have left women with the most labour- intensive responsibilities. This is particularly true in the area of food production and food handling for local consumption. A woman's role is defined as one that does not require tools but a lot of skills and hard work.[494] In India's North East region the variability of gender specific work indicates that socio-cultural factors rather than just women's physical and physiological attributes determine the assignment of tasks to women and men.[495]

Like any other patriarchal society, in Mizo society the male members dominated family and society. Since the pre-colonial period, household works were assigned exclusively to the female members in the family while all the male members including young members would step outside for hunting, jhumming and other tough works. All the grown up male were supposed to take part in raiding, hunting and so forth. Meanwhile, looking after household and children, drawing water, collecting firewood, pounding rice etc. were the duties and

[492] Carole M. Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth Century Florenc*e, New York, Routledge, 2004, p. 1.
[493] Carole Counihan, *Gendering food*, The Oxford Handbook of Food History, Jeffrey M. Pilcher (ed.), OUP, www.oxfordhandbooks.com, 2015.
[494] Brita Brandzaeg, Wome, Food and Technology: Case of India, Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.14, No. 47 (N0v 24, 1979), pp. 1921-1024. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4368165, (accessed 20 June 2018).
[495] Sumi Khrisna, Gendered Price of Rice in North East India, Economic & Political Weekly, Vol.40, No.25 (June, 18-24, 2005), pp.2555-2562. Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4416784, (accessed 16 July 2014).

responsibilities of the women. Women also took up laborious work like men in cultivation work except in the toughest work of cutting down forest called '*Lo Vah'*.[496]

There are writings that also endorsed the gender based division of labour in the traditional Mizo society that 'the sexual division of labour in the traditional society was so sharp that the men concentrated themselves on defence and hunting. Women were responsible for all the domestic works. There was no holiday for them. They were busy from dawn to dusk. What was considered as women's work would not be touched even in a jest by men. Otherwise they would be laughed at by their fellow men and by the society'.[497]C. Nunthara has stated that with the primitive nature of the society, the domestic and the outside domain were clearly demarcated and the division of labour strictly followed sex division like many other simple societies. The duties of the womenfolk largely fell within the domestic domain.[498]

Since the Mizo society favoured big family women had to work very hard and hardly had free time from dawn to dusk. Not only grown up females but even the young girls would help their mothers as much as they could and would learn weaving and also various household chores at early age, while the young boys would refrain from doing all these things due to their instinctive feeling that such works were for the opposite sex.[499]

In the early days, jhum cultivation was the only occupation the Mizo pursued. Among the young girls and boys, the practice of '*Inlawm*' to work together by turn from one's jhum to another was very common. At the time of this it was the duty of the girl to carry in her basket all the boy's belongings such as clothes, dao, axe and a wrapped rice all the way to and from the jhum. They would wash and repair the boy's clothes, inspite of their hard work at the jhum the girls had no time to rest even at home. All the time they would engage themselves in domestic work right after coming back from the jhum. There were also much responsibilities shouldered by women particularly young and unmarried girls in the community when there was bereavement and important occasion. These include drawing of water, collecting firewood, cooking, pounding and sifting rice for the bereaved's family. They would lend hands for all possible help they could give. Involvement of the girls at such

[496] Lalfakzuali, *Changing Status of Mizo Women*, Aizawl, TRI, 2010, p. 3.
[497]*Mizo Women Today*, Mizoram, TRI, Art & Culture Department, 1991, pp. 7-8.
[498] C.Nunthara,p. 86.
[499] Lalfakzuali,pp.3-4.

time was necessary to match with and motivate the activities of the boys who rendered much work for the good and consolation of the bereaved family.[500]

Sangkima also describes the many duties entrusted upon women in the following way. 'When the girl attained adulthood she was assigned with different nature of work. She had to accompany her parents in the jhum thereby doubling her responsibilities in the family. Working the whole day at the jhum along with others she found no time for taking rest even when she reached home late in the evening. She had to spend the night with various engagements. It was customary among married and unmarried women to engage themselves with cotton works. Besides, the unmarried women had to perform a well established social custom by receiving youngmen who came to spend time in amusing themselves after toiling the whole day at jhum. This custom is called *Inleng* (courting). When the next day dawned she had to rise early to start afresh for the whole day. In the early morning she proceeded to the spring (water - point) to fill bamboo tubes with water, finish unhusking the rice by pounding in a mortar and cook the breakfast. She was required to finish all these tiring jobs before sun rise while the husband and the other male members were still asleep. Then after the meal the real work of the day began. All these pre-day engagements were performed by the young women and their mothers. If the mother had no daughter she had to single out these duties.[501]

The social, economic and cultural lives of Mizos limited the freedom of 'the second sex.[502] The autumn season was considered by Mizos as the most pleasant season of the year and profoundly called it '*Awllen*'. This was the season when men engaged themselves in hunting. Those who did not go for hunting roamed about without helping the family. But for womenfolk it was the busiest season of the year. During this pleasant season the Mizo woman sets her daily routine in two features. The first part of her work in a given day was to fetch firewood from the jungle. It was her duty to stock firewood for the next season. The other part included making of clothes for the coming winter.[503] From here it can be asserted that Mizo women did most of the work for the family and all the burden and responsibility of running the family were borne by womenfolk. They, without any complaint, readily accepted

[500] Lalfakzuali,pp.6-7.
[501]Sangkima, p.90.
[502] Simone de Beauvior, *The Second Sex*, Alfred A. Knope, New York, Random House Inc., New York, 1993, p.34
[503]Sangkima,pp.90-91.

all those duties and responsibilities as the only form of societal setting known to them was patriarchy.

V.L. Siama argues that Mizo women took up the responsibility of the domestic affairs, the daily routine was monotonous and tiresome - they got up early in the morning, looked after the children, cooked rice, pounded rice, prepared food etc. while men never seemed to offer any help as it was considered unmanly. Then women fetched water, in their free time they wove cloths for their families and then accompanied men to the jhums. When they returned from jhums she carried plants and vegetables for food as well as for their pig while the male members went along empty handed. Only when women fell sick that did they receive help from their husbands as helping their wives was considered '*Thaibawih*' / unmanly.[504]

The division of work between Mizo men and their women was also noticed and observed by the Missionaries. The Report of the Foreign Mission states,

> "The Lushai methods of agriculture is very primitive. The work is done almost entirely by the women. The men are vey lazy. Single young men hardly ever do 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 fields. Though there us no such necessity now the men do not work in the field as they should. The government endeavours to persuade them to give up their present methods and adopt modern methods of agriculture, in order that they may improve their own condition. If this were done the mission also would benefit by it".[505]

The 'unfair' division of labour in Mizo society was also highlighted by a lady missionary Dorothy F. Glover who said, "Lushai woman is a busy housekeeper and worker. Besides the care of the children, and the cooking, she is spinner, weaver, dress maker, water – carrier, wood cutter. She also looks after the domestic animals and helps with the jhuming".[506]

Towards and after the end of British rule in India the gender based division of work was still biased in the Mizo society. May Bounds and M. Evans noticed that and they wrote, 'the women worked very hard indeed and were always carrying heavy loads. They carried long

