

FOOD IN THE LIFE OF MIZOS:
FROM PRECOLONIAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY
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First published 2019

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ISBN: 978-93-82396-71-0

Published by

The Secretary

Indian Institute of Advanced Study

Rashtrapati Nivas, Shimla-171005

Typeset at Sai Graphic Design, New Delhi
and printed at Surbhi Prints & Packs, Ashok Nagar, New Delhi

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Preface

This monograph is the outcome of the Fellowship granted by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla from 2 May 2016 to 1 May 2018. I thank Prof. Chetan Singh the former director for his keen and critical interest in issues related to the question of food studies. This study however started a long time ago and my debt is large. Recalling the names of all who helped and assisted me in preparation of this book is almost an impossible task; some are likely to be missed. The individuals and institutions I acknowledge below are just those that readily come to my mind; I beg the indulgence of others.

I express my thanks to the University Grants Commission, New Delhi, for granting me the project on history of food in the North-East India, with special reference to Mizoram, while I was with the Department of History and Ethnography, Mizoram University. This opportunity enabled me to collect material from different regions of North-East India.

I thank my interpreters, specifically Pi Lalmuanpuui Khiangte, Associate Professor, Government College, Lunglei, Mizoram, for not only helping me in conducting interviews at Lunglei but also helping me in translating a number of documents collected from the archive maintained by Baptist Mission headquarters at Serkawn, Lunglei.

I owe most to the two institutions where I have taught for years, Arunachal University (Rajiv Gandhi University), Itanagar, and Mizoram University, Aizawl. Prof Tamo Mibang encouraged me to conduct research on various aspects of the history of Arunachal Pradesh during the 1990s. He has been a generous friend. Sarit

Chaudhuri and Sucheta Sen Chaudhuri as my erstwhile colleagues in Arunachal University have been providing me a deep insight into Anthropological issues from time to time. Discussion with Sajal Nag from time to time has broadened the frontiers of my knowledge on the various communities of North-East India.

I would be failing in my duty if I don't express my intellectual debt to my former colleagues in the department of History & Ethnography, Mizoram University: K. Robin, Lalngurliana Sailo, Rohmingmawi. Besides I am highly obliged to Remruatkimi, Department of History, Government Hrangbana College, Aizawl, and Vanlalremruata Tonson for helping me in providing material from time to time and also translating some documents from Mizo to English language. I am highly indebted to Pu Thangchungnunga (PU Para) for his support from time to time.

I acknowledge the help of all my fellow colleagues at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, and specifically Samir Banerjee who took great pains to go through the draft and for his suggestions at various stages of the writing of this monograph. I thank Prof Sujata Patel for her help in providing suggestions and restructuring the the chapter on Restaurants. The weekly seminars presented by Fellows have been very helpful in developing my ideas.

Officials at several libraries and archives have helped my research: V. Remkunga, the archivist of the Baptist Christian Mission (BCM), Lunglei, who was extremely helpful when I spent a few days in the archive maintained by Baptist Christian Mission, Lunglei; the archive maintained by Aizawl Theological College, Durtlang (Aizawl); Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl; Synod Archive, Aizawl; Assam State Archives, Dispur; Central Library, Mizoram University, Aizawl; Mizoram State Library, Aizawl; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Teen Murti Bhavan, New Delhi; Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi; Central Library, JawaharLal Nehru University, New Delhi; Ratan Tata Library, Delhi School of Economics, New Delhi; Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, New Delhi. I am extremely obliged to the Librarian and his team at Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

I express my thanks to the entire secretarial staff at IIAS,

including the drivers and mess staff, for making my stay very comfortable at the Institute.

The support of my brothers, Roshan Lal Dawar and Om Prakash Dawar, and sister Krishna Devi Ahuja has been very significant in my life.

Last but not the least the entire credit in writing of this monograph goes to my wife Usha Dawar and daughters Shivali and Bhumiika who have been always inspiring me to complete my work. Usha Dawar had to take the entire burden of domestic chores on her shoulders and allow me to pay full attention to my work.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Mizoram situated between 21°58' north to 24°35' north latitude and 91°15' east to 93°29' east longitude, covering an area of 21,081 sq.km. forms one of the seven states of the North-East. It is flanked by Manipur, Assam and Tripura states of India and shares International border with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The entire territory is mostly mountainous and hilly with precipitous slopes forming deep gorges culminating into several streams and rivers. Almost all the hill ranges traverse in the north-south direction. The western side of the ranges is always very steep and precipitous whereas the eastern sides are somewhat gentler¹. There are small as well as big rivers, the former being seasonal and mainly dependent upon monsoon, the later ones are Tlawng (Dhaleswari), Tuirial (Sonai), Chhimtuipuii (Kolodyne) and Khawthlangtuipuii (Karnafuli), which, however, don't dry up and are navigable throughout the year.² In spite of its tropical location, Mizoram has a moderate climate.³ During the monsoon, the climate is humid and it rains from May to September. It has a short winter and long summer⁴. Because of its climatic conditions, there has been a presence of dense forests of evergreen trees and variety of bamboo species. These resources supported the economic lives of the people of this region.⁵ In this respect, bamboo being an important part of forest ecology in Mizoram was the fulcrum of Mizo economic and cultural life. The abundance of forest cover and water resources in turn had created conditions for the development of rich wild life. In fact the integration of human and non-human is embedded in the folklore of the Mizo community. However, as a result of global warming the climate of Mizoram has

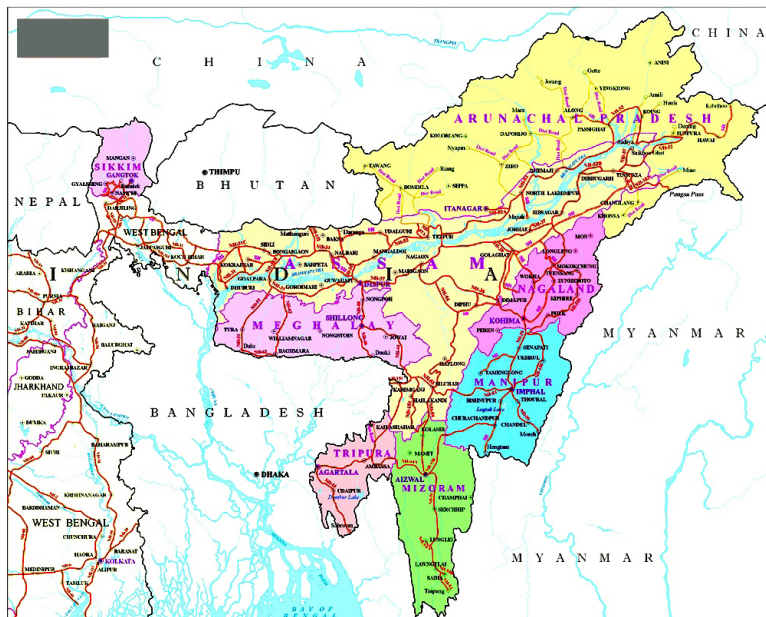


Map 1: Map of India

also been undergoing change and even the amount of rainfall has been erratic. As a result of commercialization, the forest cover has also been declining, endangering the wildlife.

Nomenclature

In pre-colonial times, the area known as Mizoram today comprised a number of tribes: “Lusei, Hmar, Poi/Lai, Lakher/Mara, Chakma, Tadou, Ralte, Gangte, Sukte, Pangkhua, Zahau, Fanai (Muallianpuii), Molbem, Darlong, Khuangli, and Falam



Map 2: North-East India. Mizoram is shown in green colour

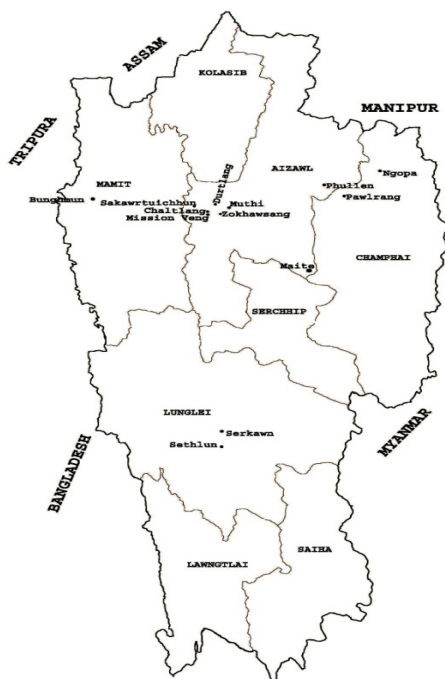
(Tashons).⁶ They were variously known as ‘Kuki’, ‘Chin’, ‘Zo’ and ‘Lushai’. They are scattered in the present Mizoram, Chin state of Myanmar, Bangladesh, Indian states of Manipur, Assam, and Tripura.

According to J. Shakespear, Kukis, Chins and the Lushais are all of the same stock.⁷ R.G. Woodthorpe argues:

The name Kookie has been given to this great tribe, as Mr. Edgar tells us by the Bengalis, and is not recognized by the Hillmen themselves.⁸

T.H. Lewin used Lhoosai and Kookies as overlapping categories.⁹ A.S. Reid states:

Previous to the Expedition of 1871-72, the wild tribes which had been in the habit of raiding our North-Eastern Frontier were generally spoken of as “Kukis”— a Bengali word meaning hill-men or highlanders. Since that event, however, 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



Map 3: Mizoram

sense, to indicate all those living to the west of the Koladyne river, while those to the east are designated Shendus.¹⁰

After having examined the various categories¹¹, Joy L.K. Pachau and Willem Van Schendel arrive at the conclusion:

We will use the terms 'hill people' and 'Zo-fate' interchangeably to refer to the assemblage of related sub-groups who inhabited the hills when the British invaded. We will also use the adjective Zo – as in 'the Zo region'.¹²

Since 1950, even the term 'Lushai' has been superseded by the generic term 'Mizo'.¹³

However, I have used the term Mizo and it includes the Lushais, Mara, Lai/Pawi, Hmar, Paite, Ralte and other subgroups. In this study, I have deployed, at place the category 'Mizo' and at some



Map 4: Cultural and geographical map of Mizo and cognate groups. It hangs in the Central Library of Mizoram University, Aizawl, and also in Government tourist lodges of Lunglei and Saiha.

places as 'Lushais' in the context of pre-colonial as well as colonial periods. At times, I have used the 'Mizoram' and 'Lushai Hills' interchangeably. Both are used in this monograph denoting the contemporary Mizoram.

The Moving Community

The Mizos were traditionally nomads. They used to change their habitat very often.¹⁴ It is said that they came to inhabit Mizoram from a place called Chhinlung in the Shan State of China, passing through different regions of Burma. In the words of J. Shakespear, “The Lushais (Mizos) have been nomadic ever since their ancestors started on their western trek some two hundred years ago.”¹⁵ J.M. Lloyd remarks, “They (Mizos) seldom stayed in the same place for more than seven or ten years and sometimes moved in a much shorter time”.¹⁶ Therefore, the ‘Mizo’ cultural area in the pre-colonial times was historically a liminal and fluid space defined by the persistence of “fluid notions of sovereignty and territoriality”.¹⁷

Colonialism, Christianity and Post-Colonial Developments in Mizoram

This area was annexed and became part of the Indian empire of the British in 1890-1891. Both the North and the South Lushai Hills were merged and were given the name ‘the Lushai Hills’.¹⁸ This became a district of Assam province and was put under the superintendent.¹⁹ The Christian missionaries starting entering the Lushai Hills from 1894. The colonial ethnography as well as Christian missionaries had generated a ‘body of knowledge’ which created a space for (a) emergence of new concepts of space (b) Introduction of new social boundaries and (c) textualization of the ethnic groups. The emergence of ‘new literacy’, the production of the newspapers ‘Mizo Chanchin Laishui’ and ‘Mizo Leh Vai Chanchinbu’ and ‘Krista Tlangau/Kristian Tlangau’, ‘Young Lusai Association’ (rechristened later as ‘Young Mizo Association’) contributed to the creation of ‘Mizo public’ (Mizo public sphere)²⁰. However, this public sphere was highly under the colonial cultural and Christian missionary’s hegemony.²¹ The ‘Intellectuals’²² who led the cultural movement had to negotiate with pre-colonial ‘Mizo’ culture and also with the ‘Christianity’ and the result was the emergence of new cultural imaginaries which created a space for Mizo identity. The cultural productions in the colonial and

post-colonial Mizoram have been representing the new emerging identity of the Mizo.²³ The cultural imaginaries resulting from this cultural movement laid the seeds of political imaginaries²⁴ ultimately creating a space for secessionist politics leading thereby to ‘insurgency’ for 20 years, that is from 1966 to 1986 culminating, ultimately into the peace accord of 1986 with the Government of India. Mizoram became the 23rd state of India on 20 February 1987.

Introducing Food History

Food plays many and also complex roles in human society. Asking questions about “food is like peeling an onion. With each layer you peel away there are different meanings and problems”²⁵. Food is the ideal cultural symbol that allows the historian to uncover hidden levels of meaning in social relationships and arrive at new understandings of the human experience.²⁶ The production, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, “more so than other kinds of behaviour, reveal the complexity of human interdependence, and serve as a nexus for an unbounded number of issues concerning society and culture”²⁷. Therefore, “food production and consumption have become hot topics for scholars”²⁸. Food, in fact, “is considered as a form of social history.”²⁹

The Earlier Writers who Provided Models on Research in Food History

Earl J. Hamilton was one of the earliest writers who provided a model for the study of food history³⁰. This was further developed by the Annales School³¹. The food studies further gathered strength by A. Crosby’s *The Columbian Exchange*.³² These early efforts established a framework for food history, and a growing recognition of its legitimacy as a field of study. As the field has grown, it has become more specific and particular, and at the same time more general and comprehensive. Three recent publications are significant in terms of the history of food: (1) *Food. A Culinary*

History from Antiquity to the Present is the English translation of a work first published in French under the direction of Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari in 1996.³³ The English translation was edited by Albert Sonnenfeld. The book comprises of 40 essays, beginning with antiquity and carrying forward into the 20th century³⁴. The book is divided into various sections and each section is preceded by authors' introduction. With titles such as "The Humanization of Eating Behaviors", "Food Systems and Models of Civilization" and "Romans, Barbarians, Christians: The Dawn of European Food Culture" give a direction and contextual richness to studies of diet, health, cooking, manners, social structure, food diffusion, production and distribution and much more. (2). Alan Davidson's *The Oxford Companion to Food*³⁵ (3) Kenneth E. Kiple and Kriemhild Cornee Ornelas, *The Cambridge World History of Food*³⁶ and (4) Raymond Grew (ed.), *Food in Global History*³⁷. Broadly, four themes in particular seem to provoke much of the discussion: (a) diffusion (b) other (c) cuisine and (d) nutrition.

