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RE-VISITING MIZORAM'S INSURGENCY PERIOD WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

ZORAMI

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ABSTRACT

This paper tends to revisit the obstacles and hurdles caused by insurgency in Mizoram. Among the few writings in English based on this event, Zorami, written by Malsawmi Jacob is one of the finest. This novel highlighted the lives and livings of the people during those times. So, this paper tends to discuss various themes through this novel and revisited through the lens of feminism and humanism. As women are considered to be the weaker ones of the society, their sufferings are overlooked. Every war laid hands on humanity, innocent lives suffered mostly. So, it is of immense pivotal to look back and learn from the past. Most significantly from the arena of literature, these wars and fights brought a new sphere in literature that sheds its light in this paper.

Keywords: *Insurgency; Mizoram; women's sufferings; oppression.*

INTRODUCTION

Memory seemed to stuck in the past and doesn't seem to deal with the present but it connected three-time dimensions- evoked at the present, referred to the past and viewed the future. So, everyone whether he/she liked it or not, she/he always got connected to her history. No one could run away or escape from it. Jan Assman, a professor at the University of Konstanz divided memory into two types: communicative and cultural memory.

Cultural memory is formed by symbolic heritage embodied in texts, rites, monuments, celebrations, objects, sacred scriptures and other media that serve as mnemonic triggers to initiate meanings associated with what has happened. Also, it brings back the time of the mythical origins, crystallizes collective experiences of the past and can last for millennia. Therefore, it presupposes a knowledge restricted to initiates.

Communicative memory, on the other hand, is limited to the recent past, evokes personal and autobiographical memories, and is characterized by a short term (80 to 110 years), from three to four generations. Due to its informal character, it does not require expertise on the part of those who transmit it.

He further pointed out: cultural memory is 'the faculty that allows us to build a narrative picture of the past and through this process develop an image and an identity for ourselves'.

This paper also pictured the images of the insurgency times of Mizoram through the novel *Zorami*. However, Mizoram appears to land in the Northeast of India, having international boundary with Myanmar to the east and Bangladesh to the west; Manipur and Assam on the north and Tripura on the north-west. They, indeed, underwent lots of struggles and hard times in the process of having freedom. The insurgency period as much as 20 years long, so countless numbers of innocent lives had been lost in the struggle and citizens had suffered physically, mentally and psychologically. So, it is important to, in a while, visit the past for the younger generations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kamla Bhasin's *What is Patriarchy* (1993)

In this booklet, Kamla Bhasin analyses the connotation and idea of patriarchy, how it has been detrimental to the society. The topic of this booklet is classified into two parts. It firstly attends to the notions of patriarchy and its issues from various spheres and secondly it attends to the foundation and theories of patriarchy. In this booklet, the author contends on the existence of patriarchy in the family and society; and make us see the relevance of male dominance in the present time. She states,

> "The word patriarchy literally means the rule of the father or the "patriarch", and originally it was used to describe a specific type of "male-dominated family"-the large household of the patriarch which included women, junior men, children, slaves and domestic servants all under the rule of this dominant male. Now it is used more generally to refer to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways" (2).

Hmingthanzuali and Catherine Lalhruaitluangi Chhangte's *Representation of Women in Mizo history* (2020)

This paper has its significance as it presented a novel dialogue on the chronicle of history. This dialogue deviates from the conventional strategy or method of recounting history which was commonly authored by men writers. Consequently, this novel dialogue is inclusive of the history that had been abandoned and overlooked in course of time. Therefore, this new dialogue of recounting history is more comprehensive than the preceding dialogue. Records and data of history began from the interference of the British colonists; of whom are the pioneers including the Christian missionaries. This research shed light on mostly in a state of military reports, government reports, medical reports, Christian missionary reports, diaries, letters, etc.

In the recounting of history, women have not been entirely overlooked. Even the British colonizers such as T.H Lewin, J.Shakespear, McCall, etc stated Mizo women however, chiefly outof pity so it can be summarized that the state of women had been awful that it permeated in the eyes of the colonizers.