[504] V.L. Siama, p. 25.
[505] *Reports of the Foreign Missionof the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, pp. 34-35.
[506] Dorothy F. Glover, *Set on a Hill (50 Years in Lushai),*London,Edinburgh Press Ltd., 1944, p. 5.

sticks of wood in baskets on their backs to light and maintain the fires for cooking purposes in their homes. They carried water from the springs in bamboos, also in baskets on their backs, and water is very heavy. They carried the vegetables, the fruit, the rice after it had been harvested, and at times sun grass for the roofs of their houses. This could entail miles of trailing uphill and downhill. Then on Saturdays they carried to the market in Aizawl five miles away whatever could be spared to sell to bring in a little actual money. It was no wonder that back – ache was prevalent amongst women. The men also carried produce in baskets on their backs but not to the extent the women did. They also carried bamboos and wood for house building and repairing on their shoulders. They too worked very hard indeed'.[507]

Therefore, it is found out that the slow development of Mizo food culture is undoubtedly the outcome of the gender based division of work in Mizo society. As women had no leisure time or a time of their own they were deprived of sufficient space or time to evolve new cooking style or to develop the ingredients. Their uncountable responsibilities, duties and engagements prohibited them from innovating new cooking method. The monotonous daily routine that exploited women was one of the basic factors for the slow development and progress of Mizo food culture.

5.2.3 Role of women on food preparation

In '*Food, Power and Female Identity in Contemporary Florence'* Carole M. Counihan contends that in a state society women gain influence (private power) through giving even as they may be locked out of coercive (public power). In this analysis women feed others in return for "love, favours, good behaviours and the power that comes from being needed" She also argues that food practices are both constitutive and reflective of gender construction.[508]

In exploring the construction of gender and family through food practices, the sociologist Majorie Devault argues that food preparation is work that defines family. Women's activities in the home, Devault maintains, cannot be neatly divided into work versus leisure, the basis for much sociological theory on work and family. This framework conceptualizes work only

[507] May Bounds & Glwadys M. Evans, *Medical Mission to Mizo,* Chester, Great Britain, Handsbridge Printing Service Ltd., 1986, p. 39.
[508] Carole M. Counihan, *Food, Power and Female Identity in Contemporary Florence*, p. 8.

as that done outside the home, while the family is assumed to be respite from work. Through the work of feeding, "women quite literally produce family life from day to day".[509] Devault maintains that this work of feeding is invisible as work, though it is central to the construction of family, women themselves often deny that it is work. According to Devault, this activity is work which is both physical and mental labor, a social practice which constructs family.

Since unknown times Mizo women played the most prominent role in cooking food for the family. All the materials - ethnographs, news papers, journals, books, interviews etc. proved the unanimous duty and role performed by Mizo women in food preparation for the family. Shakespear had written that it was women who cooked breakfast of rice, a meal of rice and herbs at noon, and the evening meal which varied little from the previous ones, but some garnish, a little meat, dried fish, or some savoury vegetable was generally added.[510]

As Devault argues food was preparation was not considered as work though it required physical and mental labour. Mizo women never considered it as work and they blindly accepted that it was part of their duty as being the fair sex. They did not realize that it was the food they had prepared that bound them together with their families. They even urged the female child to do such laborious work without any complaint. Through food they produced family lives but unlike other societies like Counihan writes about they did not get back respect and favour and power from the feeling of being needed which is evident from the aforesaid Mizo sayings on women.

In the earlier days Mizo women never took part in religious ceremonies since they were not supposed to perform actual sacrificial parts. Actual religious practices were performed exclusively by men only. But the womenfolk could not keep themselves aloof as they were expected to serve pots of beer (*Zu*) ready for such occasion.[511]They were the one to prepare *Zu* for their menfolk. However, their skill and labour of brewing rice for *Zu* was never appreciated. Their physical and mental labour did not earn them deserved space in the social, economic and family lives.

[509]Counihan,p.13.
[510] Shakespear,pp. 16 – 17.
[511] Lalfakzuali,p.4.

5.2.4 Role of women on food processing and utensil making

Throughout North East India, it is generally the women who select the seed for sowing although their methods may vary in detail from place to place. Years of observation and practice have given them a seemingly intuitive understanding of paddy seeds and the ability to select visible pure strains. Mizo woman had learnt the skill and technique of food preservation. Despite the Mizo women's rich heritage of farming experience, they are ridiculed by common saying that 'woman's knowledge does not go beyond the village water source'.[512]

Since the pre - colonial period preservation techniques like drying, smoking and salting have been in the hands of women. The processing of pig fat to produce lard required skill and knowledge. As most families could not kill more than one pig in a year the preservation of the lard as well as extracted pig oil was one challenging task. Moreover, the manufacture of *chingal* (distilled ash) was complicated task as it was supposed to be kept by every Mizo family. It was again women who performed the distilling of wood ash to manufacture of chingal - their seasoning material. Practically, *saum* and *chingal*distinguish Mizos from their neighbouring tribes and outsiders. Through the indigenous knowledge of food processing Mizo women contributed in the process of identity formation.

Not just in the processing of food but also in the making of cooking pots the role played by Mizo women was not at all minimal. In the Mizo economic division of work making of cooking pots / pottery was exclusively left to the domain of women. The cooking pots used by Mizo before colonial period were hand made. The clay was usually dug in the bank of the streams. The size of the pots varies according to the purpose for which they were intended. The whole processes of making pots was performed by women alone.[513]

The making, cleaning and maintenance of cooking utensils were actually considered to be women's job, their utensils were mostly made of clay and mud. Women had indigenous knowledge in the art of making earthen pots. They first gathered mud/clay as much as they could, then knead the mud very hard and left it for dessicating for some days. The process thus continued, they made rice pot, piggery pot, crushing plate, bowls, wine/beer pot etc. After drying these articles in the sun they burnt them in the fire. After this the utensils were

[512] Sumi Krishna, Gendered Price of Rice in North East India, Available from: Jstor, (accessed 16 July 2014).
[513] *Mizo Women Today*, p. 10.

ready for use.[514] Mizo women did not receive any teaching in this regard yet they still found out their own way of manufacturing potteries. Their indigenous knowledge was remarkable.

The utensils found in Mizo house was described by Shakespear. He said, "Owing to their nomadic habits Mizos had not much utensil. Some earthenware beer pots, strengthened by plaited coverings, some brass pots, earthenware cooking pots and bamboo spoons completed the untensils used inside the house". He also stated that the woman made clay pots, moulding them by them. There were only two kinds in use – a small circular pot with a mouth some 6 to 8 inches in diameter, used for cooking, and a large jar, about 24 inches high and 15 inches in diameter, tapering to about 9 inches at the mouth, which is used for brewing beer in.[515]

Thus, in the colonial Lushai hills, Mizo women were totally identified with their domestic role, providing nurturance for the families primarily by feeding them. Their skills in fermenting and preserving were passed down from older women to their daughters and daughter-in-laws. The art of pottery making was required by every women as they were the makers of their utensils. Such skills and techniques were passed down by mothers to their daughters and daughter-in-laws.