Food in India

Some of the scholars who studied Indian foodways are: Om Prakash³⁸, McKim Marriot³⁹, R.S. Khare,⁴⁰ and K.T. Acharya⁴¹; M.S.A. Rao,⁴² Arjun Appadurai⁴³; Carol A. Breckenridge;⁴⁴ David Burton;⁴⁵ Gautam Bhadra;⁴⁶ Frank F. Conlon;⁴⁷ Jayanta Sengupta;⁴⁸ Rachel Berger;⁴⁹ Krishnendu, Ray and Tualsi Srinivas;⁵⁰ Utsa Ray⁵¹; Jhon Thieme and Ira Raja⁵²; Chitra Banerji.⁵³

Food in Mizoram

The food in Mizoram as an area of research has not yet drawn the attention of historians, anthropologists and sociologists. There are some references to food and drinks in colonial official writings,⁵⁴ but these hardly provide any insight into the culture. These officials were writing in the ethnographic present and the folklores have been taken as relics of antiquity, which remained in their perception, unchanged in the process of time. Most of the

academic works generated in the post-colonial period do provide some allusion to food here and there but there is hardly any full-fledged study on food per se.⁵⁵ A number of articles on Bamboo flowering resulting into famine conditions (Mautam) have been published in Mizo as well as English language. Sajal Nag in the work entitled *Pied Pipers in North-East India: Bamboo-Flowers, Rat-Famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)* deals with various issues related to bamboo flowering and rat famines of 1881, 1911-12, 1959, 2007 and how these were used as sites by colonial officials, missionaries and Mizo nationalists for forging their own agenda.⁵⁶ Though it is breakthrough in the historiography of Mizoram and provides us deep insight into the food crisis caused by the bamboo flowering but the larger questions related to food history need to be explored and, therefore, an attempt has been made to perform this task in the following pages of this book.

The thrust of this work is to explore production, distribution and consumption of food in the context of Mizoram since 19th century. Chapters 2 to 4 deal with production of food and its temporary disruption due to natural and man-nature conflicts or in other words natural and political effects on the food production and distribution from pre-colonial to post-colonial times. The remaining four chapters, chapters 5 to 8, deal with the negotiation of Mizo consumption practices with the colonial and post-colonial modernity. For the sake of convenience, the monograph is divided into the following chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter-2: Food Production: An Involvement and Intervention

In this chapter an attempt has been made to study the agricultural practices of the Mizo since 19th century and the continuities and changes in the modes of food production. However, besides the agrarian other sources of food production have also been taken into consideration.

Chapter-3: Ecological Phenomenon of Bamboo Flowering and Food Crisis

The Mizo encounter with temporary food crisis ensuing from an ecological phenomena of periodical bamboo flowering and

their coping mechanism forms the subject matter of this chapter.

Chapter-4: Food and Man-Nature Conflicts and Contradictions

However the Mizo had not only to meet the challenges posed by natural disasters but also various political powers which disrupted their foodways. This chapter resolves around the issues arising out of these conflicts.

Chapter-5: Creating New Tastes

How did the Mizos negotiate with the hegemonic forces of colonialism, Christianity and 'Mainstream Indian Culture' in terms of the 'taste'? How did the 'Mizo public' constructed food as a site of forging identity in the process of negotiation with these hegemonies. An attempt has been made to explore these seminal questions in this chapter.

Chapter-6: Bakery Products: The Promise of Modernization

How did the Mizo develop the taste for bakery products when there was an absence of these consumer goods in their tradition? How has it become part and parcel of Mizo food culture in the contemporary Mizoram? Has the colonial and post-colonial modernity played any role in the development of this consumption practice? These are some of the engaging issues weaved into the fabric of this chapter.

Chapter-7: Restaurants

"The restaurant is the tank in the warfare of cookery," says Zeldin, "because it has always been a major instrument for smashing old eating habits. Take-away food is the guerilla of cooking."⁵⁷ Is it a valid generalization in the context of development of modern restaurants in Mizoram? How do various social groups in Mizoram perceive the emergence of modern restaurants? Has the educated Mizo youth been able to carve out its space through the site of the new 'eateries' developing in Aizawl? Such interrogations have been deliberated upon in this chapter.

Chapter-8: Consumption of Milk in Mizoram: A Brief History

This chapter seeks to examine how the missionaries endeavoured

to turn the Mizo Christians from 'lactose intolerant' to 'lactose tolerant'. Though they were successful in this attempt to some extent but it is only in the post-colonial period and specifically in the last two decades that the milk has become an important consumer good in Mizoram.

Chapter-9: Conclusion

NOTES

1. These generalizations have been based on the readings of the works: *Statistical Handbook of Mizoram*, Aizawl, 1974, p. 3; Rintluanga Pachau, *Geography of Mizoram*, Aizawl, 1994, p. 23.
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11. For discussion on various categories, see Jangkhomang Guite. 2011. 'Civilization and Its Malcontents: The Politics of Kuki Raid in Nineteenth Century Northeast India.' *Indian Economic and Social History Review* 48 (3): 346-47, 349; David Vumlallian Zou. 2005. 'Raiding the Dreaded Past: Representations of Headhunting and Human Sacrifice in Northeast India.' *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 39 (1): 81n. Son Suantak, Bianca. 2013. 'The Making of the Zo: The Chin of Burma and the Lushai and Kuki of India through

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 18. See Notification No. 592 E. B. Governor-General in Council, dated 1 April 1898. Appended to A.G. McCall, *The Lushai Hills District Cover*, The Tribal Research Institute, Deptt. Of Art & Culture, Aizawl, 2008 (Reprint)
 19. Notification No. 977 dated April 1898 in Appendix, A.G. McCall, op.cit., p. 11.
 20. For the concept of public sphere, see Chapter 5 of this book.
 21. The concept of hegemony has been discussed in detail in chapter 5 of this book.
 22. For the concept of 'Intellectuals', I have derived insight from the following works: Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (ed. and trans.), New York, 1971, p. 9; Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, "Notes on the Role of the Intelligentsia in Colonial Society: India from Mid-Nineteenth Century", *Studies in History*, vol. 1, Number 1, January-June, 1979, 0.98; Karl Marx, *German Ideology*, edition of 1965, London, p. 61; Prof. Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 752; Andre

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23. Jagdish Lal Dawar, "Zo Cultural Region: Mizo Cultural and Political Imaginaries in 20th Century" in Rashpal Malhotra and Sucha Singh Gill (ed.), *India's North-East Asiatic Sout-East: Beyond Borders' Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development*, Chandigarh (India), 2015, pp. 167-182; also see Joy L.K. Pachaua, *Being Mizo: Identity And Belonging In Northeast India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2014; Biakliana, *Hawilopari*, North-Eastern Hill University Publications, Shillong, 1983 (first edition). K.C. Vannghaka, *Influence Of Christianity In Mizo Fiction*, op. cit., pp. 53-60, 74-79; also see C. Lalrozami, *Historical Development Of Media In Mizoram: A Cultural Approach*, op. cit., pp. 112-119; Lianghkaia, *Mizo Chanchin (Mizo story)*. It deals with Lianghkaia's historical imagination).
 24. See for further details chapter 4 of this book.
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 30. See Earl J. Hamilton' "Wages and Subsistence on Spanish Treasure Ships," *Journal of Political Economy*, vol. 37, 1929, pp. 430-450, cited

in John C. Super, "Food and History" Review Essay in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (autumn, 2002), p. 165.

31. Ibid.
32. Alfred W. Crosby, Jr., *The Columbian Exchange*, Westport, 1972.
33. Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (dirs.), Albert Sonnenfeld (ed.), *Food. A Culinary History from Antiquity to the Present*, New York, 1999. A comparable work that concentrates on Latin America (with many articles devoted to Mexico) appeared the same year. Janet Long (coord.), *Conquista y Comida: Consecuencias del Encuentro de Dos Mundos* (Mexico City, 1996).
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CHAPTER 2

Food Production: An Involvement and Intervention

Introduction

An attempt has been made to understand the forces of production such as land, labour, technology, markets, etc. in other words the focus is on the nature-labour-commodity nexus. Another focus of discussion revolves around the role of women especially in production of vegetables and collection of edible wild plants. Besides farming practices attention has also been paid to other sources of food production: hunting and fishing.

Pre-Colonial 19th Century Mizoram: Food Production

Farming Practices

‘Mizos’ farming practices are homologous to that of the people inhabiting the vast mountainous region, termed as ‘Zomia.’¹ They have been following shifting cultivation for food production. Various known as ‘rotational bush-fallow agriculture’, ‘swidden cultivation’, or ‘slash-and-burn cultivation’, ‘jhum cultivation’ (a term used among the tribes of North-East India) is an ancient form of agriculture still commonly practised in many parts of the humid tropics. Within India, shifting agriculture or jhum is practised predominantly in the hill tracts of eastern and north eastern India. At least 100 different indigenous tribes and over 620,000 families in the seven states of North East India depend on

jhum for their subsistence.² Writing about the farming practices of 'Lushais' David Kyles writes:

Farming presents no complicated problem to the Lushais. Having cleared a space on the top of some hill for their village, they then cut down a large area of bamboo jungle nearby. They let this great heap of withering vegetation dry and then set it on fire, so that the fierce, scorching flame roars up the hillside, like some fiery sea flowing the wrong way round! This gives them their Jhums, their farming land all ready made and fertilized. This land produces all they require with lavish abundance for three or four years and then it fails because it is never cultivated, and the happy go lucky Lushais pass on to repeat the process elsewhere, returning to the original *jhum* after twelve years or more, when it has reverted to its original state.³

However, the shifting cultivation has been a subject of controversy and generated a lot of debate among foresters, ecologists, economists, and policy-makers. Broadly, two views emerge from existing literature: (i) The first group of scholars argue that shifting cultivation results in loss of forest cover, erosion of topsoil, desertification, decline in forest productivity, destruction of biodiversity. It is assumed to be an inefficient form of agriculture.⁴

(ii) The other group of scholars argue that: (i) far from being primitive and inefficient, *jhum* is an ingenious system of organic multiple cropping well suited to the heavy rainfall areas of the hill tracts; (ii) The economic and energetic efficiency of *jhum* is higher than alternative forms of agriculture such as terrace and valley cultivation. This is mainly because terrace and valley cultivation needs expensive external input such as fertilizers (which often get leached or lost in the heavy rainfall hill slopes) and pesticides, besides labour for terracing; (iii) There is often no strong relationship between population pressure and *jhum* cycles, villagers choose to cultivate at cycles of 5-10 years even when longer fallow periods are possible; (iv) that population density would impinge on *jhum* cycle only after some critical threshold of high population pressure is crossed; (v) The burning of slash returns nutrients to the soil through ash and kills microbes allowing relatively high yields; (vi) Yields decline as the soil is

depleted through one year of cropping and cultivation is rarely carried out for more than a year; (vii) When fields are abandoned, there is rapid regeneration of bamboo and other plants. After 10 years, the vegetation and soil properties recover to levels that can support another round of *jhum* cultivation; (viii) In some areas with better regrowth of bamboo, even shorter fallow cycles may be feasible and sustainable; (viii) The economic security provided by *jhum* and its cultural importance to indigenous tribes; (ix) These studies show that *jhum* fields cultivated for a single year and abandoned (the most common practice) have less erosive losses of soil than the other forms of settled cultivation; (x) Although *jhum* is most commonly blamed, other factors such as conversion to monoculture commercial tree plantations such as teak, oil-palm and logging for timber extraction can also have negative impacts on biodiversity.⁵

In the context of Mizoram, the shifting cultivation has been defended by some prominent scholars.⁶ It is argued that it is a dynamic practice.⁷ This technique has very well been suited to the topography of Mizoram. It has been suited ecologically too⁸. The Mizos used very simple technology in this method of cultivation. Dao formed one of the agricultural implements with which most of their *jhooming* operations were performed.⁹

Jhum or swidden cultivation used to produce subsistence crops such as rice in abundance. The Mizos were growing a variety of paddy seeds one of which as mentioned in colonial archival records is known by the term “mim” (Bengali name is “kunch”).¹⁰ Officiating superintendent, Lushai-Hills wrote to Officiating Reporter on Economic Products to the Government of India, Indian Museum:

Its Botanical Specimen is Coix. The seeds are sown in *jhum* lands. They are sown mixed with rice throughout all Lushai villages to a greater or less extent. The seasons of sowing and reaping are March and November respectively. It is not alternated with any other crops here...Method of preparing grain is by husking. It is not dried on hardened for ornamental purposes. The people of the district do not use it in any other way... the Lushais eat it and feed their pigs with it...There is no market for it and it is not sold...This variety of seed ‘Coix’ had been preserved in the collections of Indian Museum¹¹.

Besides variety of rice crops, Lushai grew “millets, vegetables, peas” etc.¹²

Nature of Social Organization and Food Production

The shifting cultivation in pre-colonial Mizoram could be sustained by the way the society was organized. In the 19th century pre-colonial Mizoram the various tribes had a system of chieftainship. Each village was ruled by a chief who was supreme in his own village. However, the chiefs were largely governed by the customary laws. If a chief became too much oppressive, the subjects had the tendency to leave him and join another chief's village and therefore he was 'constrained to govern according to custom'.¹³ T.H. Lewin observed that 'every man is equal, the chief having power only in matters relating to the general good, indeed should the chief attempt to enlarge his authority he is speedily brought to his senses by the desertion of his people who at once seek some less ambitious leader'.¹⁴

Every chief ruled his village with the help of elders known as the 'Upas' who were appointed by the chiefs and were liable to be removed by him. Below him were other village functionaries.¹⁵ The chief and his officials therefore formed the privilege class of the Lushai society. The first and foremost groups of the privilege class, with the exception of the chief, were the Upas. They were exempted from the payment of the paddy due to the chief and enjoyed priority in selection of *jhum* fields. The 'Tlangau' or the village crier was a privileged person. His duty was to proclaim the chief's order to the people by crying all around the village. He was entitled to receive a small amount of paddy from each house. Another was 'Thirden' or the blacksmith, who was to repair and shape up all the working tools of the villagers. For such work he received a basket of paddy from each household per annum. 'Thirden' also received a small share in every animal killed by the villagers. The 'puithiam' or village priest, performed sacrificial ceremonies and offerings for the villagers. 'Ramhual', who advised the chiefs where *jhum* should be cut each year, was other important

village functionaries¹⁶. All the cultivators had to pay various taxes or tributes to the chief. These taxes were: 'Fathang' (paddy tax), 'Sachhiah' (a portion of hunted or killed animal), 'Khuai chhiah' (honey tax) and fish tax, etc.¹⁷ Some chiefs used to be more powerful than others. "The greatness of a chief was judged by the number of houses in his village; and a chief ruling over three hundred houses was considered powerful."¹⁸

Labour and Food Production

The whole process of food production by 'commoners' was performed with the family labour as well as through reciprocity. However, the chiefs were dependent upon *Bawi* system, which generally has been translated as 'slavery'¹⁹. Explaining this term, Thomas Herbert Lewin says:

I use the word 'slavery' for want of a better; 'boi' is the term in their dialect, which betokens a person who has lost the right of individual freedom of action, but in all other respects the word 'slave' would be inapplicable. The menial service in a chief's house or in the households of the wealthier persons... is performed by two classes, (1) the Boi, (2) the Sul²⁰...should any person, lazily neglecting to cultivate rice on his own behalf, surreptitiously take, steal, or attempt to steal the rice of another, he becomes the chief's 'Boi'; should any commit murder, or commit a fault, the consequences of which he is unable to bear alone or unassisted, he takes refuge in the house of the chief, and he and his family with their descendants become 'Boi'...The Sul is simply a man, woman, or child, who has been forcibly taken prisoner in war, who is in fact a captive to the bow and spear of the chief. Such persons in every day life are treated in no way differently to the Boi, but may be redeemed by their relations on a money payment. A Sul lives in the chief's own house, and may be sold from one to another, or treated as a household chattel. The Boi is rather an hereditary retainer, occupying a separate house and not liable to sale or transfer...The offices performed by the Sul or such of the Boi as compose the immediate household of the chief is everywhere the same. They have to hew wood and draw water, they cultivate the chief's jum (sic) and in their leisure hours weave cloth, cook the meals of the household, serve the chief's wife, or take care of the children.²¹

Trade in the 19th Century

In the 19th century, the Mizo chiefs had well-established system of trade with the neighbouring areas. They exchanged crude rubber, cotton, cinnamon, *lac*, ivory and wax with salt, sulphur, flint, glass, iron, brass, copper utensils etc.²² R.G.Woodthorpe provides an interesting example of barter:

A coolie, having no use for his money and being no doubt utterly tired of his monotonous Commissariat fare, gave one rupee for a fowl, which thenceforth was established by the Lushais as the standard price, though, of the actual value of the rupee they were entirely ignorant, appreciating more highly a few copper coins. A few sepoys who had a supply of the latter, took advantage of it to buy back at about a sixth of their value the rupees which the Lushais had previously received from the officers.²³

Burland recorded that in 1871 about 1500 maunds of rubber was procured by traders from the Mizos.²⁴ However, in January 1877, 111 maunds of rubber were taken in the five shops.²⁵ The rubber trade had been declined further in March, 1877.²⁶ The decline was because of the 'exhaustion of the rubber supply.'²⁷

There was a great demand for salt among the Lushais and therefore it was regarded as the most precious item of exchange:

A large number of Lushais had accompanied us as far as Tipai Mukh, and were busily employed in driving a few last bargains. They brought down large quantities of India-rubber, which they exchanged eagerly for salt, equal weights, and the value of the rubber was more than four times that of the salt, any individuals who could command a large supply of the latter had an excellent opportunity of doing a little profitable business.²⁸

The three bazaars, namely Tipaimukh, Sonai and the Changsil Bazars, established on the borders of the Lushai Hills played an important role in the trade.²⁹ There was, however, no certainty about these bazars, which would dwindle or flourish depending on the availability of indigenous forest produce, and also on the relationship between the chiefs and the British and among the chiefs themselves.³⁰

In this respect, Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem Van Schendel write:

Although the early literature stresses inimical relationships and fear between hill and plains people, there were many longstanding friendly contacts between them as well, notably by means of trade in salt, rubber, cotton, tobacco, fruits, wax and guns³¹.