V. Lalrinsangi's *Women and Insurgency in Mizoram: A feminist study of select Rambuai fiction* (2017)

An Mphil dissertation of V.Lalrinsangi; she uses three insurgency novels for her primary sources namely, Zorami: A Redemption Song (2015) written by Malsawmi Jacob, Rinawmin (1970) written by James Dokhuma and The Beloved Bullet (1992) written by James Dokhuma and translated by Prof. Margaret Ch. Zama. By means of these novels, she presented the state of women in Mizoram's insurgency. The author of this dissertation has utilized subtle particulars of the story for assessing women and their context in the story.

This paper chiefly brings a knowledge that existed in the three novels, particularly Zorami , a concept that Bell Hooks named as 'talking back'. As stated by her, it is an action which indicates contentment and new life. In *Zorami*, the protagonist recounted her story and revisited through it which makes her the winner of 'talking back'. By letting the protagonist recount her life story, Malsawmi Jacob breaks stereotype where most of the narration happened to tell the tale.

The general incident encountered by women in insurgency is what Cathy Caruth named as 'unclaimed experience'. It is an expression which signifies the victims do not entirely decipher the trauma instantly; the trauma began to torment after the agony is gone apparently. This component is general in every insurgency novels, inclusive of the three primary texts of this research.

Arthur Brittan's *Masculinity and Power* (1989)

Brittan discusses masculinity and patriarchy in this book from the inborn traits and social dynamics. Brittan states that men are the creators and masters of history, he contends that, "It is male intentionality which conquers nature and pushes forward the limits of knowledge. Man is the 'subject' of history" (174).

This discussion is akin to the dominance and complexity of men. Nevertheless, the initial part of this book attends to the power structure of male supremacy and he assumes that gender structure indicates who hold power. In this respect, Brittan implies that femininity and masculinity are sheer antithesis, he declines and disregards the being of complexities in day to day lives.

> On the context of male sexuality, he declines and disregards Freud's notion of male sexuality (54) and examine the three types of repression.First and foremost, the unrefined repression and secondly, Lacanian symbolic order which denotes phallus as unavoidable and thirdly, he takes his idea from Connel and Foucault where his conclusions are much in align with Connel's entrenched theory.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research uses a qualitative approach to investigate the literary analytical frameworks of resistance applied by Mizo writers in rambuai fiction. This study is underpinned by theories of feminism. It alludes to social participation of women and intends to curb oppression of women in society. It is carried out through in-dept comprehensive analysis of the text, with the insight of resistance and feminist theories. The researcher depends on the subsequent conceptual model to evaluate how resistance is connected and linked against repression and subordination of women.

Moreover, feminism exhibits "a world view that values women and confronts systematic injustices based on gender" (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 50). On this point, Mama contends that "feminism refers to the political and intellectual struggle for the liberation of women" (2005). In align with this, Amouzou states that "a central task of feminism is to examine women's oppression and the possibilities for resistance and positive change" (2006, p.13). Correspondingly, Koussouhon et al. assert that "[…] the utmost aim of feminism is to confront male-dominance and power as well as free the womenfolk from all forms of societal ills strengthened by patriarchy or systemic institutionalized sexism both in literature and society" (2015, p. 315). Furthermore, Lay & Daley states that:

> "…one central feminist theory has not evolved; basic principles are commonly given when describing feminism. These principles include ideas such as valuing women and their experiences, identifying conditions that oppress women, changing society through advocacy, and recognizing that many factors, not just gender, impact a woman's actions and views" (2007, p. 51).