5.2.5 Attitude of men towards foodways

Mizo men showed indifferent attitude towards food preparation. Their mind was reserved with patriarchal beliefs and practices. As a result, they never cook food for the family. Very interestingly, it was, and still is, men who did cooking on special occasions - Christmas feasts, community feasts etc. Some questions could be asked around this issue - Why could not men cook for the family when the could for the community? Did men do cooking for the community to get recognition?

As stated earlier, the preparation of food at home was considered woman's job and responsibility. Mizo men, on the other hand, refused to help their women in cooking as they were afraid that they would be called '*thaibawih*' (literally - dominated by wives) by their friends and relatives. As such, it became a tradition in Mizo family to not help woman in cooking though the larger part of of the cooked food was reserved and consumed by man.

[514] *Mizo Women Today*, p. 87.
[515] Shakespear, pp. 26 – 28.

After the introduction of education in theLushai Hills by the Christian Missionaries and the Government, Mizo men's attitude towards women and their role in the family underwent considerable change. Educated Mizo men began to spread the message of love and care for their womenfolk and this new class was critical of the prevailing attitude of men towards women. Therefore, the new educated Mizo men urged the need to change their general attitude towards women as is evident from the *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu* (June, 1906). In the June,1906 issue of the journal a certain man by the name of Bawnga of Sakawrtuichhundiscussed the prerequisite change in Mizo social practice as well as a change in the customary law. The writer, Bawnga, was of the opinion that Mizo women worked too hard as compared to the menfolk, and that they needed some kind of relief from their numerous daily work. He said that women had no free time and they had been expected to do all kinds of work by the society. Instead of appreciating their work they were often beaten up by their husbands and brothers. Even when they brewed rice beer the men would take out the pot and shared it with their friends when the beer got matured. For all this reason, Bawnga asked the menfolk to be more kind and generous to women and children.[516] However, the effort to change the attitude of men towards women borne little or no mentionable result.

The Christian missionaries, May Bounds and Glwadys M. Evans commented on the intentional complimentary role played by men in the preparation of Christmas feasts –

> "In Durtlang village a Christmas service would have been held and the Church would be full. Several of the men would then start the cooking for the Christmas feast. The whole village would have contributed towards the cost of an animal for the Christmas feast. The village would usually be divided into six areas. Mostly each area would have a whole cow, or occasionally they would have a pig. The men would have prepared everything needed for the cooking previously, and the animal would have been cut up in small pieces. The cooking pots were very large indeed and except for the offal all the parts were cooked together. The young girls would have collected wood for the fires in readiness, they would also have carried sufficient water for the cooking. Rice sufficient for each family would be cooked in the family home".[517]

[516] *Mizo leh Vai Chanchin*, 1906, ATC Archives, Account No – 10837.
[517] Bounds and Evans, p. 46.

For the sight of outsiders and society men chose to cook. This was perhaps their attempt to get projected as good husbands or good men in general. Cooking outside the home got men social recognition and therefore, food became the creator of power in the social and family set up in the Lushai hills. It seems that the colonial officials and the Christian missionaries also accepted the social set up as it was though they mentioned in their works the unfair division of work between men and women in Mizo society.

5.2.6 Manifestation of gender on food practices

In an open society like the Mizo women enjoyed a wide range of freedom. In social activities like *Khuang Chawi, Chawngchen* etc. women took active part. It would not be an exaggeration to say that no festival could be held without the participation of women. On such occasions no restrictions was imposed upon her even to the extent of indulging in drinking *Zu.*[518] The *Sumdeng Zu* was the drink prepared specially for both the unmarried man and woman.[519]At normal times a woman did not indulge in drinking for it was considered a shameful practice. The wives of a Chief and his elders were however, free to take drinks side by side with their male counterparts. On certain occasions, when together amusing themselves together, they consumed *Zu* without any restraint. When they were under the excess influence of the drink their family life was at risk, sometimes even ending in divorce.[520]

However, Mizo women played little role in the religious practices and rituals. In some sacrificial function, it was a taboo for women to eat the flesh of the animal killed. There was such a restriction for women to enjoy such meat with their male counterparts. All these restrictions were due to the fact that the Mizo had a strong opinion that a man should have a manly character and a woman should have a womanly character. A husband should be more capable and maintain superiority to his wife otherwise he should be looked down upon by the others. Therefore, women had no chance to participate in the affairs of men.[521]

[518]Sangkima,p. 94.
[519] Challiana, *Pi Pu Nun*, Aizawl, The Trio Book House, 1978, p. 46.
[520]Sangkima, p, 94.
[521]*Mizo Women Today*, p. 38.

Food is one way through which the place or role of gender in Mizo society and history can be reconstructed. Among the Mizos there is division in their food items and eating habits on the basis of gender. Both in the pre-colonial and colonial period women hardly took dog meat. A.G. McCall stated that women stayed away from dog meat for its unpleasant proclivities. Even today eating of dog meat among Mizo women is rare. But the fact remains that in the 21st Century (among Mizos) consumption of dog meat by a girl is unbefitting. Traditionally crab was also considered as 'women's meat'. In pre-colonial Mizo society manliness was sometimes related with food. Those who could control themselves in eating as well as those finishing faster than friends were considered to be manly. Pre-colonial Mizo men tried to maintain and keep up this practice.[522]

Generally, Mizo women consumed significantly fewer calories than men and were perceived as more feminine the less they ate. In the meantime, consuming more calories or large amount of food was considered more manly. According to food utilization theory, the final pillar of the food security framework, pertains to the ability of individuals to meet their specific nutritional and dietary needs. While it is important to enable individuals to meet these needs, calorie alone is not enough to ensure adequate diets and nutrition. In most societies, women play the primary role in translating available food into nutritional security for children and other family members.[523] In Mizo society, women play the leading role in translating the available food around them into nutrional securiry for their children and other family members.

[522]Thanga, p. 64.
[523] Available from: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.15767/feministsstudies.40.2.39, (accessed 13 June 2018).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Food has often been used as an instrument of establishing domination and hegemony since time immemorial. In pre- historic period, human exploited nature to get what he wanted, that is, food. By exploiting and controlling nature humankind procured his basic needs for sustenance. History tells how food factor contributed to the rise and fall of civilization. Food is also the basic cause of clash of civilizations. It is where power comes from. Without possessing the means of survival none could gain power and wealth. It is also the most formidable means of domination. The search for food drew nations and cultures together, had not the European searched for Oriental Spices the relationship or interaction between East and West might have been delayed.

Regarding the establishment of colonial rule, it is found that food shortage had made contribution. It was the disastrous famines - the *Mautam* and *Thingtam* Famine of 1850 and 1860 respectively that broke the back of the Mizos who had so far successfully fought back foreign intruders. The food shortage aggravated by the two famines made things easier for the British to defeat and establish domination over the Mizos.

The study reveals that in pre-colonial period, Mizo food culture was simple and unsophisticated. Like other South Asian and East Asian people, in Mizo culture, rice plays an important role. It is their staple food and other foods (vegetables, green leaves, fruits, meats etc.) are always described simply as 'accompaniments' to it. 'To eat food'in Mizo really means 'to eat rice'. The prominent place of rice in Mizo fare was expressed by its usage as an ingredient in the most popular snacks '*Chhangban*' (sticky rice bread) and in the preparation of Mizo typical dishes like *Sawhchiar/ Buhchiar* (Mizo porridge made with either meat or vegetables), in the brewing of rice beer which was the most popular drink.