Once the three markets were opened by the colonial officials on the frontiers, the Mizos had more opportunities for increasing their trade. However, these markets were opened with the purpose of surveillance over the 'raiding' chiefs and also to enmesh them into the cash economy. However, it objectively helped some of the chiefs. The traders paid regular rents to the Chiefs at whose territory the markets were situated. Hunter writes in "Statistical Account of Assam": "In December 1874 the Lushais came down in large number to purchase cattle, the exchange for which they offered the cash they had obtained from the sale of rubber"³² This trade made some chiefs more wealthy and powerful and they started subjugating the weak chiefs. A historian Vanlalringa Bawitlung argues that this process had been leading to state formation under the powerful chiefs.³³ However, the processes of state formation had been thwarted by the intervention of the British Indian government and during the British –Lushai war of 1890 the latter were defeated and this region was annexed by the British³⁴.

The Colonial Period

The introduction of Land Settlement

The Government surveyed Mizoram, finalized individual land ownership, introduced new process of cultivation.³⁵ The new Land Settlement was introduced in 1898 under the supervision of John Shakespear who had been appointed as the Superintendent of this district. It was the first land settlement under colonial government. The most significant feature of this settlement report was fixing the territories of the Chiefs.³⁶

By introducing the land settlement the migratory practices of the Mizos came to an end. However, Chapman and Clark, the two missionaries imagined that it was the growth of Church in every

Mizo village that induced the Mizos to abandon nomadic way of life permanently:

The practice of moving villages fell into disuse when every village had its own Church. The people were reluctant to abandon the site where stood the beautiful house of worship which they had built with so much loving labour. The village location was no longer changed, and the people constructed permanent houses.³⁷

The Colonial Officials and the Shifting Cultivation

In the writing of the British officials, the Lushais have been represented as ‘head-taking savages’, ‘uncivilized’, ‘savage’.³⁸ Their method of agriculture was perceived to be ‘primitive’³⁹, ‘barbarous’, ‘destructive’, and ‘wasteful’⁴⁰. The officials asserted that this system of farming led to ‘destruction of forests’, ‘sudden floods in the plains’⁴¹, ‘population pressure’ leading to scarcity of *jhuming* land⁴². The forest officials were more concerned for introducing ‘some systematic measures of forest conservancy into these hills’⁴³. There also lurked a hidden commercial motive for condemning this practice as Superintendent of Lushai Hills declares:

Of the immense damage done by extensive *jhuming* in tree jungle I will only say that it is apparent to all. As far as the Forest Department is concerned, the loss is great as the large trees burnt and killed would have been available for trade purposes⁴⁴.

Therefore, ‘The cessation of *jhuming*’ in his view ‘would benefit the Forest Department’.⁴⁵ Even the colonial anthropologist had similar views on shifting cultivation. Thus, anthropologist Fürer-Haimendorf argues:

Primitive husbandry *jhum* cultivation is certainly crude when gauged by modern standards. It is ‘predatory’ in the sense that there is little, if any systematic practice of crop rotation or soil compensation. The consequence is naturally exhaustion of soil, involving removal to a new plot, where a new clearing is made with much wastage of timber and energy ... the development of agriculture techniques by the adoption of the plough paves the way for large-scale agriculture operations and surplus

production. It emphasizes the permanence of field and settlement and individual claims of specific tracks of land, in other words it encourages private property rights and the growth of permanent villages.⁴⁶

Another reason for attack on shifting cultivation in the perception of the colonial officials was the need to earn revenue and also stop importing food imports from outside Lushai Hills for feeding the army and the colonial bureaucracy. The officials were in great need of porters, coolies, and labour for clearing the forests for construction of roads and also the labour in reserve forests. It is difficult to control the mobile population for these activities. Here, James Scott's views on mobile population or in his views stateless people.⁴⁷ In this respect the declaration of 'reserve forest' became an important site of state regulation and power⁴⁸. Both forest and fields were redefined to support and justify colonial resource regimes⁴⁹.

Thus, we find that the discourse of 'primitiveness' and 'civilizing mission' recurs in the official writings.

Alternative to Shifting Cultivation

The colonial officials aimed to improve the manners and morals of the Lushais. Teaching 'modern methods of agriculture' formed an important aspect of this discourse of 'improvement'. Major Cole further argues:

The objects of Government and the Mission in the work of improving the people's welfare, by providing for them a mental and a moral training, and by securing greater supervision over them in their work, and especially by teaching them modern methods of agriculture...The Government endeavours to persuade them to give up their present primitive methods and adopt modern methods of agriculture, in order that they may improve their own condition... And if the conditions of the Lushais were improved they might be expected to take upon themselves a larger share of the burden. It is their custom to move their villages every five or seven years, and it is difficult on this account to do anything permanent among them... He thought that the Government and the Mission might unite to make an effort to build permanent villages in some of the most fertile valleys, and establish mission stations in them, as was done in Khasi...

Such villages would become model-villages, which the Lushais generally might copy.”⁵⁰

The discourse of ‘improvement’ takes various forms and one of its most significant is the abandonment of ‘jhumming’⁵¹ and the introduction of Wet Rice Cultivation as an alternative system of farming.

WRC (Wet Rice Cultivation)

The colonial officials promoted Wet Rice Cultivation in certain areas, specifically in the valley areas of Champhai and Thenzawl, in 1898 under the direction of John Shakespear.⁵² It was further extended to North Vanlaiphai, South Vanlaiphai and Tuisenhna, respectively in 1904, 1912 and 1925⁵³ The ‘Permanent Khet Cultivation’ as practised in the Naga Hills, was projected as the model to be emulated by Lushais.⁵⁴ Even some Naga Angami demonstrators were brought to Lushai Hills to teach new techniques of food production. Since the Lushais were not familiar with this technology, the Nepalis were settled in the areas of permanent wet rice cultivation. For this purpose some money in the form of agriculture loan was being allocated in terms of agricultural loan to encourage this practice and also for purchase of bullocks for experimental cultivation.⁵⁵ The Chiefs were given special orders to help in promotion of this method of cultivation.⁵⁶ Agricultural instructors and demonstrators had been invited and also some were sent for training in the institutions in other parts of India.⁵⁷ Gradually, a number of Lushai families started taking to wet rice cultivation in Champhai, North Vanlaiphai, etc.⁵⁸ It is clear from the loan for purchase of bullocks etc. the demand for which had been mounting.⁵⁹ For this, new land rights were introduced in the areas where permanent wet rice cultivation was launched⁶⁰. However, irrigation system had also been introduced by channelizing various streams.

Terrace Cultivation

The other aspect of this ‘improvement’ was introduction of Terrace cultivation. Terrace cultivation as practised in the Naga Hills was

taken as a model to be shown to the Lushais.⁶¹ Between September and October 1916, the Superintendent took some Lushai Chiefs to Naga Hills to study the terraced fields around Kohima and Khonoma.⁶² Later two Angami Nagas as 'terrace demonstrators' were appointed.⁶³ An experiment with local seed as well as Naga Hills paddy seed were made.⁶⁴

However, the colonial officials were not happy over the fact that the Mizos had not taken interest in this technology and therefore the terrace cultivation was not showing good results.⁶⁵

Introduction of New Crops

The colonial officials introduced new plants: the garden pea, tomatoes, celery, passion fruit, okra, carrots and peanuts, and guavas.⁶⁶ "By 1908," says Kyle Jackson, "cultivation experiments were underway with wheat, pulses, Pennsylvanian tobacco (so 'appreciated by the Lushais' that it was soon cultivated across some 100 villages) and English vegetables."⁶⁷ At Sialsuk 42 miles from Aijal 'experimental sowing of potatoes' was done and it displayed good outcome.⁶⁸ The methods of growing the new fruits were taught to the people. Thus, in a letter dated 21 February 1908 the we get detailed process of cultivating the Ceylong Papaya Seeds.⁶⁹

Khasia named Raja Singh has started a fruit garden at Sairang which is doing well. Some 500 orange trees have been raised. Proposals were submitted this year to give him a small monthly allowance of rs 10 to conduct experiments on behalf of Government.

4. An experimental sowing of potatoes at Sialsuk 42 miles from Aijal is very promising. The potatoes have not been cropped. Proposals have submitted during the year to conduct experiments on a more extensive scale.

Colonialism, Christianity and the Nature of Social Change

Once this area was annexed by the British and the Christian missionaries started entering this region from 1894 onwards, the pace of change was much faster. The colonial officials reduced the power of the chiefs and also more chiefs were appointed. However,

there was a massive disarmament of the community. Though the governance of the villages was still performed through chiefs but they had to report all the matters to the interpreters and inspectors appointed by the government. The system of *Bawi* (slavery) was also abolished in the 1920s. The government also introduced house-tax to be collected by the respective chiefs and deposit in the Government treasury. The church literacy created a social group of missionaries who were employed in different echelons of church order in order to spread the message of gospel. The new church literate section of the society became an ideal to be emulated by rest of the society since comparatively they were in a better social and economic position.

However, there was increase in non-cultivation population of the society, which had to be fed. The colonial bureaucracy, though very small, police, the missionaries all had to buy the grains from within Mizoram because importing from other parts of India in the absence of infrastructure was very costly. The burden of taxation also had increased. Besides, usual fatham to the chiefs, they had to pay house-tax to the state, tithe (church tax) to the church and also provide either in the form of paddy or cash to the their wards for hostel, etc. There was a need, therefore, to grow more food and extend the areas of cultivation. In the 1940s, the chiefs were demanding the abolition of riverine reserves as this land was suited for cultivation of crops for export such as cotton and also demanded that they should be allowed to clear land adjoining government roads as the people were facing shortage of *jhum* land. These demands were put forward in the Lushai Hills Chiefs' Durbar in 1941 and a resolution was passed accordingly and forwarded to the government.⁷⁰ But these demands were not met by the government.

Post-Colonial Mizoram

The attack on shifting cultivation and the pressure to grow more food continued to mount in the post-colonial Mizoram and led to the introduction of schemes such as:

- a. Garden Colony
- b. Jhum control
- c. Land Use Policy
- d. New Land Use Policy (NLUP)
- e. Mizoram Intodelhna Project (MIP)
- f. and again the New Land Use Policy (NLUP)

In fact “there has been a persistent attempt at ending the culture of jhum activity among the rural population through gradual shift to permanent system of landuse”.⁷¹

However, we have taken just one such scheme for discussion, that is, New Land Use Policy.

The New Land Use Policy

The Government of Mizoram first conceived a policy in 1984, which was implemented in a small scale during 1985 – 1992.⁷² It was later developed during 1993 – 1998. The NLUP was again implemented in 2011 after the Congress came to power in Mizoram in 2008.⁷³ The aim was to progressively reduce and replace jhumming till its complete abandonment and promote:

- (a) Permanent wet rice cultivation
- (b) Terrace cultivation
- (c) Horticulture
- (d) Cash Crops
- (e) Animal Husbandry
- (f) Sericulture
- (g) Alternate Agro Industry

The Consequences of NLUP

The results of the New Land Use Policies introduced in 1984 and later on during 1990s were becoming could be perceived. Some of these are being discussed.

According to Daman Singh:

The NLUP operates in such a way as to dislocate the well-organized system of shifting cultivation. In the villages where jhumming has been banned, people continue the practice covertly in small groups that lack the discipline and foresight of the village councils. In negating the authority of the village council over issues of land use and management, the NLUP disables the very institutions, which has been instrumental in the effective administration of resources. Divested of its powers and superseded by the bureaucracy, the village council that was once a reactive and responsible body representing the interests of the people, is in danger of becoming a mere figurehead.⁷⁴

The process of privatization of land from village community land started taking place and thus to the individual ownership of the land. It was not possible for the poor families to spend the money on input of the private land and therefore giving birth to landlessness in the rural society. As Vanlalnunmawia Zawngte argues: "After the introduction of NLUP, there has been an increase in the number of landless laborers that widened the gap between the rich and the poor in the society."⁷⁵ Another process, which became evident after a few years were that the self-sufficient community became a dependent one.⁷⁶ Therefore, it led to the food insecurity. The persons who got alienated from the land had no option but to migrate to the urban centers in search of livelihood. It is evident from the Census of 2001.⁷⁷ It also had indirectly contributed towards erosion of cultural values associated with shifting cultivation and community ownership of land. These values are the values of sharing culture, as Vanlalnunmawia Zawngte remarks:

The Culture of sharing and caring prevails in the society is replaced by individualistic greed and growth oriented culture. Some of the dominant capitalists' principles have replaced the aged-old communitarian culture such as sharing and caring in Mizo community. Instead of common sharing and caring, individualism, acquisitiveness and personal gains have crept in.⁷⁸

It also led to corruption in the society.⁷⁹ According to K. Zalawma there was environmental impact of this policy:

Natural green environment of tree or bamboo forest was massively destroyed for the policy. And it is commonly known that deforestation

caused disappearance of several animals and birds from the forest, soil erosion, and irregularity of rainfall, landslide and change of temperature. Thus, the environmental impact of the policy, whether it is in direct or indirect way, is to be considered seriously.⁸⁰

These effects have further been intensified in the context of the latest New Land Use Policy of 2008. During my fieldwork a large number of respondents provided similar explanations. The gap between rich and poor has been widening and, moreover, the advocates of alternative land uses for monoculture plantation buttressed by private industries are spreading their tentacles.