DISCUSION AND FINDINDS

FEMININE STRUGGLES IN TIMES OF INSURGENCY

Females had struggled within and outside the premises of society. The Mizo society has been rigidly more or less patriarchal society. Females were expected to be quiet and just be an observer. Being smart has been mistaken with being brash. Amouzou states that "Patriarchy is that form of social organization in which males exercise power and thus create for female an inferior status" (2006, p. 97). Similarly in the novel *Zorami*, the protagonist Zorami, when she was a little child ran home telling her mother with utmost pride and excitement that the teacher in school gave a 'very good' remark for singing. At this, her mother's reply was shameful as she said, "You sang before the whole class? You were not ashamed? Girls shouldn't do such things or talk too much" (Jacob 43). This is the same reason why at the age of 13 when a non-Mizo army sexually molested her, she had learn to remain silent, to bear the pain alone. The author described this incident: She runs home panting and crying. Her stomach seems to have come up to her mouth. She gets violently sick. Her mother asks her questions but she can't, won't tell. Such a thing is not for telling. She keeps vomiting through the night.

Even if she is the victim of the incident, she is as well became the victim of embarrassment even that of his father. When the topic of marriage was discussed, Zorami's father yelled, "You should be only too happy he is willing to marry you, a damaged girl. He is too good for you" (62). At this, Zorami got totally disappointed and for this, her father got puzzled, having no knowledge of him doing any harm.

Her friend Kimi's words reflected the Mizo patriarchal society when she says, "Remember the old adages: 'Woman's wisdom does not reach beyond the village stream' and 'A wife and a broken fence are meant to be replaced'. It's all so unfair! And our customary laws are so hard against a woman. She has worked hard for the family, but if her husband decides to divorce her, she has to got out with an empty hand. Nothing belongs to her, she cannot take even her children with her" (77). This conception of women is still true till today. It is clear from the character of Zorami. Though she attained higher studies, she has been belittled because she is a woman. It is

true when Mboya's states that "Patriarchy compels women to believe that their inferior position is natural and irredeemable" (2010, p. 24).

In the case of losing dear ones, women were allowed to cry but once the funeral is over, they must mourn only in secret; in other words, to suppress their emotions. They are required to keep a cheerful face in public. Therefore, they considered the act of crying as a sign of weakness which is the reason why women were expected to cry out loud. Men are not expected to roll their tears because of the fear of emasculate themselves. These are the physical as well as psychological atrocities faced by the Mizo females for being born a female in the society.

Rowley and Grosz states that "femininity is explained as the lack of a phallus. By the absence of a phallus, the woman is making herself the object of men's erotic desire. Her sexual identities are capable with the phallic signifier's reference only" (187). This has its relevance when the sepoys who were sent to Mizoram to maintain peace were the agents of rape and torture for the Mizo women. The first victim we have seen in this novel is Zorami. The incident happened on her way to fetch water. In one of the stories within the novel, there was Major Kohli who got thirst with women. He got a search party and ordered his men to arrest two sisters, one bearing a child. They did so, leaving a baby alone. They fulfilled their sexual desires throughout the night and released the two women in the morning. This continued for several days, whenever the sepoys felt like doing so. As a result, they began to develop psychological disorders such that they had forgotten to get back home, forgot to get bath and had stopped talking. Kohli found other victims, one after another. They were above control as they had the sanction of the highest authority in the country an as Indian Army. Therefore, they were double colonized and victimized where they didn't have the guts to scream out their hurt. Weedon states that "the phallus signifies power and control in the symbolic order through control of the satisfaction of desire, the primary source of power with psychoanalytic theory" (Brooks 77) which is reflected in the character of Major Kohli.

DISMISSAL OF HUMANITY

Mukabi and Burkeywo states that "Patriarchy looks at women as objects" (2016, p. 29). Consequently, Amouzou claims that "Patriarchy is that form of social organization in which males exercise power and thus create for female an inferior status" (2006, p. 97). Furthermore,

Weedon confirmed that "Patriarchal power rests on the social meanings given to biological sexual difference. In [a] patriarchal discourse, the nature and social role of women are defined in relation to the male as norm. This finds its clearest expression in the genetic use of the terms 'man' and 'he' to encompass all of humankind" (1987, p. 2)

During those times, there was dismissal and portrayal of humanity. Humanity is not just sympathy and civility towards other human beings, it is valuing lives and looked upon them as a human being. If someone values humanity, they could not walk pass his fellow humans suffering and create situations for someone to suffer. When one of the MNF underground member Nikhuma's house had been burnt down by the sepoys, he left his two months pregnant wife and his eldest son who was barely six years old who were sent to Jorhat jail in Assam. Actually, the wives at home and the little ones were being innocent but still they could not avoid the torture. Even pregnant women and children depending on breast feeding were taken to the jail, there had been no way out.