It is found that Mizo food has many similarities with the food culture of South East Asian countries. The fermenting of soyabean and the extensive use ofboiling in food preparation are some of such examples. Foods were provided by their surrounding forests, rivers, cultivated jhums and gardens. Their peaceful co-existence with nature was noticeable. Despite their

dependence on wild forests and rivers as sources of food they did not destroy their sources of food in pre-colonial period, as such, nature gave them the blessings of numerous foods.

Regarding the culinary skill, boiling and smoking were the prevailing method of food preparation, though there are some instances to prove the usage of oils extracted from animal fat in cooking. The method of frying with oil was not practiced before the establishment of the British rule in the Lushai hills. However, oil was extracted from pig fat and preserved for future use when a pig was killed. Food was preserved for future use by means of drying, smoking and fermenting. Fermentation not only constitute significant form of preservation but also an important method of preparation. Rice, particularly glutinous one, was fermented and brewed for rice beer which was one of their protein source. The art of food preservation was learned at home, demonstrated by mothers to their daughters which passed from generation to generation.

Most primary (interviews, diaries, personal records etc.) and secondary sources (colonial, ethnographic, missionary and indigenous writings) are very critical of pre-colonial Mizo food, of the way it was prepared as they all believed it was too artless. They might have been right if they wanted a more elaborate style of preparation. However, food experts conceived that primitive food was the best food, thus, the study reveals that simplicity in the preparation without cooking oils and spices - the method known to Mizos, prevented from different food related diseases like diabetes.

It is also found that food served as a marker of class in pre-colonial Mizo society. The hierarchical nature of Mizo society was evident from the food practices. There seem to have been no mentionable sweet food like sugar or jaggery in pre-colonial period though sugar cane plant was found in the hills. Salt and honey were luxurious food. Because of its scarcity and enhancement in the taste of dishes salt assumed prestigious status in the pre- colonial Mizo food and thus, the regular usage of it served as a marker of class or social status. The difference between commoners and chiefs and privileged people (village priest, elders etc.) can be discerned even from food.

The dominant place occupied by meat in Mizo fare is also noticed. Most family could only kill a pig within one year. Pig was the most common animal used for rituals and sacrifices, in those sacrifices women were not allowed to consume the sacrificial meat. The occasion for the consumption of meat was, thus, very rare. This must be the case why Mizos considered

meat as good food as most were deprived of it and the cravings for meat set their habit of consuming meat as much as possible when they got the opportunity.

The research reveals that before the establishment of the British rule Mizo food was much simple and did not have much seasonings and taste enhancer. All of their taste enhancers were produced locally. Plants like parsley, basil, chilli pepper, Mizo onion, ginger and turmeric were the prominent seasonings. Besides these locally grown herbs and spices the taste was enhanced by Salt, *Saum* (fermented lard) and *Chingal* (distilled ash).

As far as meal time is concerned they usually had three meals a day - a breakfast (*zing chaw*) early in the morning, a lunch at noon (*chhun chaw*), and a heavy evening meal (zan chaw) about sunset. When they set out for their jhums or for journey they habitually carried cooked rice wrapped up in plaintain leaves for their midday meal. The commoners' dishes were quite simple consisting of three main items boil (*tlak*), chutney(*sawh/bawl*) and *bai* (vegetables boiled with salt or wood ash and distilled ash). There was little or no change at all in the meal time during colonial regime.

Among the Mizos there existed division in the food items and eating habits on the basis of gender. Both in the pre-colonial and colonial period women hardly took dog meat. A.G. McCall stated that women stayed away from dog meat for its unpleasant proclivities. The fact remains that in the 21st Century (among Mizos) consumption of dog meat by womenis considered as unbefitting or unsuitable. Traditionally crab was considered as 'women's meat'. Generally, Mizo women consumed significantly fewer calories than men and were perceived as more feminine the less they ate. In the meantime, consuming more calories or large amount of food was considered more manly. In Mizo society, women played the leading role in translating the available food around them into nutritional security for their children and other family members.

Besides cooking women were the one to gather or to make cooking pots and utensils. The utensils were made of clay. The contribution of women was enormous as they made clay pots not only for cooking but also for brewing rice beer. There were very few design for the potter and the same pattern was followed year after year. The entire pottery work was done by hand. Earthenware cooking pots and bamboo spoons and tubes competed the utensils used inside Mizo home.

It is also realized that like other patriarchal society, among the Mizos food preparation was the unquestioned task of women. Women were expected to cook food for the family and girls from a very young age were expected to know how to cook. Food preparation usually took place in the household but on festive occasions it required the involvement of appointed specialists (fatu) which was mostly done by men. Men stayed away from cooking at home to avoid being called '*Thaibawih*' or unmanly whereas their ability to cook without hesitation on feasting occasions is indicative of Mizo male's attempt to gain social recognition.

In pre - colonial period food was shared by the family by using the same bowl (*Chawthlengpui*)or common wooden plate. Generally,*thlanvawng* (Gmelina arborea) was used for this plate. There could never be a distinction between the rich and the poor in meal eating style. They sat together and shared the food. Meal time was used by Mizos for counselling and guidance for younger members of the family. Hierarchy within the family was also performed during meal time where the eldest member of the family was supposed to take the first bite and then other members follow suit. Those who failed to abide by these manners were considered shameless or indecent.

According to custom all travellers in the hills were entitled to food and lodging free for a night. Some people churlishly refused to give the hospitality required by custom but any one who follows the rules of *Tlawmngaihna* would never refuse hospitality to a stranger and the more strangers a man put up the more *Tlawmngaihna* he was held to possess. However, it is discovered that pre-colonial Mizos were not all hospitable to strangers. This is evident from a due called '*Chawman*' which was paid by a man who had been lodged and boarded in another man's house when he left the house of the man who had been supporting him. Many people supported orphans and others in their houses and when the person whom they had been supporting left their house, they were entitled to claim a sum of Rs. 40 as *Chawman* to cover the expenses incurred in boarding and lodging charges. This due of Rs. 40 could not be claimed when the lodger was turned out by the householder and did not leave on his own free will.

The gender based division of work in Mizo society is found to be responsible for the slow development of Mizoculinary system. As per the division of work, women had to fetch the firewood and water, cook the food and do the greatest part of the weeding and harvesting; they also made all the clothing for the whole household from cotton grown in the jhums, which they themselves gathered, cleaned spin, and woven into strong cloth. In such situation,

cooking / food preparation was the unquestioned task ofMizo women who were supposed to make home for the whole family and to also work alongside the menfolk in their jhum lands. As they were supposed to work from dawn to dusk they did not find time for the development of culinary method. For them, food preparation was no longer a passion, instead it became an obligation as it added another number in their list of a must do.

Mizos were not inquisitive enough to experiment new recipe or to invent new dish. Comparing Mizo food preparation with their neighbouring communities it is found that Mizo food culture is less developed. Though located in the same geographical region with other communities under similar ecological setting the Mizos culinary skills and ingredients in their dietary practice are much simpler characterized by simple boiling with and without salt.