New Land Use Policy and Oil Palm Cultivation

Oil palm is amongst the fastest expanding crops in tropical Asia.⁸¹ It is believed to be not only productive but also cheap and is put to “diverse uses as biofuel, lubricant, cooking oil, and as an additive in the food and cosmetic industries”⁸² In the United States, Palm-oil is “one of the common ingredients in the processed food today”.⁸³ India is the world’s largest consumer and importer of palm oil.⁸⁴ It has been importing this oil from Indonesia and Malaysia.⁸⁵ However, at present Indian government has been advocating oil palm cultivation for the purpose of edible-oil security.⁸⁶ The farmers have been given incentives in the form of various subsidies to expand this cultivation in different regions of India.⁸⁷

The Government of Mizoram has been promoting cultivation of oil-palm crop as an alternative to shifting cultivation. In order to control ‘jhumming’, it has promoted cultivation of oil-palm in various districts.⁸⁸ The government began this cultivation in 2004-5.⁸⁹ It was done under the supervision and financial assistance of Godrej Oil Palm Ltd, Ruchi Soya Industries Ltd and Foods Fats & Fertilizer Ltd.⁹⁰ The target area has progressively been increasing for the production of palm-oil.⁹¹

The government in its policy document has provided the following reason for the promotion of oil-Palm cultivation:

The rapid increase of land degradation due to jhumming, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and productivity, increasing flood are leading to an ecological crisis affecting livelihood options for Jhumia families. This

suggests inter-alia policy to encourage and support plantation of Oil Palm to overcome these constraints. Oil Palm stands as an ideal crop capable of achieving conservation of soil and moisture, repair of degraded land, provide ecological balance, food and security of rural and urban poor. The Government of Mizoram aims to implement an action Programme with an objective of placing Oil Palm as a key component in the plan to generate employment and mitigate environmental degradation and to strengthen the process of Oil Palm Development.⁹²

However, it has been seen from the example of Indonesia and Malaysia that oil-palm cultivation has disastrous results. The palm monoculture has displaced the indigenous families from their land and child labour and modern day slavery still occur on plantations in both Indonesia and Malaysia”.⁹³

“Ecologically”, says Umesh Srinivasan, “there is overwhelming consensus that oil palm is unmitigatedly detrimental. Oil palm expansion is one of the largest drivers of the loss of virgin forest in south-east Asia”⁹⁴. L.P. Koh, L P and D.S. Wilcove contend that 55 per cent of expanding plantations in Indonesia and Malaysia came from the complete replacement of natural forest⁹⁵ and such expansions contribute to forest loss in Thailand, Myanmar and Papua New Guinea⁹⁶ (Fitzherbert et al 2008). According to Raman, oil palm plantations actually lead to a greater loss of forest cover because once converted into cultivated land, the forest never has a chance to grow there again.⁹⁷ The environmentalists are skeptical about the viability of Oil-Palm Plants in Mizoram because these are water-intensive and one gets sufficient water only during monsoon and rest of the year Mizoram has scarcity of water. Therefore, instead of food-security the oil-palm plantation may lead to food-insecurity in Mizoram.

Other Sources of Food Production

Hunting

Hunting formed an important source of food production by the pre-colonial Mizos⁹⁸. According to T. Ingold:



Picture 1: Oil palm plantation in Mizoram, India

T.R. Shankar Raman

To reduce the demand and supply gap, India too has joined the bandwagon of oil palm cultivators. Source: Umesh Srinivasan and Nandini Velho, 'Growing Oil Palm Threat to India's Biodiversity'.

Gathering, hunting and herding, which are usually arranged progressively-placed one after the other in our conventional chronologies of prehistoric change-were really complementary techniques of obtaining food, which developed together.⁹⁹

The Mizo used various weapons for hunting of animals and the hunting party was always accompanied by dogs. "The Lushais," say R.G.Woodthorpe, "are mighty hunters, as they are great eaters of flesh, and their supplies depend a great deal upon the success of their hunting excursions."¹⁰⁰

The Lushai also used to rear domestic animals: mithun, the goats, and fowls.¹⁰¹ In his survey, T.H. Lewin used to write notes on everyday basis. He used the categories of 'Lushai' and 'Kookies' as overlapping.¹⁰² In one such a note, dated 11 May 1867, he writes:

The gyal¹⁰³ delights to range about in the thickest forest... The Kookies hunt the wild ones for the sake of their flesh. Guyals have been domesticated among the Kookies from time immemorial, and without

any variation in their appearance from the wild stock. No difference whatever is observed in the appearance of the wild and tame animals, brown of various shades being the general colour of both. The wild guyal is about the size of the wild buffalo in India...Kookies ... rear their guyal entirely for the sake of their flesh and skins... The flesh of the guyal is in the highest estimate among the Kookies, so much so, that no solemn festival is ever celebrated without slaughtering one or more of the beasts, according to the importance of the occasion.¹⁰⁴

Earlier, they used to hunt birds, animals, etc. The methods for hunting of birds were: *thangthleng*, *sahdal*, *thangchep*, *vaithang*, *mangkhangng*, *beai*, *buhchuk*, *kilen*, *chip thang*, *bilh*, *hnawhtawt*, *sakuh thang*, *sanghar thang*, *fal*.¹⁰⁵

However, as a result of colonialism and advent of Christianity in Mizoram the practice of hunting started declining.

Fishing

Besides hunting, fishing was always an important source of food for the Mizos. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, a food historian argues, "Fishing is a form of hunting."¹⁰⁶ He nevertheless contends:

Fishing is obviously not hunting of the same kind as is practiced on the land in the kind of agrarian and industrial societies which, overwhelmingly, prevail in the modern world.¹⁰⁷

The area inhabited by the Mizo was full of rivers, streams and water bodies and therefore, these were the catchment areas for fishing. According to A.S. Reid:

Fishing dams were found below each considerable village. They consisted of weirs of stone with a close fence of split bamboos stretching across the stream. There was only one opening, and that into a long tube or lane of close bamboo work into which the fish were swept and then captured.¹⁰⁸

In fact, the Mizo folklore do reveal to us the existence of water dams.¹⁰⁹ The Mizo used to collect fish through various methods and one of the material used for fishing was 'Leithak'.¹¹⁰ V. Remkunga, the archivist of the Baptist Christian Mission (BCM), Lunglei, explained to me by demonstrating it to me. He remarked to me



Figure 2: Mr.V. Remkunga, the archivist of the BCM, Lunglei, demonstrating the plant. (The photograph was taken by me during his interview.)

that he himself “has done it a number of times, from Kolayadyne river since his village is nearby-they used to spend whole night there.”¹¹¹ He explained:

It is a sort of grass and it flowers in the months August to October. They cut this grass and dry it in the sun and put it in the sack, then just mash it and dip it in the river and as a result wherever the water flows the fish cannot go and then they collect the fish.¹¹²

Besides, there are other traditional methods of fishing in rivers and streams of Mizoram: ‘*Sangha-tlang-vuak* (community herbal fishing), *Ngawidawh* (arial trap), *Bawngdawh* (maze/barricade), *Len den* (cast net), *Hawthrawk* (poking net), *Lungtuk* (hammering), *Lungbuk* (stone piling), *Lensuah* (scooping), *Lui thliar/thliar leh* (water diversion), *Suar dan* (temporary water blockage), *Chawnzial* (cave fencing), *Bel chiah* (pot immersion), *Tui theh kang* (water bailing), *Lui tea sangha lut lo dan* (intercept process) and *Lenkhangzar* (entangling gear), *nghakuai chia* (fishing rod/hooks) and *sangha chhun* (spear/harpoon).¹¹³

The “corresponding method for fish is pisci culture or aquaculture: fish-‘farming’, as it is called.”¹¹⁴ The government of Mizoram has also introduced pisci culture and had been financially assisting the farmers to develop fish farming.

Gardens

In the pre-colonial times, the Mizo farmers used grow vegetables on a small scale. R.G. Woodthorpe, during the Lushai expedition of 1871-72, noticed:

Besides the crops grown in the fields, small gardens are frequent in the villages in which are cultivated yams, tobacco, pepper, beans of various sorts, and herbs.¹¹⁵

As discussed in earlier section, the colonial officials had also introduced the new type of vegetables since the needs of the army, officials as well as the missionaries required production of more vegetables so as to create a market for vegetables for Mizos where they could sell their products in the newly coming of bazaars. This

process continued during the post-colonial period as well. Thus, by mid eighties, as Thangchungnunga writes:

During the mid eighties, the commodities like Ghinger, Chilly, Tobacco, squash and vegetables formed major component of marketing by the villages.¹¹⁶

Home Gardens

“Home gardens are considered one of the oldest subsistence farming systems practiced by rural communities in many parts of the world, consisting of multi-layer systems of trees, shrubs, and herbs around homesteads”¹¹⁷ A.R. Barbhuiya, U.K. Sahoo and K. Upadhyaya conducted field work in six villages of Mizoram and studied the 90 indigenous home gardens located in these villages.¹¹⁸ The authors state:

These home gardens are mostly rainwater fed. Water harvesting technology in the villages is almost non-existent due to steep slopes coupled with poor water-holding capacity of the soil. Almost all gardeners use traditional tools and practice manual weeding and pest control. Soil fertility is maintained through natural means using organic manures produced at home and through composting leftover crops. In general, adult family members contribute equal labour to the overall maintenance and management of gardens; men select cash crops, trees, and fruit species and obtain and sow seed materials, while women mainly grow and manage vegetables, spices, medicinal plants, and harvest and market subsistence crops. In general, flatland or settled valley cultivation practices are very limited and most of the agricultural practices are performed in the sloppy upland areas. The majority of the villagers practice home gardening for livelihood in those slopes without intensive and mechanized agricultural practices. Home gardens are still widespread and historically have been an integral part of the subsistence agricultural systems of those villages along with sporadic shifting cultivation.¹¹⁹

Wild Edible Plants

I noticed through observation and interaction with large number of Mizo colleagues in Mizoram University as well other Mizo

friends who are residents of Aizawl that the wild edible plants are very popular in Mizoram for the preparation of food. These are collected by poor women (both young and old) from the forest areas and sold in the various bazaars. When I had rented a house at Chawlhmun locality which is near to Mizoram University Campus from September 2004 to October 2011, one of the Mizo lady who used to work in the morning hours daily for doing house-hold chores including cooking my food. She was a very poor woman who had to support her children since her husband had divorced her. After leaving my house, she used to go to the forest areas or even nearby uninhabited areas to collect wild edible plants to sell in the nearby market. Besides, she also maintained a small piggery and poultry. It was her major source of livelihood. I also used to see these wild edible plants being sold at open stalls outside the Mizoram University campus. When I shifted to the University quarter in November 2011 on my early morning walk around and inside the University campus, I used to come across women from Tanhril village walking down the slopes carrying their empty baskets (see the picture below) on their back to collect wild edible plants to be sold at one of the open stalls mentioned above. In fact, the scholars have been conducting research related to the availability of wild edible fruits and wild edible plants in Mizoram.¹²⁰ A. Kar, D. Bora, S.K. Borthakur, N.K. Goswami and D. Saharia in their study conducted in 2013 documented botanical name, family, local name, parts used and mode of preparation along with their parts sold in the local market and their prevailing prices.¹²¹ A total of 279 plant species belonging to 100 families were reported from the study area and out of these 35 species were sold in the market (Bara bazaar).¹²²

Vegetable Vendors

Though there are a number of vegetable vendors in different towns of Mizoram and I have visited these in Kolasib, Lunglei, Serchip, Champhai and the street vegetable markets 'Thakthing Market', 'Treasury Market', 'Bara Bazaar Market', 'Vaivakawn Market', and 'Bawngkawn Market' in Aizawl city. However, I conducted

intensive fieldwork mainly in ‘Vaivakawn bazaar’, ‘Thakthing bazaar’, ‘Ramrikawn bazar’, ‘Treasury Market’, ‘Bara Bazaar Market’, in and around Aizawl areas. I have also been a regular buyer of vegetables and fruits at the temporary bazaar outside the main gate of Mizoram University Campus, Tanhril.

I am providing here a brief account of the ‘Thakthing bazaar’ on the basis of my own visits as well as insights drawn from an unpublished M.Phil dissertation, entitled “Entrepreneurship Among Street Vendors Of Vegetables In Aizawl, Mizoram”, submitted by Rodi Lalremruati, Department of Commerce, School of Economics, Management and Information Sciences, Mizoram University, Aizawl, 2013.

Thakthing Bazaar

The history of ‘Thakthing Bazaar’ (morning bazar) can be traced to the early 1980s when around 20 street vendors sold vegetables on the pavements of the road from Sikulpuikawn to Thakthing. The Saturday market, popularly known as the ‘Zing Bazaar’, extends from Sikulpuikawn to Thakthing Tlang. All kinds of products from clothes, toiletries, household electrical appliances, footwear, vegetables, fruits, cereals, etc. are sold on the pavements by street vendors. A few Manipuri are also seen selling cooked food products. The market is dominated by women and they carry their minor children with them.

Rodi Lalremruati writes in her dissertation:

The word ‘Thakthing’ means Cinnamon, denoting that cinnamon was widely grown in this hill. They lay their products for sale on the pavement in the designated place from the early hours of Saturdays. Vendors from far-flung villages arrive in the market on Friday night and stay on the pavements often with their minor children.¹²³

The street from Thakthing to Thakthing Tlang is closed for vehicular traffic from the early hours of Saturday to 7:30 p.m. About 400 entrepreneurs sell vegetables in the Zing bazaar.¹²⁴ There are others also who sell other consumer products. The vendors are provided with cereals and cups of tea to sustain the day. These

women come from different villages in the vicinity of Aizawl city and majority of them have to walk to reach the market.¹²⁵ An interesting aspect is that all these women start camping on the night of Friday itself since they have to occupy various spaces for selling their vegetables, both seasonal as well as non-seasonal. The former are procured from their own kitchen gardens/fields, etc. while the later one have to be purchased from the wholesale market in Barra Bazaar so as to resell on retail basis to a variety of customers. One can generally see this market flooded with people right from early morning of every Saturday and continues whole of day till late evening. In fact one can buy leftover vegetables on cheaper prices late in the evening because most of the women don't want to carry back to their homes since these would be decaying.¹²⁶ In fact, a number of times the women vegetable vendors are left with no alternative but either to sell at throw away prices or just to dispose these off in the drain.¹²⁷

Local street markets play a central role in livelihood security of the ordinary Mizos and almost all of these are run by women vendors.

I have been visiting Bara Bazaar since 2004 on some of the Saturdays to buy vegetables, fruits and local turmeric powder as well raw turmeric. I used to talk to various vegetable women vendors sometimes in broken Mizo and other times in Hindi. Some of the women could speak in broken Hindi. Since I used to talk to different women vegetable sellers from time to time, it is difficult to recall the names of all but I do remember names of some of the women with whom I used to converse while buying vegetables. One such name, which I recall, is Pi Sangpuui.¹²⁸ In 2012, she was about 50 years of age. She used to come from a village located about 7 km from Bara Bazaar of Aizawl. She owned a small farm where she had been cultivating vegetables, ginger, etc. I recall one of her talks with her in October 2012:

I have been vending my vegetables, ginger, green leaves produced in my small farm for last 10 years in Bara Bazaar. I walk from my village along with other women and reach the bazaar in the evening of every Friday and sleep on the pavement where I occupy space. If I start early morning on Saturday, I may not get the space since other vendors would occupy it.

I earn about 8,000 rupees per month by selling the vegetables.¹²⁹

Once I enquired about the price of apple from a young girl who had occupied a small spot inside the shed of the Bara Bazaar. She quoted the price and started laughing, “Oh! Mr. Bean”. In fact, many Mizo girls and boys and children used to address me as Mr. Bean!. I jokingly told her, “If I am Mr. Bean, then you should charge less money since you like the T.V opera ‘Mr. Bean’. But she again laughed and refused to reduce the price of apples. I noticed that be it young women vendors or elderly ones they always smiled. I never noticed any signs of tension among them. I used to wonder that how is it that their life is full of struggles and despite that they are always laughing.