One of the most ill conducts of the sepoys was to make the native people defame his fellow people so as to save their own lives. They were named *kawktu*[1]. In this novel, there is a character named Ralkapa. As Ralkapa had a stern determination of fighting for his state, he went out as an underground. In one of their outings, their group met the Indian Army. They were beaten up severely, five of them were beaten to death. When Ralkapa's turn came, he has been offered a chance to inform about the MNF movements and show the MNF supporters to the Indian army. Or else, he would die on the spot. Then, the situation let him forced to trade the lives of his people. But that did not stop the beat and torture. So in order to save himself, he had to inform more and more lives, accusing the innocent ones as well. Whether they helped him or not, any home he had visited was doomed. So on the part of the armies and Ralkapa, they both trade humanity for their own thirst of blood and safety.

At a closer glance of the character Ralkapa, there is a mirror of human where the act of betraying his own people gave the feeling of sadness. But after some time, he got used to it and had stopped troubling his mind. In our day-to-day lives as well, the first time we did something wrong became the worst time we encounter guilt. This feeling of guilt and sadness left as the

[1] Informer.

numbers rise. Coming back to the case of Ralkapa, the fact that his fellow people fear him gave him the idea that he is powerful and he was above them all.

Another ill conduct of the Indian army men was the curfew and regrouping(khaw khawm) of some villages. In that, all the men in the villages stand before the armies. They were tortured in various ways, some were beaten severely. In the curfew period, no one was allowed to stay outside after dark. One common complication faced by the public was that they had to secretly went outside for their toilets were outside their houses. Those being caught were hung upside down over the latrine pits till they became unconscious. In this novel, the unfortunate situation was told in a song, thus-

*"*Of all our bad times, *khaw khawm* is the darkest;

All our Zoram has faded like worn out clothes;

Men, women and children, gathered from all hills

Go hungry and homeless like the *riakmaw* bird.

Our village streets and the house of our dear God,

Where beloved families and friends sang joyful songs

Are cold, silent, abandoned, now have become

The dwelling of lonesome, sad, motherless birds*"* (116-117).

In the opening chapter of 16 titled 'The Warriors March', the author wrote:

"Biltlang was a tiny village of about fifty houses. A section of the Indian army landed there under the command of a Major. The people there had done nothing offensive, and there was not a single MNF member in the village. The village council president told them these facts. But the Major and his soldiers were in a mood for action. They had tasted blood before, dealing with a village where armed underground men had taken shelter, and thirsted for more. They tortured six

men to death and burned the houses. And they marched on towards Bakla, the next village" (118).

In the next village as well, a young pastor greeted them, served them tea, and pleaded the Major not to harm the innocent people. But the men could not have enough of blood; the Major shot him from the back and his men set the pastor's house on fire.

It would also be interesting to note that the Indian army men used the local men as a coolie to carry their heavy loads through the difficult terrain, as Mizoram is a hilly area. Regarding this, the author wrote:

"In the eyes of those army men, the people were lower than animals. Besides, they considered each Mizo an enemy, whether they were involved in the independence struggle or not. As for the unfortunate men who were forced to act as coolies to the brutal soldiers, it was darkness all the way" (122).

A 50 years old man named Pu Khuanga was made a coolie by some of the soldiers. Due to the heavy load, he fell down and couldn't get which caused the soldiers to kick him dead.