When the British administration was consolidated in theLushai hills the British officials made many attempts to introduce new food items,viz. potato, pulses, carrot, fruits - orange, pineapple, and beverages - milk, tea etc., some of which were welcomed while some others failed to attract Mizo response and attention. Attempts were made to popularize the new food items by issuing ordersto cultivate novel crops such as potato, pigeon pea etc.In the meantime, they propagated the dietary and health advantages of the new food items in a vernacular journal, entitled, *Mizo leh Vai Chanchinbu*.

It is also found that during colonial period crystallised sugarassumed equal status with salt as luxury food item. It even defined in a subtle way a person's economic status as having the means to drink sweetened tea was a symbol of status. The only sweetened food that provided calories to Mizos in pre-colonial period was honey. With colonial regime and interaction with other communities such as the Gurkhas,Mizos learnt the art of making jaggery*(Kurtai*) from sugarcane. In the Lushai hills, sugar was possibly used on a regular basis in military camps. It was out of reach of the common people and very few had access to it. Even jaggery was available only for the well-to-do Mizos or government babus. Even in the 1940's not only sugar but also jaggery was a rare food item and was considered a luxury food.

Mizoresponses to new food culture represented by European and Indian food culture were varied from one food item to another. While some were readily accepted some other failed to gain their ground till 1947. One example of positive response towards new food is the introduction of biscuits in the hills. They loved the taste and it made them long for 'heaven' instead of '*Pialral*' (the final abode of spirits in pre-Christian Mizo belief). Anotherinstance

of the positive responseto the new foods was the introduction and consumption of beverages like milk and tea. By 1927 milk and tea entered Mizo fare on a large scale and spread across the length and breadth of the hills.

On the other hand, Mizosdid not welcome the introduction of new breed of fowls in their land. In fact, there are many Mizos who still preferredMizo chicken prepared in indigenous style over bigger breed of fowls, such was also the case in colonial Lushai hills as there is no indication to show that new breed was welcomed and liked by Mizos.It appears that Mizoswere against the intervention of 'alien food culture' in the initial years but with the passage of time they began to develop a taste for those 'alien' foods and accepted their inclusion in their diet.Thus, there were positive as well as negative responses from Mizos regarding the introduction of new food culture.

The research reveals thatunder colonial rule the method of food preparation underwent remarkable change in the form of hybrid cuisine in the Lushai hills. There was a shift from the traditional method of food preparation to a new hybrid of '*European - Indian - Mizo'* food preparation. The colonial rule witnessed deviation in the Mizo food preparation with the increasing availability of salt, oil and sugar. Frying was never practiced by Mizos in pre-colonial times and it constitutes a new method hitherto unheard of. Under colonial rule some Mizos who were employed by European missionaries and Government officials to service their domestic chores were acquainted with the art of frying but never adopted it as a regular cooking style in their own households. Slowly in the post colonial period increasing number of Mizos seems to have embraced frying as part of their cooking practice. Besides frying, there seems to have emerged new method of using oil in food preparation in the form of Indian curry.

The research reveals that under colonial rule there was remarkable change in the dining manner of Mizos.By 1930's many Mizos particularly those in government and mission employment started using tables, stools and short stools. Instead of sharing food from the same bowl they also used separate bowl / plate for each individual diner. After being exposed to the food etiquette of their European colonial masters many of them began to use spoons and forks rather than their bare hands (after colonial period).

As Christianity took its firm ground in the Lushai hills new tradition of do's and don'ts in food eating began to develop under the guidance and supervision of the Christian

missionaries. One of the changes that came along with the spread of Christianity is meal time prayer. Presumably, hygienity in pattern of eating was one of the most important aspects of education, thus, their new conceptualization of cleanliness automatically demanded a change in their pattern of eating in which sharing food from one common plate was found unhealthy and uncivilised and thus, had to be discarded.It is also found that the educated Mizos and the YMA supported the adoption of western table manner. As result of their efforts there wasincreasing number of Mizos who discarded the tradition eating habits particularly in big villages or headquarters of the government officials and Christian mission during colonial rule while the traditional pattern conceivably continued in remote villages till the end of 1960's.

The change in Mizo food ethics is also noticed. Ethical eating or food ethics had a large impact on Mizo food choices for consumption as well as on their eating pattern. Those food ethics had served as indicator of '*Mizo tlawmngaihna'*. Mizovalue system and their morality towards others had been manifested by the ethics that revolved round food consumption. Mizo concept of food sharing and its significant symbolism came to be less valued after colonialism. According to Mizo folk wisdom, people who share food with others live longer and those who do not, die early – '*sem sem dam dam ei bil thi thi'*. That folk wisdom had been dearly followed by Mizos when the British established their rule over them. It seems that the afore-said folk wisdom came to be less valued after colonial rule. The standing social norm of collectivism was to be replaced by individualism. Thus, the Social Darwinist concept of survival inadvertently developed in the Lushai hills after the establishment of colonial rule.

Education became one of the 'accepted values' of Mizo life after colonial rule. In the old days 'value' was summed up in the sense of achievement brought by performing certain rituals and sacrifices, and to be the possessor of a gun. But there was a growing sign that one of the greatest desire of Mizos in the 1930's was to be educated. Such change was found to provide an opportunity for the discontinuity of some Mizo concepts towards food. The traditional Mizo concept of health had changed. Traditionally health had been defined as the absence of diseases and if someone was free from a disease he was considered healthy. That biomedical concept of health was the prevailing conceptualization of health by Mizos. For instance, "*Chaw kan ei teuh chuan kan chak ang*" - the concept that the eating of more food provides energy to the body was no longer accepted after the coming of the British. After the introduction of modern western education Mizoswere exposed to the world of 'Balance Diet'

or a diet that contains the proper proportions of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water necessary to maintain good health.

Wild foods from the forest, including wild ferns, bamboo shoots, and roots, provided food in times of emergency, food shortages or regular expected hunger seasons, and they add unique tastes – often bitter or sour – as well as nutrients not always available in cultivated plants. After colonial period, as fewer people gathered wild foods, the knowledge about locating and processing these food was being lost; at the same time, the environment where they could be found was changing due to the destruction of forests. Mizos depended on wild foods, in fact, those wild foods constitute their delicacies till today. But colonial rule transformed their simple lifestyle into a complex one where many of their daily needs could be procured from the bazaars. The transformation led to the misplacing of the Mizo indigenous knowledge of locating and processing various food items.

Regarding identity issue, in colonial period it is found that Mizos had been living as a separate and distinct people who identified themselves from others. When colonialism encroached their lives and culture a conscious or unconscious attempts were made to destroy Mizo identity and the feeling of 'us' in them. Colonialism many a times tried to annihilate colonists' identity by employing a 'cultural bomb'. The cultural bomb of the colonists was very effective in creating new identity amongst Mizos. The new Mizo Christian converts were said to have identified themselves as a separate group with the larger Mizo society. They changed the way of dressing, cooking and eating. The cultural bomb also destroyed Mizo capacities and self esteem. In that situation, they began to develop blind imitation of western style of living, worship, dressing and cooking.The colonial rulers did not have empathy with the indigenous tradition. In colonial Lushai hills, *Zu* drinking in Mizo festivals which had assumed the status of tradition was prohibited for Mizo Christian converts. Instead of instilling moderation and limit, *Zu* drinking or consumption was strictly prohibited. The attempt to establish identity with the traditions of the colonized was only a mode of seeking legitimacy by affirming the culture, at least part of it, of the colonized. Paradoxically, though, it tended to deepen rather than minimize the cultural differences between the colonizerand the colonized.