Treasury Square Vegetable Market

This vegetable and meat market is very close to main post office of Aizawl. In Mizo language, meat and vegetable market is called *Chawhmen* bazaar or *Chawhmen Zawrhna*.¹³⁰ It is a small bazaar occupying only one lane between Venghlui and Tuikual South pavements.¹³¹



Picture 3: Source: Lalarzoa Zara Ralte, 28 August 2013, <http://azassk.blogspot.in/2013/08/meat-vegetable-market-at-treasury.html>, assessed on 6/3/18



Picture 4: Source: Lalzarzoa Zara Ralte, 28 August 2013, <http://azassk.blogspot.in/2013/08/meat-vegetable-market-at-treasury.html>, assessed on 6/3/18



Picture 5: Source: Lalzarzoa Zara Ralte, 28 August 2013, <http://azassk.blogspot.in/2013/08/meat-vegetable-market-at-treasury.html>, assessed on 6/3/18



Picture 6: Source: Lalarzoa Zara Ralte, 28 August 2013, <http://azassk.blogspot.in/2013/08/meat-vegetable-market-at-treasury.html>, assessed on 6/3/18

The following pictures (pictures No. 7- 16) were taken by me at random from different parts of Aizawl city during my fieldwork during January-February 2018.



Picture 7



Picture 8: Vaiva Kawn Bazaar



Picture 9: Vaiva Kawn Bazaar



Picture 10: Vaiva Kawn Bazaar



Picture 11



Picture 12



Picture 13



Picture 14



Picture 15



Picture 16

Challenges faced by vegetable vendors

The vegetable vendors have been facing various problems in Aizawl.

Though the Mizoram government has been encouraging them to be self-reliant under the Mizoram Intohdel Policy (MIP) and produce vegetable for sale and consumption in the state but it has not provided them any incentive in terms of providing them space especially in Bara Bazaar of Aizawl for selling the vegetables.¹³²

Whenever they have found themselves a suitable location, in and around Bara Bazaar, they have been shooed away by the local authorities. These farmers find themselves pitted against the local brokers, known as Kharchawng, who are again mostly women. These city-based brokers have shops in the main market for which they pay a fixed monthly rent.¹³³

Another case of challenge faced by these vendors is that the Aizawl Municipal Corporation has introduced new rules for vegetable vendors sitting along the street between Horticulture and Agriculture Directorate building within the jurisdiction of Tuikual South Local Council. According to this new rules each vegetable vendor has to pay 50 rupees per day as vending fee¹³⁴.

Shops without shopkeepers

The uniqueness of Mizoram lies in that one may observe on the national highways shops without shopkeepers. While travelling from Aizawl to Kolasib, Lunglei, Saiha, Lawngtlai, I noticed at a number of places on the roadside a few stalls stocked with vegetables and few other commodities but I could not find any shopkeeper. It has also been observed by others. Thus, I noticed a write-up at google.com by Ikshit. Since the entire write-up is important, I am quoting it in full:

The Mizos have indigenously developed an innovative kind of grass-root level system of commerce where they have shops without shopkeepers. This novel system of commerce, based on honesty and goodwill is called ‘nghah lou dawr’. While you find cash locked inside cash registers and safe vaults in shops in the rest of India, in nghah lou dawrs (shops without shopkeepers) there is no one to guard the cash. Around 65 km from the state capital of Aizawl, it is a common sight to see such shops along the highway in Seling. At these shops fruits, vegetables, flowers and other items etc. are kept for sale with a price list and a small container to keep the cash in for the customers after making their purchase. The only thing missing in such shops are the shopkeepers. Thatched huts double up as shops displaying an array of vegetables, fruits, fish, occasional bottle of fruit juice and even fresh water snails, a local delicacy. The plastic container meant for depositing cash has words written “Pawisa Bawm” or “Pawisa Dahna”. The shoppers are also free to retrieve change from the container if they are short of it. They say that necessity is the mother of invention and this unique commercial system is no exception. With farmlands being few and expensive in the region, it is difficult for small time farmers to spare even one family member to sit at the shop. And guess what? Nobody’s complaining! The shopkeepers trust their customers and swear by them. They say that they have never failed them and nothing has ever gone missing from their shops.¹³⁵

The author of this article has also provided a few photographs to illustrate his point:

Picture-17



Picture 17



Picture 18



Picture-19: Source: <http://www.merineews.com/mobile/article/India/2016/08/01/the-indian-state-of-mizoram-in-the-north-east-has-shops-without-shopkeepers/15918386> p. 4 of https://www.google.co.in/search?q=vegetable+vendors+in+Mizoram&dcr=0&ei=oeudWoiE8XevgSC_pTwCA&start=30&sa=N&biw=1264&bih=743, accessed on 6/3/18

Kitchen Gardens

As stated above, there has been a good tradition of kitchen gardens in Mizoram right from pre-colonial to the contemporary times. When I used to take a bus (till I shifted to Mizoram University Campus) from Chawlhmun to my department in the university, I used to see a number of open spaces that had not been occupied, and the adjoining villagers would turn them into vegetable gardens. It is true of all the small towns as well as the rural areas in Mizoram. I witnessed these during my fieldwork in different parts of the state. One of my respondents from Mizoram University, Aizawl, informed me through her childhood memories that it was very common among people residing in Aizawl, specifically those who had large compounds attached to their houses used to make kitchen gardens.

Rooftop gardens

I have been observing that a large number of Mizos convert rooftops of their houses into kitchen gardens. These are basically produced on small scale for salad and adds-on and also to get fresh organic vegetables. I observed this during my fieldwork at Aizawl, Serchip, Lunglei, Saiha, Champhai and Kolasib.

The following are some of the pictures of roomtop gardens taken by me during my fieldwork (Pictures 20-22):



Picture 20: Roof Garden (Kolasib Town)



Picture 21



Picture 22

The government of Mizoram has been encouraging people to develop kitchen gardens and grow nutritious vegetables. The women are also being trained to develop nutritional kitchen gardens.

Kitchen Gardens in Schools

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, have been persuading different states to create consciousness among the rural schools to introduce kitchen gardens so as to enable the students to get fresh, organic and nutritious vegetables during the Mid-Day Meal. For this even a workshop was organized at Bhubaneswar from 13-14 November 2017.¹³⁶

In Mizoram, certain schools, especially in the rural areas and small towns, have started their own kitchen gardens. One of my respondents who had visited almost all the schools in Mizoram in connection with inspection related to monitoring of the Mid-Day Meal scheme and informed me that only a few schools have developed kitchen gardens for getting fresh vegetables along with their Mid-Day Meal. These gardens were collectively developed through social service performed by all the students concerned. However, during dry season (especially during winter), when there is paucity of water, the villagers collectively gift vegetables to these schools as add-on.¹³⁷

Conclusion

To sum up: The agricultural practices of the Mizos for the production of food grains revolved around Jhumming (shifting cultivation). It was fairly viable system but when the area was annexed by the British, this system of agricultural practice came under attack and the colonial officials introduced wet rice cultivation in certain areas. However, the Mizos continued with the earlier practices also. The officials introduced new crops so as to extract more revenues. The shifting cultivation continued to be under attack on the part of the Mizoram government in the post-independent period. The government introduced New Land Use



Picture 23: Source: http://mdm.nic.in/Files/Workshop/2017-18/PPT_Bhubaneswar/PDF/Kitchen%20Garden%20ppt.pdf

policy the consequence of which has not been healthy. Besides agricultural practices, Mizos also hunted animals, birds and practiced fishing as sources of food. There has been progressive development of gardens since pre-colonial times. In this regard, the vegetable vendors have been earning their livelihood by means of sale of vegetables. But the Mizos used to suffer temporarily from food scarcity as a result of ecological crisis emanating from Bamboo flowering which is the subject-matter of the next chapter.

NOTES

1. The concept of 'Zomia' was firstly used by Willem van Schendel in his work, see Willem Van Schendel, "The Invention of the 'Jummas': State Formation and Ethnicity in Southeastern Bangladesh", *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Feb., 1992), pp. 95-128. It was then further developed by James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press,

New Haven and London, 2009.

In this book, James C. Scott provides us a history of about 100 million people who live in a vast hill and mountain zone that runs across South west China (Sichuan, Guizhou, Yunnan, Guanxi, and Guangdong), northeast India, northern Burma, and parts of Southeast Asian countries (Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam) and Bangladesh. These populations fled into the hills over the course of two millennia, he argues, to avoid the imposition of slavery, indentured labour, and taxes by expanding states. There they evolved languages, economies, and ways of life designed to keep the state at bay.

2. P.S. Ramakrishnan, *Shifting Agriculture and Sustainable Development: An Interdisciplinary Study from North-Eastern India*. MAB Series, Volume 10, UNESCO, Paris, 1992; also see 'Shifting Cultivation in North East India', North East India Council for Social Science Research, Shillong, 1976. In the context of shifting cultivation in Mizoram the literature consulted by me was: J.M. Das, *A Study of the Land System of Mizoram*, Law Research institute, Eastern Region, Guwahati High Court, Guwahati, 1990; ORESTES ROSANGA, *The Economic History Of Mizoram From 1900-1940*, Ph.D Thesis (unpublished), Department of History, University of Delhi, 1990; R.L. Singh, *India - A Regional Geography*, National Geographical Society of India, Varanasi, 1991; Animesh Ray, *Mizoram*, National Book trust, New Delhi, 1993; Thangchungnunga, *The Problem of Land Utilisation and the Place of Land Resources in The Economic Life of The Mizo Society*, Ph.D thesis (unpublished), Department of Economics, North East Hill University, Mizoram Campus, Aizawl, 1993; Lianzela, *Economic Development of Mizoram*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1994; Lalrinawma, *Mizoram - History and Cultural Identity, 1890-1947*, Spectrum Publications. Guwahati, 1995; Daman Singh, *The Last Frontier, People and Forests in Mizoram*, Tata Energy Research Institute, New Delhi, 1996; U. Shankar, Tawnenga and R.S. Tripathi, "Evaluating Second Year Cropping on Jhum Fallows in Mizoram, North-Eastern India - Phytomass Dynamics and Primary Productivity", *Journal of Biosciences*, 1996 vol. 21, pp. 563-575; Lalungurliana Sailo, *Economic Changes and Social Evolution: Mizoram (1870-1960)*, Ph.D Thesis (unpublished), Department of History, School of Social Sciences, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 2004.
3. David Kyles, *Lorrain of the Lushais: Romance and Realism on The*

North-East Frontier Of India, The Cary Press, London, (Arhive of Aizawl Theological College) year of publication not mentioned. (Ch. 1 The Headhunters Who Lost Their Heart).

4. See P.D. Stracey, 'A note on Nagaland', *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*, vol.64, 1967, pp. 440-446; D. Borah and N.R. Goswami, *A Comparative Study of Crop Production under Shifting and Terrace Cultivation* (a case study in the Garo hills, Meghalaya). Ad hoc Study 35, Agro-Economic Research Centre for North-East India, Jorhat, 1973; A.P. Dwivedi, 1993, *Forests: The Ecological Ramifications*. Natraj Publishers, Dehradun; 1993; R.R. Rao and P.K. Hajra, 'Floristic Diversity of the Eastern Himalaya in a Conservation Perspective' *Proceedings of the Indian Academy of Sciences* (Animal Sciences/Plant Science Supplement), 1986, November: 103-125; C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival*, Oxford University Press, Delhi; M. Gadgil, and R. Guha, 1992, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1982.
5. All these generalizations are based on these works: Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966; H. Conklin, 'An Ethno Ecological Approach to Shifting Agriculture', pp. 221-233', in A.P. Vayda (ed), *Environment and Cultural Behaviour*, Academic Press, New York, 1969; O. Horst, 'The Persistence of Milpa Agriculture in Highland Guatemala', *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 1989, volume 9, pp. 13-29; M.J. Eden, 'Traditional Shifting Cultivation and the Tropical Forest System', *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 1987, volume 2, pp. 340-343; R. Guha, 'Fighting for the Forest: State Forestry and Social Change in Tribal India', pp. 20-37, in O. Mendelsohn and U. Baxi (eds), *The Rights of Subordinated Peoples*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1994; M. Gadgil and R. Guha, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1992; P.S. Ramakrishnan, *Shifting Agriculture and Sustainable Development: An Interdisciplinary Study from North-Eastern India*. MAB Series, Volume 10, UNESCO, Paris, 1992; T.R. Shankar Raman, 'Jhum: Shifting Openions', *Seminar*, 2000, Issue No. 486, pp. 1-8; B.D. Sharma, *Shifting Cultivators & Their Development*, Sahyog Pustak Kutir (Trust), New Delhi, 2003; U. Shankar, Tawnenga and R.S. Tripathi, 1996, 'Evaluating Second Year Cropping on Jhum Fallows in Mizoram, North-Eastern India – Phytomass Dynamics and Primary Productivity', *Journal of Biosciences*, 21: 563-575.

6. See Daman Singh, *The Last Frontier, People and Forests in Mizoram*, Tata Energy Research Institute, New Delhi, 1996; U. Shankar, Tawnenga and R.S. Tripathi, 'Evaluating Second Year Cropping on Jhum Fallows in Mizoram, North-Eastern India – Phytomass Dynamics and Primary Productivity', *Journal of Biosciences*, 1996 vol. 21, pp. 563-575.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid. Here it is worthwhile to refer to Clifford Geertz's work on Indonesia. In a very educative chapter on comparison between Sweden cultivation and Permanent wet rice cultivation in Indonesia, he argues that the former is more ecologically sustainable as compared to the later. See Clifford Geertz, "Two Types Of Ecosystems" in Clifford Geertz, *Agricultural Involution: The Process of Ecological Change in Indonesia*, University Of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966, pp. 12-37. (Specifically pp. 15-37 dealing with swidden cultivation).
9. R.G. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872*, op. cit., p. 74.
10. Officiating superintendent, Lushai-Hills to I.H. Burkill, ESQ, Officiating Reporter on Economic Products to the Government of India, Indian Museum, Calcutta, letter No. B/26 dated 10 December 1903, Agriculture file CB-1 (A-8), Mizoram state Archives, Aizawl.
11. I.H. Burkill, ESQ, , Officiating Reporter on Economic Products to the Government of India, Indian Museum, Calcutta to Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Aijal, Assam, letter No.26 famp dated 23 January 1904, Agriculture file CB-1(A-8), Mizoram state Archives, Aizawl.
12. Director, Department of Agriculture, Eastern Bengal and Assam to The Superintendent, Lushai Hills, dated Shillong, 26 December 1908, File No. Agriculture File: CB-I(File No. A-11) MSA.
13. John Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, London, 1912 (reprint Aizawl, 1975), p. 112.
14. Thomas H. Lewin, *A Fly on the Wheel or How I Helped to Govern India*, (Rpt. Aizawl, 1977), p. 287.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. See John Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clan*, op. cit; N.E. Parry, *The Lakhers*, Shillong, 1932; B. Lalthangliana, *Culture And Folklore of Mizoram*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Delhi, 2005, pp. 65-68.
18. Lal Biak Thanga, *The Mizos: A Study in Racial Personality*, United Publishers, Gauhati, 1978, p. 88.