If the dismissal of humanity is discussed, the act of the Mizo underground armies have to be discussed as well. One kawktu was caught by the underground armies with his head fixed to the ground with the wooden nail. Though they betrayed their own tribes, no one deserve such an appaling death. One character named Pu Lalrinmawia, the editor of a daily newspaper wrote in one of his editorials: "What is the point of all this bloodshed? Will all these killings bring independence? No. Will they improve the lot of our people in any way. No. They are butchering innocent civilians. They are slaughtering their fellow Mizo men. What is the point, we ask, what is the point?" (142-143). So, the MNF feared that through the print media, public would stop supporting them turned their heads against them. As a result, the went to the editor's house, called him outside, warned him to stay silent and killed him on the roadside.

The evil doers did not care whether it was in the light of day or in the sight of innocent children. In one of the chapters there is a mention of Quit Mizoram by the MNF, which is a notice for all the non-Mizos warning them to leave Mizoram immediately. And there is this George from Kerala, a science teacher who risks his life for teaching his student, he stayed on. One day, when

his class has been going on, two MNF soldiers came and stabbed him with knives, killing him. They even aimed their guns at the school children. This is the situation of the then Mizoram. There are two things to mention here- firstly, not all non-Mizos were wrong and terrible. Even George, the science teacher taught the Mizo children lovingly so that they learn. There is no harm in teaching anyway. Secondly, the student right there who saw the killings would remember the incident and which would certainly effect psychologically and mentally. Children are the future of any nation, so from someone who loved their country or state, the well- being and health (be it physical or mental) of children is important. In addition, they did not have the right to fear the innocent children or aiming guns at them.

The saddest thing happening around the insurgency times were that they encouraged themselves to kill, and that to kill someone is a great deed. Chapter 21 tells the tale of the character named Lalawmpuia, 22 years old, who was included in the troops commanded by Major T. They suspected their own fellow tribe, Khama seemed to be a deserter, though he denied it. Khama is his very mate and it happened to fall under his duty to kill him and his uncle before, which he could not do. He whispered to himself "Is my reluctance to kill due to cowardice? No. I'm ready to give my life for a worthy cause. But where is the worthy cause? I cannot see the worth of killing my uncle, in cold blood. Shoot an unsuspecting man sitting peacefully in his house from behind! Craven! I enlisted in the MNF to fight for the freedom of my people, not to commit treacherous murders. And what is the connection between these murders and Mizoram's independence? None!" (147). The commander even called him an effeminate trying to shattered his pride which would push him to kill, according to his thinking.

From the above mentioned incident, it is clear that even all the Mizos were not clean hands either. Just as the many Indian army men, they thirst for blood, they did not feel uneasy in killing people, specifically, their own fellows as well. To look at a glance, they needed their fellow tribes only to meet their needs. Their cause was to fight for independence so that the people could live freely without the dominance of any other. As a result, the public often questioned on the actions of the MNF volunteers. They fought for their people, contradictorily, they did not hold back in killing them, which is a severe confirmation that humanity has almost died out in the community as well.

All these things narrated in the novel tells the betrayal of humanity within and outside the community. The Indian army men were actually to bring peace in the state but they set fire to troubles ruthlessly ignoring the innocence of the people. Simultaneously, the underground soldiers were not all in all good either. Both of them failed at preserving humanity.

AROUSAL OF MIZO ETHNICITY

Brutalities or trouble in a land causes unity among the inmates. This is shown clearly in the novel *Zorami*. Therefore, it affected the mentality from young minds to that of an old age. Zorami, when she was an early age, she participated in a procession wherein the Assam government was forcing to use Assamese language in all important matters. After knowing the main reason of the procession, she was glad with all her heart that she had joined the procession. From this incident, we can know that there is an arousal of ethnicity in the mind of a little girl.

As the story unfolds, we came across the character of Ralkapa and Laldinpuii, who were aspiring students. One evening, there was a meeting where the leader of the MNF gave a charismatic speech which awoke the aura of Mizo nationality in the minds of gatherers. Among them were Ralkapa and Laldinpuii who were still teenagers. From the speech they heard, they were aspiring for freedom and in the path of doing so, they have the right courage and valour which are the best equipment for battlefield. As a result, Ralkapa joined the MNF and trained for guerrilla war, hoping to get selected as a member of the Special Forces who were meant to attack the government offices.