The Christian missionaries and the British colonial administrators working in the Lushai Hills were found out to be the one to give a distinct identity to Mizos. We have never heard / read of the pioneer missionaries nor the colonial administrators inter-dine with Mizos. Instead of

inter-dining there was an indifferent attitude towards Mizo food culture. For those who considered Mizo food culture as 'primitive' and 'filthy' inter-dining with indigenous family was one challenging task. Their attitude towards Mizo food culture created social and mental gap.Therefore, by secluding themselves from Mizo food culture the identity question was brought up by the missionaries and British officials in the first place. When there was no attempt on the part of the missionaries and the colonial officers serving in the Lushai Hills to have social intercourse with the indigenous people, therefore, the feeling of separateness and differences became inevitable. Moreover, they remained exclusive and did not mingle with the Mizos. Such kind of attitude created differences between them and the people they ruled over.

Though Mizos after becoming Christians absorbed western culture and religion the traditional style of eating still persisted in the celebration of Christian festivals. The continuity of communal feasting in Mizo way was even endorsed by most of the later missionaries. It is found that while the 'cultural bomb', conjured up by K.N.Pannikar, was very effective in changing the lifestyle, dresses and food habits of Mizos it could not completely destroy Mizo identity. The continuous existence of Mizos as a separate people was reflected in their food culture - the method of preparation, their emotions and sentiments towards Mizo food like *Tlak, Bai, Bawl, Rawt* etc.

Colonial hegemonization not only created / generated consent but also contestation. Mizos contested in the cultural war revolving around food and identity by replacing their age old ingredients with new ingredients (for example, cooking soda replaced *Chingal*) without losing the traditional taste. Mizo food culture was, hence, neither completely hegemonized by the colonial rule nor fully dissociated from the traditional.

Furthermore, it is found that culinary colonialism through the 'cultural bomb' created fusion in Mizo food culture. Bread, cookies, salad, fries etc. clearly came from the colonial experience. Mizo food bears the ascriptions of colonial taste preferences and technological innovations. The colonization of Mizo food may not be visible like the political colonization or the religious changesbut it is clear that the new food technology brought about by the British officials and missionaries altered Mizo taste buds and the gradual change in the taste buds was more visible in the post independence era. Some may attribute Mizo exposure to outside world beyond their own land as the prime factor in changing food habits of the Mizos, however, it is an undeniable truth that colonialism was the most important factor. The

introduction of new food, new cooking method, new method of consumption, new cutleries and new attitude to food were indeed substantial development. However, it is very interesting to emphasize here that despite these changes and the numerous attempts of colonial administrators and Christian missionaries Mizo food culture continued to survive. Some actually flourished and continued to remain an important component in Mizo fare.

Appendices

I.

A: List of Vegetables − Indigenous and Colonial

Sl.No.	Local Name	Botanical Name	Common Name
1	Aieng	*Curcuma longa*	Turmeric
2	Aidu	*Amomum dealbatum*	Wild Cardamom
3	Alu	*Solanum tuberosum*	Potato (Colonial)
4	Anhling	*Solanum americanum*	American Black Nightshade
5	Ankasa	*Spilanthes acmella*	Toothache Plant, Electric Diasy or Buzz Button
6	Ankhapui	*Marsdenia maculata*	Hairy Milk Vine
7	Anngharil	*Alternanthera sessilis*	Sessile Joyweed or Dwarf Copperleaf
8	Antam	*Brassica juncea,*	Mustard
9	Archempai/Archangkawm	*Oroxylum indicum*	Midnight Horror, Indian Trumpet Flower
10	Bahkhawr	*Eryngium foetidum*	Culantro or Long Coriander
11	Bahra	*Ipomoea batatas*	Yam
12	Baibing	*Alocacia fornicata*	
13	Bal/Dawl	*Colocasia esculenta*	Taro
14	Bawkbawn	*Solanummelogena*	Brinjal
15	Bean	*Phaseolusvulgaris*	Bean (Colonial)
16	Behlawi	*Vignaunguiculata*	Cowpea
17	Behliang	*Cajanus cajan*	Pigeon Pea
18	Bekang	*Glycinemax*	Soybean
19	Bepawr	*Psophocarpustetragonolobus*	Winged Bean

20	Bepui	*Lablabpurpureus*	Butter Bean, Poor Man Bean or Papaya Bean
21	Berul	*Trichosanthescucumerina*	Snake Gourd
22	Buh	*Oryza sativa*	Rice
23	Buhban	*Oryza sativa subsp. japonica*	Glutinous Rice
24	Buhtun	*Daucuscarota subsp. sativus*	Millet
25	Chakawk	*Diplazium esculentum*	Vegetable Fern
26	Changkha	*Momordica charantia*	Bitter Gourd
27	Chhawhchhi	*Sesamumindicum*	Sesame
28	Chimchawk	*Aralia foliosa*	
29	Chingit	*Zanthoxylum rhetsa*	Indian Ivy - rue
30	Dawl/Bal	*Colocasia esculenta*	Taro
31	Fanghma	*Cucumissativus*	Cucumber
32	Fangra	*Canavaliagladiata*	Sword Bean
33	Hmarchate	*Capsicumfrutescens*	Chili Pepper
34	Hmarchapui	*Capsicumannuum*	Bell Pepper
35	Hruizik	*Calamus erectus*	
36	Kawhtebel	*Trevesia palmata*	Snowflake Plant
37	Kawlthei	*Psidium guajava*	
38	Khanghu	*Acacia pennata*	Climbing Wattle
39	Lengser	*Elsholtzia communis*	Lomba
40	Mautuai	*Melocanna baccifera*	Bamboo Shoot
41	Pa ui thin	*Lactifluuscorrugis*	Corrugated – cap milky mushroom
42	Puvana beng	*Auriculariaauricula-judae*	Wood Ear or Jelly Ear mushroom
43	Pasi	*Auriculariaauricula-judae*	Split Gill Mushroom