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125. Ibid. I have also visited this bazar a number of times on Saturdays right from 2004 to 2015.
126. Ibid.
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128. The meaning of 'pi' is: 'madame', 'smt', etc.
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meets-after-5-years/ p. 4. of [https://www.google.co.in/search?q=vegetable+vendors+in+Mizoram &dcr=0&ei=oeudWoiIE8XevgSC_pTwCA&start=30&sa=N&biw=1264&bih=743](https://www.google.co.in/search?q=vegetable+vendors+in+Mizoram&dcr=0&ei=oeudWoiIE8XevgSC_pTwCA&start=30&sa=N&biw=1264&bih=743), accessed on 6/3/18.

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CHAPTER 3

Ecological Phenomenon of Bamboo Flowering and Food Crisis

Introduction

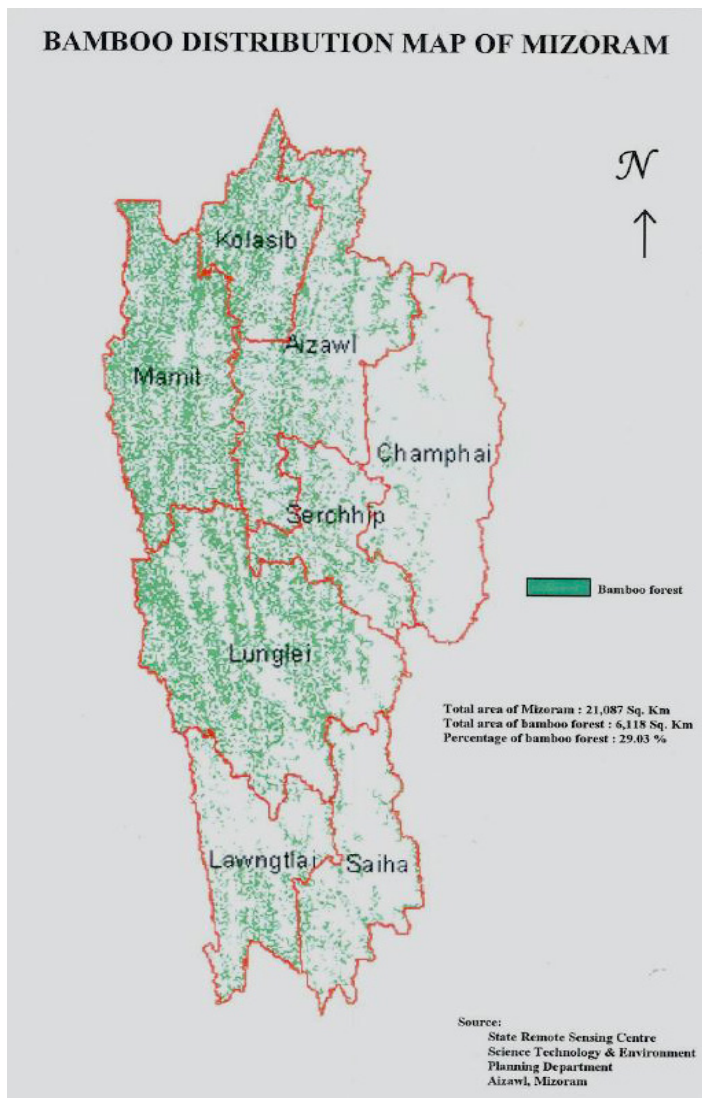
Bamboos are woody monocots and belong to the family Gramineae.¹ It is assumed to be the fastest growing plant.² Bedell, on the basis of literature available in 1997, states:

There are 75 genera of bamboos comprising about 1250 species excluding the ones not yet described and named. They vary in height from 15 cm to over 30 metres and occur mostly in Asia and south America and to a limited extent in Africa.³

Sharma⁴ and Soderstrom⁵ have reported about 75 genera and 1250 species, distributed in different parts of the world whereas Ohrnberger and Goerrings mention approximately 110 genera and 1010-1400 species.⁶ However, Sarkar mentions about 51 genera and over 1000 species of bamboo in the world.⁷ In the north-eastern region of India, bamboo diversity is quite rich, with about 63 species belonging to 15 genera.⁸

Bamboo area of Mizoram state is highest in India (49.1 per cent to the forest cover of the state)⁹. There are “about 16 species of bamboo in Mizoram in North-East India, the most abundant are the *Melocanna bambusoides* (called ‘Mautak’ in Mizo).”¹⁰

The following map based on the remote state sensing Centre Science Technology & Environment Planning Department, Aizawl, Mizoram, represents the bamboo distribution in different regions of this state.



Total Area of Mizoram : 21,087 Sq. Km

Total area of bamboo forest 7091.66 sq. km (33.63% of total geographical area)

Number of bamboo species found: 25 species

Melocanna baccifera: about 80%

Other bamboos: about 20% (Source : F. Lalnunmawia).¹¹

Bamboo is vital to the material as well as cultural needs of the people of the North-East states in general and Mizoram in particular. Thus T.H. Lewin, writing about the importance of bamboo in the lives of the hill people of Chittagong in particular and that of the people of south-eastern India, comments:

The bamboo is literally his staff of life. He builds his house of the bamboo; he fertilizes his fields with its ashes; of its stem he makes vessels in which to carry water, with two bits of bamboo he can produce fire; its young and succulent shoots provide a dainty dinner dish; and he weaves his sleeping mat of fine slips thereof. The instruments with which his women weave their cotton are of bamboo. He makes drinking-cups of it, and his head at night rests on a bamboo pillow; his forts are built of it; he creches fish, makes baskets and stools, and thatches his house with the help of the bamboo. He smokes from a pipe of bamboo; and from bamboo ashes he obtains potash...The hill man would die without the bamboo.¹²

In fact, these remarks are equally valid for Mizos as well.

Bamboo Flowering

The phenomenon of Gregarious flowering and mast seeding of bamboo has been recognized by various scholars. Thus Geo. D. Fuller claims:

The simultaneous flowering at long intervals of many individuals of the same species has been recorded in many tropical and subtropical lands. The most remarkable record, extending (with some interruptions) back to 292 A.D., is that of a bamboo, *Phyllostachys puberula*, a native of China and Japan. All the individuals of this plant, however widely separated, have bloomed simultaneously every 60 years and then have died, and been replaced by seedlings. *Bambusa arundinacea*, of India, is known to flower simultaneously every 32 years, while some of the bamboos of southern Brazil are said to blossom at intervals of 13 years.¹³

Janzen argues that "Bamboo flowering intervals are genetically triggered and range from less than 10 years to more than 120 years".¹⁴ P.E. Bedell maintains:

Flowering in bamboos is irregular and unpredictable in most species, and they may flower only once in a life time¹⁵... Flowering in bamboos

is unique and unpredictable and vary from species to species. Some interesting facts have been recorded from time to time in connection with flowering in bamboos, especially gregarious flowering. Species which show a marked tendency towards gregarious flowering at long intervals are bambusa arundinacea, B.Polymorpha, Melocanna bambusoides, and Teinostachyum helferii.¹⁶

In the context of Mizoram, J.Herbert Lorrain specified two distinct groups of bamboo flowering: 'The mautam group' and 'the ting-tam group. (*Thingtam*)'. The former flowers and sprouts its seeds in a cycle of every 50 years while the later every 30 years.¹⁷

Bamboo Flowering, Rodent Puzzle and Food Crisis

It has been observed that bamboo flowering causes rise in the population of rats. In fact the "impacts of rodents in both developing and developed countries are legendary"¹⁸. There are diverse myths generated in varied societies and these have been embedded in their languages. There are specific names given to the outbreak of rats: "rat floods" in Bangladesh¹⁹, "mouse plagues" in Australia²⁰, "nuu khi" ("mouse of the bamboo flower") in Laos;²¹; ratadas in South America to describe the outbreaks of rats²²; and in the context of Mizoram, Sajal Nag has termed it as 'rat-famine'²³.

A number of scholars have remarked about the scientific basis of the linkages between bamboo masting, rodent outbreaks, and famine in Mizoram²⁴; the Chittagong Hill Tract region of Bangladesh²⁵; and Chin and Rakhine states of Myanmar²⁶.

In the context of Mizoram C.Rokhuma who had floated "The Anti-famine Campaign Organization (A.F.C.O)" in 1951 had been running a laboratory in his house and was exploring the reasons why rats' population increases after eating the bamboo fruit, specifically that of 'Melacan Bambusoid' (Mautak). He sent sufficient quantity of such fruits to the forest Research Institute, Dehradun for chemical analysis and some of the findings about the composition of the fruit were:

1. Starch (on zero moisture basis)-50.290%
2. Protein -11.556%

3. Fat-0.231%
4. Ash-3.030%
5. Moisture (after sundrying) -9.400%
6. Others-26.943%²⁷

On this basis, he argues:

Considering the chemical contents and their respective quantities in bamboo fruits, it does not perhaps appear to be so high in nutritious value, nevertheless it is beyond doubt that every creature feeding on bamboo fruits became so fatty and chump, increased more milk production by cows feeding on them fish and other living being on water feeding on the rotten bamboo fruits were also no exception. The composition of its nutritious values may perhaps be such that they just behave as a well balanced diet for those feeding on them.²⁸

Whatever may have been the cause, the fact is that once bamboos start flowering the rats population rises alarmingly and starts attacking the crops and then granaries leading thereby to scarcity of food.²⁹

The phenomenon of bamboo flowering and consequent rise in the population of rats in Mizoram was observed by the British colonial officials in the 19th century and recorded the famines of 1862 and 1882. The officials generated a body of knowledge of the famine on the basis of their own observation and the indigenous peoples' testimonies³⁰. The bamboo flowering and 'food-crisis' of 1881 1911-12, 1931, 1959, 1979 and 2007 have been very well recorded.³¹ However, gradually the crisis used to cease after sometime. But the impact remained for quiet a long time.

The two missionaries, W. Savidge and J.H. Lorrain, who arrived in Lushai Hills in 1894 discovered that the famine of 1881-82 was still fresh in the memories of the people and in a letter dated 27 January 1924 to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Aijal they provide this information to him so as to take preparations for the impending bamboo flowering of 1929-1930:

When W. Savidge and I arrived in the North Lushai Hills thirty years ago (January 1894) the thingtam (sic) famine of 1881-82 with all its hardship, suffering and death, was still fresh in the minds of the people

and was naturally often talked about. As Mackenzie says in his 'North East Frontier of Bengal' (p.325) 'the famine arose, according to the concurrent testimony of all persons concerned, from the depredations of rats'. It was doubtless aggravated (sic) by a succession of poor harvests prior to the seeding and drying down of the rawthing and other bamboos belonging to that group, but the universal testimony even today is that the famine itself was caused by the swarms of rats which followed that phenomenon. From all I have been able to gather from the Lushais who experienced that famine it appears that the rats began to get more than ordinarily troublesome. Some years before the simultaneous seeding of the rawthing (sic) bamboos, but as soon as the seeding was over they increased to such an extent that no human power could save the crops from their depredation. Exactly the same thing happened before and after the seeding of the mau (sic) bamboos in 1911, & it is because I lived through the heartbreaking experiences of the mautam (sic) famine of 1911-12...³²

Herbert Lorrain, the missionary had witnessed himself the 'mautam' of 1911-12, also reported to the head-quarters of Baptist mission in England the dismal condition caused by the famine in the annual report of 1911-12.³³

In the following sections, a humble attempt has been made to study the coping mechanism adopted by the tribes and also social, economic and ecological impact of the food crisis of 1861, 1881-1882, 1911-12, 1931-32 and 1959 in Mizoram. There is no doubt that each crisis had its own historical context which has been kept in mind in the process of discussion but some common themes arising out of each event have been taken concurrently.

Coping Strategies

The Mizo had evolved various mechanisms to cope up with the foodgrains crisis.

Alternative foods

Food choice is determined by a number of factors that include environmental, psychobiological and cultural factors.³⁴ Every society adopts a varied diet based on available plant and animal



Picture 24: Fruit of Mautak (*Melocanna baccifera*)

Source: *Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008*, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 25: Fruits of Mautak (*Melocanna baccifera*).

Source: *Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008*, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 26: Live rodent in paddy field at night.

Source: *Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008*, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 27: Fruit of Mautak chewed by Rodents

Source: *Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008*, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.

food.³⁵ it is generally accepted that what species societies judge as edible is largely dependent on cultural traditions.³⁶ “In the events where normal availability of food is disrupted,” say Antonia-Leda Matalas and Louis E. Grivetti, “societal mechanisms are fundamentally challenged and the need for survival becomes paramount”³⁷. “In this context,” say Antonia-Leda Matalas and Louis E. Grivetti, “the term ‘famine foods’ has been used to describe foods that serve as a food basis during critical periods of shortage, either during the pre-harvest ‘hungry-months’ or during acute shortages.”³⁸ Wild plants are among the most significant

famine foods, being exploited extensively by traditional societies as an alternative source of nutrients³⁹.

Mizo also had taken resort to wild plants as an alternative food. Some of these are:

Wild Sago

One of the ‘alternative foods’ was the sago palm which ‘kept many poor people from starvation’⁴⁰. F.W. Savidge a Christian missionaries working among Mizos in Southern part of Mizoram has provided in his report of the famine of 1911-12 in detail the method of processing this food:

They dry, pound, and sift the pith of the palm, and then make the powder into a kind of dumpling, which is wrapped in a leaf and boiled. The result is a very sticky insipid mass full of gritty particles. This grittiness is no doubt due to the fact that the vertical fibers running through the pith are pounded up with the pith itself.⁴¹

Jungle Yams

Wild jam was another ‘famine food’ which ‘kept the people from starvation’⁴² F.W. Savidge narrates in his report:

The plant itself is a creeper. The upper part of the root is not edible, but lower down it changes into a long tuber rich in starch and somewhat resembling the potato in taste. The root is vertical and often very long, and to get out the tuber the Lushais frequently have to dig to a great depth in very stony soil. The man who holds the record in one village dug down 21 ft. before securing the yam he was after, but he was rewarded by a tuber weighing about 40 lbs.⁴³

The Mizos had to sweat for acquiring this plant. F.W. Savidge has provided a poignant account of a ‘native’ man and woman negotiating with a rock to reach the source to catch yam:

The forest in many parts is honeycombed with these yam pits-most of them from 40 to 10 ft. deep and large enough to admit the body of a man. Many of these holes have witnessed heartbreaking sights since the

famine began. Here is a full grown man sitting near one of them crying like a child, for after toiling for hours tracing the root of the yam down through the hard soil he has found his way blocked by a great rock and he knows that he will have to return weary and empty handed to his hungry family at home. At another hole we find a poor weak widow working with all her feeble strength to extract the tuber which she hopes to find when she gets deep enough down. A baby slumbers peacefully on her back, and two other little children amuse themselves in the forest while the mother toils on. But the earth is like iron and she gets so exhausted that that she frequently has to lie down among the rotting leaves and crawling insects to recover her strength. If she succeeds before nightfall in getting out enough of the yam to keep the wolf from the door until the morrow, she will go home happy and thankful, and if not, some kind neighbor almost as poor as she will perhaps give the children at any rate something to eat.⁴⁴

In fact, the yam played a role of risk insurance since it was kept for rare emergencies:

By tradition, the hill people never dug out jungle yam or roots indiscriminately. These were always kept for rare emergencies.⁴⁵

Killing and Eating Rodents

Another alternative food for survival was eating of rodents. F.W. Savidge reported that the boarders in the school run by him had 'caught hundreds of rats'. They roasted and consumed these.⁴⁶ In fact, killing rats was perceived by the people not only as a defense against destruction of crops but also a means of alternative or 'famine' food.⁴⁷ Thus, C. Rokhuma who had been visiting various villages quotes here from the story as narrated to him by K. Laltawna of Diitlang village to the south-west of Lunglei describes:

When the time for harvest of early paddy is about to happen, practically speaking myself and rats fight for those paddy and I simply harvest them before the onset of the peak period. I accordingly gather them in the thatched barn for ripening and subsequent thrashing. Even then the rats come for those harvested paddy and as a last resort I stand guard against such a destruction and eventuality. In this way, I kill hundred of rats with a mere club. One night I usually do, I go to my barn at around 8.00 p.m. to

kill the first batch of rats attacking paddy in the barn and I easily kill 120 nos, in no time. Then I go to my previous fire place just a little distance from the barn and waited for some hours. When returning to my barn again, I suddenly spot what look like a wild cat sitting in one corner on a gunny bag but surprisingly other rats do not afraid of him. Without having a second thought I hit him hard with my club but such a blow is far from a deadly bit and he merely shows me teeth as if he is trying to attack me by producing sneering sound. Immediately take out out my dow (dao) and kill him at last. When I approach near and examine under the torch, I find out to my surprise with no doubt that it is actually a rat, its front head being spotted with white colour and the whole length of tail is also white. The tail measures much more than the length of my arm with the body size twice my fist (in length) and about four fingers width. This incidence happened during the autumn season of 1977, and everybody who happened to see that animal was struck with awe?⁴⁸

C. Rokhuma has narrated many more such stories in his book.⁴⁹

Appearance of variety of predators: insects, birds, animals, etc.