Comparing the then youths with the recent youth regarding the love of their own tribes, youths during the insurgency times did a very great job. It is clear from this novel that they have every courage and energy to fight for their people. All they need is a good path who would walk them for the right path. Looking back at the past, the reason why many underground soldiers walked past the right path had seemed to be because they had lacked a good leader who were equipped with goodwill, great cause and humanity. There are instances in this novel *Zorami*, where we met commander of troops who encouraged others to kill out of humanity, who tried to infuse hatred and self-centredness in the minds of his team mate. Hatred could not drive hatred out and there is a saying they could be unity in a community with the presence of hatred in them. Mizoram insurgency times is about partial loss of humanity in the findings of statehood and freedom. We

almost lost ourselves in our findings of individual freedom; and we almost lost our unity in search of a better livelihood.

SINGING IN THE LIVES OF THE MIZO PEOPLE

Singing songs and reciting poetry remained the sole centre in the lives of the Mizo people. In times of happiness, sadness and triumph, they sing a song. The first chapter is titled 'Home alone' in which as a reader, we are given the mood of loneliness and isolation. She, therefore, begins the chapter with a (mis)quote of Yeats:

"An aged woman is a paltry thing,

A tattered coat upon a stick, unless

Soul claps its hand and sings…" (19).

Insurgency is a time of hard and difficult situations. During that time, they sing a song to soothe and encourage themselves and one another. When Kimi's father died, the gatherers sing a song like:

*"*O, take a look beyond the hazy hills,

Where they dwell on Zion Mountain;

They live in peace, in harmony,

They yearn not for this earthly land of men.

Never can we forget, we weep,

For your homeland, O, Lord,

They walk, they roam, in sweet accord,

They sing to the gentle King.

Away, troubles, I would view my homeland,

My soul cannot feel at home on this earth;

I would rest where turbulent rivers cease*"* (125-126).

With these songs, the bid goodbye to the deceased and soothed the hurten feelings. And in the later part of the novel when Kimi seemed to be abstruse, she recited to herself lines from 'The Darkling Thrush'-

"So little cause for caroling…

That I could think there trembled through

Her happy good-night air

Some blessed Hope, whereof she knew

And I was unaware" (217).

In the first chapter, early in the morning with all the fresh air breezing in and the sight of little hills, she sang an old song to welcome the day setting in:

"When the sun shines on the mountains

And the night is on the run

It's a new day, it's a new way

And I fly up to the sun" (21).

In chapter, the character Nikhuma flashbacked jolly Christmas season, he sang the songs sung at the carols to himself:

"Christmas season's flowers blossom again,

They waken longings in the sleeping heart;

To Bethlehem, talked of o'er all the earth

On wings of faith, come one and all" (82).

He imagined the heaven's choir singing:

'O, heavenly angels' songs ring out,

Echo around Bethlehem town

Their joyful sound spread all around,

"Glory be to King Immanuel!" they sing' (82).

In nostalgia, he sang in the middle of forest:

"May the angels come and sing again

While in this lonely field near Bethlehem I wait,

May their music and melody

Echo in our hearts throughout our life time" (82).

In this novel, there are pieces of history of the Mizos like the 1871 expedition towards Cachar plains where they had killed the British gardener and kidnapped little child, given her a Mizo name 'Zoluti'. In reaching back their village, they expressed their joy and gave her a warm welcome through songs. And later, when the British missionaries Savidge and Loraine intended to go to Mizoram for evangelical work, the Commissioner resided in Silchar told them the Mizos were head-hunters and they had a Mizo prisoner named Thangzika. He was arrested for killing a damsel, Chhingpuii who had been the pride of a rival village. With Chhingpuii's head when they reached they village, the crowd overjoyously celebrated,mocking the victim singing:

"Chhingpuii, the lovely bride,

Married off abroad, is drunk

On rice beer in our village square-sweet girl!" (173).