44	Pa sawntlung	*Termitomycesheimii* *Russulasubfragiliformis (Palengsen), Lentinussajor-caju (Maupa)*	
45	Changelpa	*Volvariellataylorii*	Silver Silk Straw Mushroom
46	Pase-ek	*Macrolepiotadolichaula*	Bush Parasol Mushroom
47	Palengvar		Peppery Milkcap Mushroom
48	Papal	*Lentinulalateritia*	
49	Pachanghang	*Lentinuspolychrous*	
50	Pahnahkhar	*Lentinustigrinus*	
51	Palengsen	*Russulasubfragiliformis*	
52	Maupa	*Lentinussajor-caju*	
53	Pardi	*Petroselinumcrispum*	Parsley
54	Pelh	*Gnetum gnemon*	Gnemon or Paddy oats
55	Phuihnam	*Clerodendrum grandulosum*	East Indian Glory Bower
56	Purunsen	*Allium cepa*	Onion (Colonial)
57	Purunvar	*Allium sativum*	Garlic
58	Rawtuai	*Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*	Bamboo Shoot
59	Runhmui	*Ocimum americanum*	Basil
60	Sam tawk	*Solanumaethiopicum*	Bitter Tomato / Ethiopian Eggplant
61	Sihneh	*Eurya cerasifolia*	
62	Telhawng	*Amorphophallus bulbifer*	Devil's Tongue / Snake Palm Plant
63	Thilthek	*Calamusflagellum*	Raidang
64	Thingthupui	*Dysoxylum excelsum*	
65	Tomato	*Lycopersicon esculentum*	Tomato
66	Uithinthang	*Houttuynia cordata*	Fish Mint / Bishop's Weed

67	Vaimim	*Zeamays*	Corn / Maize
68	Vani an	*Lycanthes leavis*	
69	Zamzoei	*Amaranthus viridis*	Slender Amaranth / Green Amaranth
70	Zawngtah	*Parkia timoriana*	Stinky Bean
71	Zemathingthupui	*Dysoxylum procerum*	Asparagus

B: List of Fruits (Indigenous and Colonial)

Sl.No.	Local Name	Botanical Name	Common Name
1	Bil	*Protium seratum*	Indian Red Pear
2	Buangthei	*Meliosma pinnata*	
3	Chengkek	*Garcinia lanceifolia*	Red Mango, Wild Mangosteen
4	Hmupa	*Rubus niveus*	Snowpeaks Raspberry
5	Hmuṭau	*Rubus ellipticus*	Himalayan Raspberry
6	Kawlthei	*Psidium guajava*	Guava
7	Keifang	*Myrica esculenta*	Myrica
8	Khawmhma	*Rhus semiata*	Chinese Sumac
9	Kawrthindeng	*Dillenia indica*	Elephant Apple
10	Lumlerh	*Prunus bracteopadus*	Bird Cherry
11	Pangkai	*Baccaurea ramiflora*	Burmese Grape / Lantern Tree
12	Pawihteha	*Calamus erectus*	Snake Fruit
13	Sarzuk	*Elaeagnus caudata*	Bastard Oleander / Silver Berry
14	Ser	*Citrus medica*	Citron
15	Serthlum	*Citrus sinensis*	Orange (Colonial)
16	Sialinuchhu	*Rubus alceifolius*	Wild Raspberry
17	Sunhlu	*Phyllanthus emblica*	Gooseberry
18	Tawitaw	*Spondias pinnata*	Wild Mango
19	Tengtere	*Tamarindus indica*	Tamarind
20	Theiarbawm	*Annona squamosa*	Sugar Apples / Sweetsops
21	Theiarlung	*Prunus undulata*	Cyclamin Cherry
22	Theichhungsen	*Haematocarpus validus*	Red Barberry
23	Theifeihmung	*Litchi chinensis*	Lychee

24	Theihai	*Mangifera indica*	Mango
25	Theikhuangchawm	*Choerospondias axillaris*	Hog Plum
26	Theikum	*Diospyros malabarica*	Indian Persimmon
27	Theipalingkawh	*Bruinsmia polysperma*	Dwarf Hygro
28	Theipui	*Ficus semicordata*	Fig
29	Theiria	*Carallia brachiata*	Freshwater Mangrove
30	Theisawntlung	*Tinospora sinensis*	Malabar Gulbel
31	Theitat	*Artocarpus lacucha*	Monkey Fruit
32	Theite	*Prunus domestica*	Plum
33	Theitit	*Ficus prostrata*	White Fig
34	Ṭhelret	*Ficus elastica*	Rubber
35	Thingfanghma	*Carica papaya*	Papaya (Colonial)
36	Tling	*Embelia vestita*	
37	Tuaihabeh	*Garcinia xanthochymus*	Sour Mangosteen / False Mangosteen
38	Tuairam	*Garuga floribunda*	
39	Ṭuaiṭit	*Antidesma bunius*	Bignay /Currant
40	Theikelki	*Pentanura khasiana*	

II. INTERVIEW INFORMATION FORM

Full Name of person interviewed :_____

Nickname, if any :_____

Date of interview : _____

Research Name
:_____
_____

Address of person(s) interviewed
:_____
_____

Tel. No :_____

E Mail :_____

Date of Birth :_____

Place of Birth :_____

Researcher's signature :_____

Interviewee's Signature :_____

Occupation :_____

Other information
:_____
_____
_____
_____

III. INTERVIEW CONTEXT

Where the interview took place : _____

Time of the day : _____

Interviewer : _____

Sound condition (background noises):_____

Other people present: _____

Notes about the interview (key themes, point of discussion etc.)

Other documentation:

GLOSSARY

Bawlpu	: A Mizo priest who offered sacrifices to the malevolent spirits in times of sickness
Buhban	: Glutinous or sticky rice
Chhawlthuai	: A practice by which friends/lovers exchanges messages by inscribing on fruits or vegetables
Chi Chhiah	: Salt tax
Chi Khur	: Salt spring
Faisa	: Husked rice
Fathang	: Paddy due paid to the village chief after every harvest
Hnamchawm	: Commoners
Huai	: Demon
Khuaichhiah	: Honey due
Khuangchawi	: One who has completed the necessary
Khuazingnu	: God believed to be creator of earth
Lo	: Jhum land
Laite	: A small ladle made of gourd
Mautam	: Periodic dying down f bamboos followed by subsequent famines
Mithi Khua	: Village of the dead
Phelsep	: A split bamboo
Pialral	: Paradise
Puithiam	: Priest
Rakzu	: Distilled wine brewed from rice
Sa chhiah	: Meat due
Sa dawt	: Clan Priest
Thang	: Trap

Thangchhuah	: One who has completed the necessary requirements to achieve such a status by killing certain number of animals in the chase or by giving the required number of public feast
Thiang	: Permitted as per Mizo belief system
Thianglo	: Forbidden
Thlangra	: Winnowing plate
Tlangau	: Village crier
Tlawmngai	: To be self - sacrificing
Tumphit	: Pandean pipe
Tinzu	: Fermented rice beer frewed in a tin
Tuibur	: A container used for smoking usually made of bamboo or mud for the storage of nicotine water
Tuikhur	: Spring / water point
Tui um	: Bamboo tube used for carrying and storing water
Khawnbawl Upa	: Village elders appointed by a chief
Vai	: People from mainland India
Zawlbuk	: Young men's dormitory
Zu	: Rice beer
Zu fang	: Rice beer made from glutinous rice

Pictures

1. Ordinary Bamboo Cup for drinking rice beer
2. Brass Cup for drinking rice beer
3. Ordinary Cup made of horn of gayals for drinking rice beer
4. Beer Cup (Not Mizo original)

Source : Mizoram State Museum

1. Fen Thlir (A laddle or dipper made from a gourd)
2. Tui Um (Bamboo Tubes)
3. Tui Thawl (Water Flasks/Containers)

Source : Mizoram State Museum

1. Ngan Bel (An earthen pot containing one 'Ngan' measure for making rice beer)
2. Zu Bel (Earthen rice beer pots)
3. Dawnkawn (Siphons for sucking our beer from the rice beer pot)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