“Thangnang” (swarm of insects)

Before the onset of the ‘Mautam’ of 1911-12, there appeared a swarm of insect locally called ‘Thangnang’ as from dusk till late at night towards high mountains in 1909 and 1910 with such a sound nothing less than the onset of a monsson hail and thunderstorm.”⁵⁰ ‘Thangnang’ is a kind of bug, just about the size of average grain of corn. The Mizos used to extract oil from these



Picture 28: Laying multiple catch type cage trap in the field



Picture 29: Liner Trap Barrier Fencing around jhum paddy with bamboo spread.
Source: Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 30: Trapped rodents (inside cage trap)
Source: Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 31: Trapped Rodent
Source: Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 32: Dead Rodents

Source: Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 33: Smoked dried rodents for consumption

Source: Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.



Picture 34: Smoked dried rodents and dead rodents

Source: Brief Record on Mizoram Mautam 2007-2008, Department of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), Mizoram, Aizawl, 2009.

insects in huge quantity for preparation of curry.⁵¹ They were “being collected from the branches with baskets and were used as a delicious dietary item also.”⁵² However neither the official colonial sources nor the missionary records mention this phenomenon anywhere. C. Rokhuma, however, revealed this on the basis of very extensive fieldwork in the rural areas. Perhaps there was a politics in representation on the part of colonial officials as well as the missionaries’ accounts. C. Rokhuma also provides another interesting account.

Then Mautam famine happened in 1911 in the whole country. Every bamboo in Mizoram bore flowers and fruits, and no animals in the jungle seemed to be contented with their usual habitat. Rats feeding on bamboo fruits and other creatures on land ...and streams became predators ...of smaller animals... that fed on bamboo flowers and fruits, all becoming chubby and fatty. Even the unwanted bats appeared to be exceedingly increased in numbers.⁵³

Other animals like squirrels, jungle fowls, pheasants, and smaller types of birds as well as river animals like crabs, fish etc. also increased during the bamboo flowering.⁵⁴ How to explain such occurrences? Clifford Geertz’s explanation of similar process in the context of his work on Indonesia may help us.

...there is a patterned interchange of energy among the various components of the ecosystem as living things take in material as food from their surroundings and discharge material back into those surroundings as waste products, a process Haeckel...aptly called ‘external physiology’. And as in internal physiology, so in external, the maintenance of system of equilibrium or homeostasis is the central organizing force, commonly referred to in this context as “the balance of nature.”⁵⁵

Social Capital

I am using social capital in a loose sense, that is, links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together. The ‘norms of reciprocity’ in pre-modern Mizo society may be taken as one of the examples of social capital. It can also be used in the manner Nan Lin has

used in his book *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*, that is, social capital, or resources accessed through such connections and relations, as critical for achieving goals for individuals, social groups, organizations, and communities.⁵⁶

The Mizo concept of 'sharing' can be taken as one of the examples of social capital. It was embedded in folktales, folk songs and their daily lives. The Mizo concept of 'Tlawmngaihna' brings out very clearly. It was an ethical, moral code for mutual help in face of any crisis. Though the meaning of concept has been changing from time to time but its essence remains the same. This concept was also appropriated by the missionaries and later on by civil society organizations, specifically 'Young Mizo Association'. A famous Mizo proverb says: "*Sem sem dam dam, Ei bil thi thi*" (*Those who shares would live, Those who eat alone would die*) is an apt example of this⁵⁷.

'Mautam' songs by a popular poet "Awithangpa"⁵⁸ embody this theme very well. He lived between 1885 and 1965 and thus witnessed three bamboo flowerings during his life time:

- i. "...*Mau tam mahse lungphang lo la Nikhum pa,
Lalsiamlianpa Sawmfang a dum der dur ngai e;
Nitin chhun rawlah i ring dun ang.*"

Roughly translated as:

"...Do not be anxious even if the Mautam come Nikhum pa
Lalsiamlianpa has very well grown paddies;
Let's share them for our lunch every day."⁵⁹

Distribution of surplus foodgrains from previous year during 1911-12 'famine' to the rest of the village is a good example of the sharing culture in the society. For example C.Rokhuma writes about a village:

While the Mautam famine happened in the east, it also posed no ominous threats to those living in the western part of the country like in Hachhek range. However, at that very year, the actual famine did not happen in the west, rather they were blessed with bountry in foodgrain harvest, some having 'Mautlawnzawn' i.e. a heap of grain as high as bamboo (more

than 500 phur, one phur=(3 tins of Kerosene oil), some having 'Silai zawn' (about 500 phur), Hreihawn (about 400 phur), Tuhazawa (about 300 phur), Kakzawn (about 200 phur) etc. in every village. Due to this, at the village of Shri Hrangvunga, Chieftain of Bungmun, Foodgrains were stored ... were in fact, far in excess of 1000 phur. At that time, the total population of Mizram was about 91,024 (roughly equivalent to the present day population in Aizawl town) and such quantity of grain could be of great help at that time. Also, we can imagine there would be a huge surplus for every family to those particular areas in that year.⁶⁰

During the bamboo flowering of 1911-12 again the help came from other villages. In this respect, C. Rokhuma writes:

From every corner of Mizoram people started coming for food to the western part of the country namely; Bungmun village and the nearby areas where food grains were stocked ... The coming and going of paddy-laden people were to be seen all day long in the Haebhek range, such were the days which reflected in the names of soe new-born babies as Khawtinehawma (chawm literally means feeding every village), Khawtindawla (means supporting every village), Khawtinkhuma (means surpassing every village), etc.⁶¹

C. Rokuma writes about another issue of resolving the crisis faced by the less affluent during shortage:

Certain people, particularly the less affluent ones, could not usually cultivate the best part of land, but usually did so at the periphery of the main fields of others. In such cases there used to be more destruction from wild animals, pests and other such factors. To safeguard their jhums against such eventuality, certain measures like as 'dai' and 'perngo' as locally known had been made around their jhums. Since such were ways of earning livelihood, the chieftain and elders sat together and fixed the price of paddy for the village and made arrangement for the have-nots from have-ones. This sustained the whole village from the grips of misery and suffering. On the other hand, those having rich harvest on such occasions were respected and honoured by all, were considered to be saviours of the village and their progeny also took after their status in their names such as Laikhawenhanga etc. meaning 'saving the village'.⁶²

The Role of Zawlbuk (bachelors' dormitory)

In this regard C.Rokhuma reminiscences:

I went to Phaileng West to work as a school teacher in 1935 and at that time the huge quantity of paddy contributed as provided fund was kept inside Zawlbuk. As this could not be sold at the usual rate due to bountiful harvest, the then non believers used to purchase then @Rs.1 per 15 tias for making local wine. The inhabitants in the east part of the country also produced huge surplus grains at that time. It was said that Rs.10 could fetch (120) phur (about 160 tins of Kerosene Oil) during these days. If we think of such time, it now appears to be a mere old story, just unthinkable for the present generation.⁶³

Relief by the Colonial State and Christian Missionaries

The Christian missionaries also helped the people in providing relief during the famine of 1911-12. Thus D.E. Jones of the Presbyterian Church reports:

There are seven regular evangelists with large Districts under their care, but owing to the famine they were unable to travel as much as usual. One of them, who did not live in his District, made great efforts to reach his own people, carrying rice on his back so as to have food on his way. Strangers always find hospitality in distant villages, but last year few could offer it.⁶⁴

The government of Mizoram provided relief in terms of 'lending' rice to the chiefs with the stipulation that it has to be repaid at a later stage. Thus, in a letter dated 10-10-11 addressed to the Head Constable Sairang, the Superintendent, Lushai Hills writes:

Lalthangvunga has been allowed to purchase 80 (eighty) mounds of government rice on arrival at Sairang on credit. Please allow them the amount of rice and take proper receipts. He should return to you the bags.⁶⁵

The missionaries had appealed, during 1920s, to the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to make preparations for the impending '*Thangtam*' which was likely to ensue in 1931 or even earlier. Thus, in a letter dated 27 January 1924 addressed to the

Superintendent, Lushai Hills, Aijal, Rev. J.H. Lorrain, Baptist Mission, Lungleh, South Lushai Hills, writes:

I am taking the liberty to write to you regarding the expected thingtam famine ... that I am so desirous that the Government should do something to provide against the thingtam (sic) famine which, according to universal Lushai belief, is fast approaching. Presuming that what we may call the thingtam (sic) and mautam (sic) groups of bamboos seed at intervals of 50 years respectively, the thingtam (sic) group, which was seeded in the spring of 1881 and was followed by the destruction of the crops that same autumn by that rats, will be due to seed again in 1931 -- seven years hence. But as the exact dates of such famines in Lushai prior to that of 1881-82 are not procurable, it is quite possible -- as many Lushais hold that the period is one of less than 50 years, and, that being so, the thingtam (sic) famine may be upon us in less than 7 years from now.

From my long experience in the Lushai Hills I feel that it is hopeless to expect the people of their own accord to prepare against the time of famine which they all believe to be coming. There are individuals here & there who are making provision by storing up a certain amount of rice, but, unless the government step in & and passes orders which shall make thrift & forethought compulsory, nothing that we can say by way of advice or admonition will be of much avail...⁶⁶

Therefore, Superintendent, Lushai Hills, had issued various notifications to the Circle Interpreters for apprising the authorities about any symptoms of bamboo flowering. One of such a notice, dated 27 March 1925, was:

1. Circle interpreter zawng zawngin mahni bial chhungah eng ang mau nge par tawha, rah tawh, tun kum thum chhung khan, a par hun leh a rah hun rang takin report nghal tur a ni.
2. Circle interpreter zawng zawngin tun lai in eng mau nge par report tur a ni.
3. Circle interpreter zawng zawngin tun lai in eng mau nge rah report tur a ni.
4. Circle interpreter zawng zawngin eng ang mau nge kum in ah emaw, nakum ah emaw rah dawn, khawiah nge a rahna hmun chu report tur a ni."

The English translation is:

1. All the Circle interpreters must report the type of bamboos flower, fruit within each of their circle during these three years along with the time of flowering and fruiting.
2. All the Circle interpreters must report what kind of bamboos flower these days.
3. All the Circle interpreters must report what kind of bamboos fruit these days.
4. All the Circle interpreters must report what kinds of bamboos are expected to fruit this year or the next year along with the place where these bamboos will fruit.”⁶⁷

Similarly, in another notice sent by the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, to the Circle interpreters, it was:

I bial chhung zawng zawnga lalte mitin hnena he thil pawimawh zia hi hrilh tir leh theihtawpa zawm hram turin hrilh ang che.

Tuna chin kum reilo te ah Thingtam nasa pui ka halo thleng dawn tih mitin in an ring theuhva. Chuvangin a lo thlen hun a mangan luat lutuk loh nan heti kum athat lai rih hian lo in rinlawka tulin a tha em em dawn ani. Tichuan a she sam a lo la thlen hmaa buh him tak leh that ala thar chhung hian kumtin in mitin in buh tih hlun hi lo tum zel sela a tha ang. Theih sela chu tun vah lai buh thar hi an thar zawng zawng hmun 7 a thena hmun khat tampui lo thlen huna ei atan tiin tawh lo turin lo dah hrng tan sela, tin chuta chin chu alo thlen hma chu an kum tin buh thar chu hmun 5 a thena hmun khat chu chutiang ang chuan lo kheh hram zel sela tichuan thingtam lo thleng mahsela eitur tlachhamin an mangang huah lovang. Tin buh hlui hi alo chhia ang tih an hlauh leh a hlui aiah chuan a thar dah sela a hlui chu a thar ai chuan ei sela atha tur a ni. Tichuan chhiat tih a awm lovang.

The English translation is:

Please inform all the chiefs within your circle how important this notice is and tell them to obey it as good as possible. We all believe that Thingtam is occurring after few years from now on. Therefore to prevent ourselves from the harsh effect of the famine, it is good that we prepare ourselves during these good harvest years. Thus, everyone must try to store their paddy before the Sehsam (bad harvest considered as warning

of famine) came and while we still harvest well. If possible, one-seventh of the current year's harvest may be stored and then from the next year onwards one-fifth may be stored until the famine year comes. Therefore even if the Thingam Famine comes, they will not starve nor worry. If they fear that the old paddy may get spoil, they may exchange the old paddy with the new ones and eat the old ones first. Hence there will be no calamity.⁶⁸

On the basis of information gathered from various sources N.E. Parry, Superintendent, Lushai Hills, undertook tour to the Lushai Hills to get his first hand information and it was during the tour that he wrote to The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar:

... there is a general anticipation in these hills that a famine will occur within the next two or three years. The Roting bamboos is now in the process of flowering and seeding and on previous occasions this has been followed by an enormous increase in the rats, who devour all the crops. In various parts of the district rats are already increasing greatly and though no serious damage has as yet been done to crops the signs all points unmistakably to recurrence of one of the periodical "Thingam" famines.⁶⁹

For coping with this impending disaster, Parry passed orders that rats must be killed in all villages.⁷⁰ Thus in one month itself in Aijal Sub-division "between 45 and 50,000 rats were killed."⁷¹ But Parry was not satisfied with this limited effort and wanted to take more drastic measures to kill the rats. Therefore, he suggested to the Commissioner:

it is most desirable that Government should be moved to place at my disposal a sufficient quantity of rat poison such as "Liverpool virus" or any other poison which has proved suitable for Indian conditions to enable to wage an effective campaign against the rats before their numbers have increased to such an extent as to be beyond control. The expenditure involved would be trifling compared to that which will probably be required if a famine occurs and would in fact be in the nature of an insurance, which might save us from heavy expenditure on gratuitous relief and loans as in 1911. I do not think that I am in anyway exaggerating the seriousness of the prospect and I am quite convinced

that the only way to deal with the menace successfully is to tackle it now before it has assumed alarming proportions. Crops this year are good but there is little money in the country and my experience in attempting to recover loan advances has shown we have very little reserve in the way of cash of people possess. If a famine occurs, I consider that a good deal of gratuitous relief is certain to be necessary and that even so, cases of great hardship are liable to occur. For these reasons I most strongly urge that we should start now seriously and endeavour to exterminate rats by all means in our power⁷².