Then again they jeered their rival village by singing:

"You, our foes, claim to be brave,

Yet your cherished Chhingpuii

You left unguarded, like a shed feather" (173).

The importance of songs to the Mizo culture, and to the author herself when she named the title 'A new song'. It is above all struggles and troubles that the characters were able to delight through a new song. New year was about to begin when some boys and girls were singing outside the house:

"Days and years keep rolling on,

Times of joys and sorrows too

Roll away, become the past,

Will never return to you.

A happy new year is here

Let us sing a joyful song;

Leaving all the past behind,

Eyes on future, let's move on" (251-252).

They went on singing:

"O Lord God, forgive our sins,

Give us a new life, we pray,

Hold our hands and lead us on

In the right path day by day" (252).

The author then positively wrapped up the story by letting the protagonist sang in her heart:

"The flowers appear on the earth;

The time of singing has come,

And the voice of the turtledove

Is heard in our land" (253).

Therefore, the sub title of this novel is 'A redemption song' and the story began in a song of sad and loneliness and ended in a song of positivity. Even the characters in the folktales communicated through songs which is seen in chapter 5 of the novel. So, it is clear that songs are always an important instrument for communicating and expressing their emotions for the Mizo tribe.

CONCLUSION

What is clear from the novel 'Zoram' is that the women endured male domination and anglophilia which partly happened because of colonialism. There was threatening of women even in the pre-colonial times and anglophilia is the result of colonialism. In the aforementioned points, men dominination has been discussed. It is interesting to note that women were objectifying by buying them. In the conversation of Zorami and her friend Kimi, Kimi stated,

"Yeah. But here, in the olden days, women must have been sold in marriage, though the bride-price is only a symbol now. It's said they used to actually haggle over the bride-price. That's why they still use the word *hralh*, sell, when a daughter is married off" (78). Though they knew nothing of feminism these days, they were fully aware of them being discriminated in matters of lifestyle, in decision-making and even in dress-code. In chapter 34, the author narrated the images of Zorami's wedding with regard with the dress code which happened fews years back when she says,

"Hence a good church-law abiding bride was expected to wear the Mizo attire at her wedding. Interestingly, the order did not seem to include men. No question ever rose about the bridegroom and the best man turning out in a western suit and tie. Men were the rule-makers, so they could wear what suited them" (219-220).

It is reflection of society when women were regarded as 'the other'. They were only expected to meet their demands and it turned out to be the system of other tribes when the Indian army came. The color of anglophilia is reflected in the grandmother of Zorami when the author told

"Matea was grandma's favourite. She liked him because he was fair skinned, and didn't care much for Zorami, who was rather dark" (46).

Wherein, the word 'anglophilia is the over-excessively admiration of the English people, its culture and its language. The Mizos (Indians as a whole) have been double colonized physically and mentally by the English people, and when the country got independence, the admiration had still remained. They regarded dark skin as ugly and fair skin as beautiful. It is because of this concept that westerns were often preferred than the Indians who have fairer skin. In chapter two of this novel, a shopkeeper commented on Zorami, saying

"She's so ugly! She looks like a vai!" (25).

To conclude, insurgency days were hard times, and dark times. Those were the days when humanity had been almost driven out of the community. Darkness had reached its climax when people did not even grinned in taking people's life, when they could not create one. There is a saying 'Every dark cloud has a silver lining'. Likewise, the dark times gave the Mizo people the unity, love for their homeland and their fellow inmates and the courage to defend their culture and language as well. In another sense, if we put it that way, it has not been a total loss. One's love of culture has been brought back through these struggles which is normally valuable. However, a re-visit of one's history and memories are in dire need so that younger generations would remember the hard and struggling times of their culture and re-valued their roots. Therefore, the novel 'Zoremi' has been one of the finest creations which narrated the insurgency times vividly that belonged to Mizo writing in English.

DECLARATION

This article is original and has not been published or considered for publication anywhere else.

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