1. Zu Bel Lian (Rice beer pot)
2. Zufang Bel (An earthen beer pot smaller than ordinary beer pot for keeping and making of 'Zufang')
3. Ngan Khat Bel (A pot which contain one 'Ngan' measure for making rice beer)
4. Seki No (Cups made of Mithun's horns for drinking rice beer)
5. Zu Sawrna (A bamboo funnel for filtering rice beer)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

1. Thlangra (A bamboo tray for winnowing husked rice)
2. Faikhiat (A basket used for measuring rice for cooking)
3. Fairel (A basket for keeping cleaned rice ready for cooking)
4. Vaihrik (A sieve)
5. Kho (A flat shallow busket for keeping rice and other vegetables etc)

Source : Mizoram State Museum

1. Sum (Wooden mortar)
2. Buhher khawl (Wooden mortar driven by hand)
3. Suk (Wooden pestles)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

1. Thing thleng (A large wooden plate for serving food)
2. Sahriak bur (A container of oil)
3. Saum bur (A container of lard)
4. Mau fian (Bamboo spoon)
5. Thing buhtlei (A stirrer made of wood)
6. Mau buhtlei (Stirrer made of bamboo)
7. Khelawk (Ladle made of bamboo)
8. Haite (A ladle made of gourd)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

1. Bai bel (An earthen pot for cooking vegetables)
2. Khuhhriang (Earthen bowls)
3. Chaw bel (An earthen pot for cooking rice)
4. Bel vuak fung (A moulding mallet)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

Raw chaicheh (Bamboo tong)

Sahriak bur (Oil container)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

Chi bur (Salt container)

Sawhthleng (A wooden plate)

Chaw thlengpui (Wooden plate used for swrving food)

Source : Mizoram State Museum)

Alocasia fornicata and chilli

Bamboo shoot with fernented lard and smoked chillies

Mizo Chutney

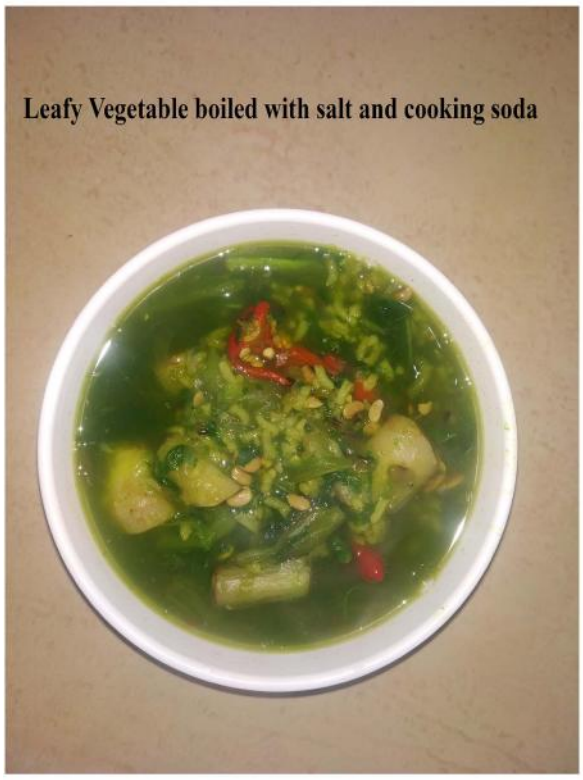
Stewed chicken

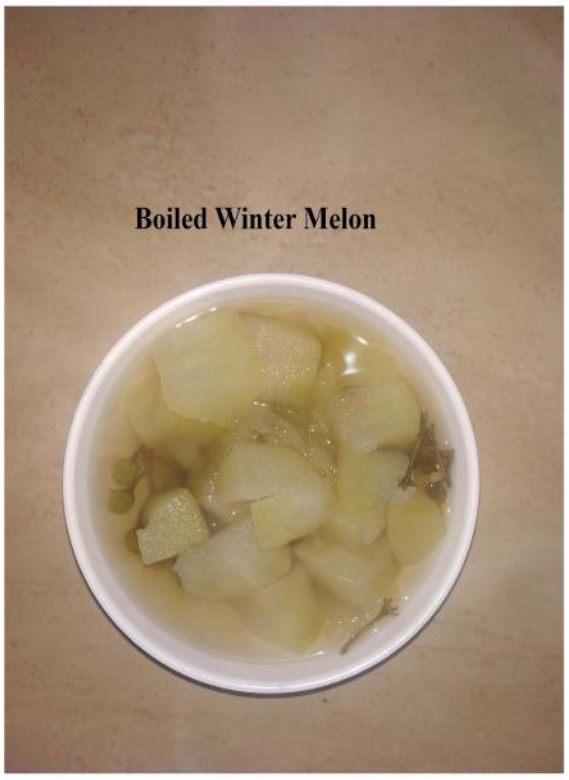
Stewed pork

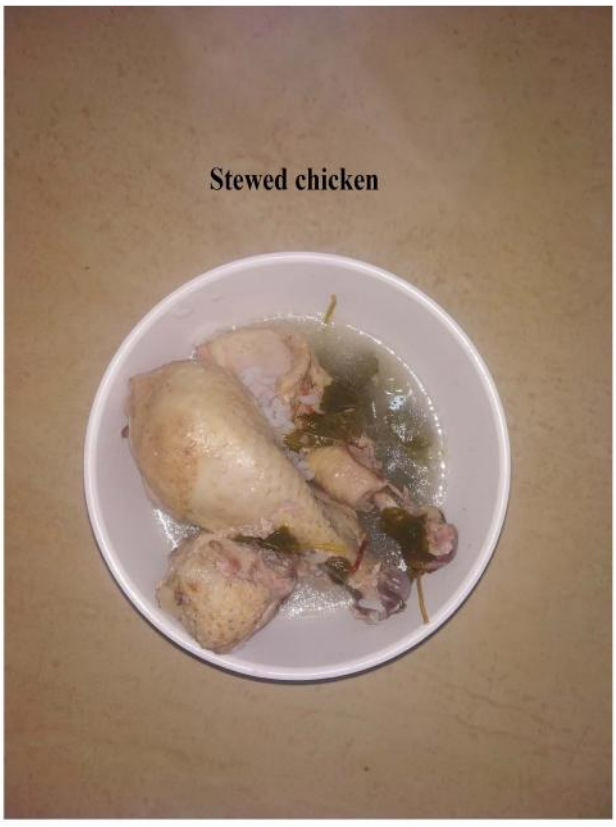
Boiled vegetables *(Tlak)*

Smoked pork

Bai (Boiled vegetables with cooking soda and salt)


Leafy Vegetable boiled with salt and cooking soda


Boiled Winter Melon


Stewed chicken

Alocasia fornicata and chilli

Bamboo shoot with fernented lard and smoked chillies

Mizo Chutney

Chhangban chhum (Boiled sticky rice bread wrapped in plaintain leaf)

Chhangban kan (Sticky rice bread made with oil)

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