It is evident from this that the Parry was more concerned with the cost of expenditure that would be incurred by the government on providing relief to the people once the 'famine' occurs. However, there was a difference of opinion on the question of killing rats by means of poison since it may not be effective.⁷³

Social, Political and Economic and Ecological Impact of Famines of 1862, 1882, 1911-12 and 1959

Migration

As a result of 'Thingtam' of 1881-82, a number of Mizos, both from the villages of eastern as well as western 'Mizoram', migrated to the cachar in search of food.⁷⁴

Thus, Alexander Mackenzie writes:

The earliest indication of the distress was the immigration of some eighty families from the village of Khalbom, followed by other subjects of eastern chiefs first, and afterwards of the western chiefs. But, though they were later in immigrating, it was the western villages which suffered most, and by far the largest number of refugees came down the valley of the Dullessury past Jhalnacherra...⁷⁵ At first their advent created considerable alarm among the tea-coolies and some managers of the gardens near their route; but it was soon found out that they were peaceably inclined, and were only anxious to earn a livelihood, either by the sale of bamboos and forest produce, by labour, or by begging. In order to facilitate the former end, the duty charged at the forest toll-stations on foreign timber and produce was taken off; and employment was offered both by the Forest Officer on clearing forest boundaries and by several

Tea Managers on cutting down the jungle on their grants. The Lushais, though not accustomed to hoeing or road-making, are skilful in jungle-clearing, and accepted work readily when offered them on high wages.⁷⁶

However, the colonial officials allowed temporary migration and once the crisis was over, they were made to return. In spite of the persuasion to return many evaded but ultimately they were forced by the officials to return to their native places.⁷⁷

During the famine of 1911-12, the reasons for migration were not only search of food but also to evade forced labour to be performed in lieu of the relief provided by the colonial officials. In fact, both these issues were entwined. The colonial officials imported food grains to provide relief as loan which had to be repaid. Here C. Rokhuma interweaves the question of famine, migration, relief and forced labour:

Such foodgrains were issued to the needy for repayment with interest. However, few people could do so due to lack of money and their credit was made good by way of forced labor. Hence, forced laborers in great number from villages had been requisitioned to go to Aizawl town off and on. Their main task was construction of water storage tank...This construction work was very exhaustive and time consuming, causing great suffering to the Mizo people at that time. Besides, the hardships caused by forced labor and the unfriendly attitude of the supervisors, the worst thing which hurt the feeling was that whether a person repaid his due in time or not, he would still be forced to go for labour at the cause of those who could not make good their dues in time⁷⁸...As Mizoram was recently annexed to the British India at that time there were so many pieces of work to be done, perhaps just to subjugate the people according to their will, like construction of roads, carrying the belonging of officials and soldiers by head load and very often, they were required to part with their eggs and chicken free of cost. Due to this type of frequent forced labour, many people moved out of Mizoram to such places like Lakhupur in Cachar District in the North east from Hachhek range to hilly tracts of Cachar in the north west, and from the western part of the country to Tripura. Those moving towards Tripura shifted in two batches and in great number. Prior to this movement, many people already migrated to Tripura⁷⁹...The first batch was headed by Mr. Dokhuma Sailo. In order to avoid the Mautam famine and to have separate chieftainship from the domine of Mr. Hrangyunga Sailo. They moved to Tripura around 1904

from Serhmun village, the place of Mr. Hrangvunga Sailo and where Mr. Taitesena was born and brought up...The second batch was headed by Mr. Hrangvunga Sailo chief of Bunghmun village and by this time they had already shifted from Serhmun to Bunghmun village. He moved along with 200 families to settle down at Zampui range in Tripura. They did not come back to Mizoram even after the famine was over. Perhaps that time might be around 1912 and the main reason also appeared to be due to forced labor and the difficulty faced by them for repayment of the relief measure at the time of famine and not because of the famine itself.⁸⁰

Epidemics

I could not trace any official records related to the Bamboo flowering of 1862 in Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl, but Liangkhaia, the first Mizo historian who wrote the book in Mizo, *Mizo Chanchin* (Mizo story), has mentioned that 'Mautam' of 1862 had affected the entire hills.⁸¹ The bamboo flowering of 1862 had also created conditions for epidemics which resulted into a number of deaths.⁸² The famine of 1882 was followed by cholera in Tipaimukh and a number of villagers died. According to V.L. Siama:

There were instances wherein an entire household succumbed to such epidemics with the result that no persons were available to dig the graves and that whatever food that could be procured from the jungle became so scarce that there were certain cases where an entire family would die from hunger while falling asleep.⁸³

However, Suhas Chatterjee argues that the plague had affected the economy of the Lushai country during the famine of 1881-1882.⁸⁴

In the 1911-12 'Mautam', the missionaries' reports from south Mizoram reveal that large number of people had died due to dysentery. F.W. Savidge reports:

There has been a good deal of sickness in the villages round us this year. Bowel complaints have been very common. These have been caused largely from the scarcity of proper food to eat. Many people have had a subsist entirely upon roots that grow wild in the jungle. Our medicines have been in great demand everywhere unfortunately some of the patients

have too much faith in the properties of our remedies, for they often put them under their pillows instead of in their mouths and imagine the result will be the same.⁸⁵

It seems more people died of diseases as compared to starvation deaths as a result of the 'Mautam' of 1911-12 as reported by medical missionary Dr. Fraser:

The Medical Work has increased in amount during the nine months, January to September, the average number of our-patient cases treated was about 2,000 a month. The number of in-patients was at time greater than could be accommodated in the Dispensary, so that some had to be admitted into the orphans' and schoolboys' houses for a while. Several came for treatment from a long distance, over 100 miles in some cases.⁸⁶

Highlighting further the impact of the famine of 1911-12, Fraser reports:

The Famine, due to the growing crops being destroyed by rats, continued during 1912 in many parts of Lushai, and caused much suffering and ill-health among the people. Outbreaks of Cholera in several Districts accompanied it, and carried off considerable number of victims. Many sad cases of destitute orphan children and other people had to be dealt with. Helped by the kind contributions towards the Lushai Famine Fund, opened by the Mission Directors, and by other gifts, we were enabled to relieve a good many sufferers.⁸⁷

Though the missionaries provided medical help it was very difficult to reach the interior villages for lack of proper roads and transportation system.

Famine as a Site of Peace as well as Conflict

The famine of 1881-82 created conditions for 'cessation of hostilities' between the chiefs as well with colonial State. Thus, an official reports:

...the pressure of famine began to be felt, and Poiboi, Khalkam and Lalhai met and agreed to a cessation of hostilities, while they sent to Cachar for food. Peace was maintained until the spring of the following year, when all fear of famine was at an end.⁸⁸

Suhas Chatterjee establishes the relationship of famine of 1881-82 with the 'raids':

The famine had crushed the economy of the hills. The Chiefs sold out their ivory, jewellery and other valuables for the sake of food; they exchanged their guns and other arms for food. They had lost half their numbers by plague pestilence and desertions. Many of their fighting men deserted or died. Their 'jhooms' were exhausted and even rubber which offered ample means of subsistence was failing. The trees had died out because of over-tapping. They had no means to raise money to purchase articles to which they got accustomed to of recent years, such as salt, tobacco, cloth etc. in short, they were reduced to a state of destitution. This acute depression precipitated the idea of plunder as the only means of effective survival.⁸⁹

Economic Dislocation

Tirthankar Roy, in his work *Natural Disasters and Indian History*, argues that all the disasters dislocate the livelihood of the people. He takes up three natural disasters, namely, earthquakes, flood and famine and argues that whether it is earthquake, flood or famine, there is "a relatively class-neutral distribution of the risk, that is, the rich and the poor both suffer."⁹⁰ He also contends that the 'public calamity is a great leveler'.⁹¹ But it does not seem to be applicable in our study. Even in the pre-colonial 19th century Mizoram as we have discussed in the preceding chapter there were processes of state-formation and a social group of elites constituting the chiefs and the 'Upas' (village council appointed by the chiefs who used to provide advice to the chiefs in various issues) had emerged who had money in cash and could afford to buy foodgrains from the three marts (bazaars/marts) established by the colonial officials on the frontiers of Cachar areas. Though the prices of the foodgrains had been hiked by the traders but somehow this social group could survive. No doubt they were constrained by the lack of proper roads yet they could manage to get their everyday food requirements.

By the 'Mautam' of 1911-12 though chiefs powers had been curtailed by the British Indian government yet they used to have

sufficient storage of grains. Besides the chiefs a new social group of educated persons who had been appointed in the lower echelons of government offices and into the church hierarchy as well could afford to buy rice from the markets at Aizawl, Lunglei towns, etc.

In the post-colonial period, during the 'Mautam' of 1959 there was further increase in the number of educated persons who had been employed. A social group of entrepreneurs also had emerged who could even sell the rice in the market. Therefore it was the poor who suffered most in all the periods of food crisis.

Political (mautam of 1959)

This famine has drawn the attention of a number of scholars because of the assumption that the 'insurgency' of 1966 lasting about 20 years was the direct result of the food crisis caused by the famine of 1959. However, during my fieldwork, I found that this famine is being remembered differently by different people and organizations. There were regional, village to village, family to family variations in terms of intensity of food crisis.⁹²

In fact, in certain areas where the intensity of famine was very high, it was found that the impact of 'insurgency' was far less as compared to the other areas where the crisis was of low intensity. Therefore, there was no one-to-one relationship between famine and 'insurgency'. In fact, different political parties remember it differently.

Though the Assam Government did provide relief by air-dropping but some of the gunny bag had broken as Nirmal Nibedan writes:

The Assam government was attempting to drop rice from the air. But some of the gunny bags broke upon the impact of the ground and the grains spread over vast areas.⁹³

Ecological

Earlier the Mizos used to kill rats by means of "locally made rat traps and 'Hnamtur' a kind of creeping plant whose roots are very effective poison to rodents but serves as good medicine for pigs."⁹⁴

In fact, the officials had also been taking keen interest and preparing for the next famine and also directing the people to kill rats.⁹⁵ Therefore, C. Rokhuma and the 'Anti-Famine Campaign Organization' distributed with the support of government huge quantities of rat poison as a precautionary measure right from 1959 onwards and during the Thingtam of 1977 huge number of rats had been killed through poison. It contained pesticides as well. Though no study has yet been conducted on its impact but definitely some pesticides must have been absorbed by the paddy fields which is very harmful for land, water and for human beings as well. It also disturbs the 'balance of nature' as we discussed in the section 1.a.iv. There is another dimension to this aspect which has been taken up by Clifford Geertz in another context. He cites the example drawn from Clarke⁹⁶:

Clarke, from whom the sheep-in-the pasture example is drawn, tells of ranchers who, disturbed by losses of young sheep to coyotes, slaughtered, through collective effort, nearly all coyotes in the immediate area. Following the removal of coyotes, the rabbits, field mice, and other small rodents, upon whom the coyotes had previously preyed, multiplied rapidly and made serious inroads on the grass of the pastures. When this was realized, the sheep men ceased to kill coyotes and instituted an elaborate program for the poisoning of rodents. The coyotes filtered in from the surrounding areas, but finding their natural rodent food now scarce, were forced to turn with even greater intensity to the young sheep as their only available source of food.⁹⁷

"The new findings in the science of ecology," says George Monbiot "show that you cannot safely disaggregate an ecosystem. The loss of one species often has severe consequences for species and systems to which it appears at first to be unconnected".⁹⁸

Conclusion

To conclude: The Mizos used to face temporary food-crisis resulting from ecological phenomena of bomboos flowering from time to time. However, they had devised coping mechanism and took resort to alternative food, generally termed as 'famine

food'. The food crisis did result into economic dislocation and the traditional society being having religious consciousness looked for solace in the new religion, that is Christianity. However, they accepted the new faith on their own terms and developed what may be termed as 'Mizo Christianity'.

NOTES

1. P.E. Bedell, *Taxonomy of Bamboos*, APC Publications Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1997, p. 3.
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3. P.E. Bedell, *Taxonomy of Bamboos*, op. cit., p. 59.
4. Y.M.L. Sharma, 1980 'Bamboos in the Asia- Pacific Region', in G.Lessard, and A.Chouinard, eds., *Bamboo Research in Asia*, IDRC, Canada: pp. 99-120, cited in L.K.Jha, op. cit., p. 1.
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6. D. Ohrnberger and J. Goerring, 1985. *The Bamboos of the World*, Int. Book Distributor, Dehra Dun, India, 1985 cited in L.K. Jha, op. cit., p. 1.
7. A.K. Sarkar, 1983. 'Bamboo: the grass trees', *J. Econ. Taxon. Bot.*, 4 (2): 347-356, cited in L.K. Jha, op. cit., p. 1.
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10. Anil Agarwal, Ravi Chopra, Kalpana Sharma (eds), 'The Bamboo Famine in Mizoram', in *The State of India's Environment: A Citizen's Report*, Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, 1982, p. 41
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13. Geo. D. Fuller, 'Gregarious Flowering', *Botanical Gazette*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (Mar., 1925), pp. 114-115 (p. 114), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2470809>, Accessed: 26/04/2014.
14. D.H. Janzen, 'Why Bamboos Wait so Long to Flower', *Annual Review of Ecology Systematics* 7 (1976) pp 347-391, cited in Ken Aplin and James Lalsiamliana, 'Chronicle and impacts of the 2005-09 mautam in Mizoram', in Grant R.Singleton, Steve R.Belmain, Peter R.Brown, and Bill Hardy (eds), *Rodent Outbreaks: Ecology and Impacts*, International Rice Research Institute, Los Banos (Philippines), 2010, p. 14.
15. P.E. Bedell, *Taxonomy of Bamboos*, op. cit., p. 4.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
17. Herbert Lorrain, 'Amidst Flowering Bamboos, Rats, And Famine', Report of 1912 of the B.M.S. Mission in the South Lushai Hills, Assam, The Annual Report Of Bms On Mizoram 1901-1938, Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn (Mizoram), Serkawn (Mizoram), 1983, p. 86; also see C.Rokhuma, 'The Periodic Famine in Mizoram' ch.1, in C. Rokhuma, *Tam Do Pawlin Engnge A Tih? (The Secret of Famines Found)* –In Lushai and English, Aizawl, 1988, p. 95 (publisher's name not mentioned, I found this book in one of files containing report of the Bamboo flowering of 1959. file c Mizoram State Archives, Aizawl. C. Rokhuma, however, argues that there used to be a third one:
 "Besides these two types of famine, there used to be the most severe one, as old saying goes, known as 'Thingpui Tam' in which men could barely sustain their lives by consuming ant-hills; and swines, deprived of proper food, could not produce any audible sound but just stood trembling against the hedge waiting for their dying date. The condition was so much that men could hardly muster their strength to catch hold of such half dead animals. No ones who witnessed that period among the living inhabitants in Mizoram could be found at present. It is, however, very strange to note that though it is called "Thingpui Tam", it is said to be Haakhia, a particular species of three that died but not these of Rothing as the name implies. This famine, though highly severe and horrible, appears to happen at a

very long interval of years and was not normally said to be one of these periodic famines indicated earlier.” Ibid., p. 95.

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22. F.M. Jaksic and M. Lima, 2003. ‘Myths and Facts on Ratadas: Bamboo Blooms, Rainfall Peaks and Rodent Outbreaks in South America. *Austral Ecol.*, vol. 28, 2003, pp. 237-251, cited in Grant R. Singleton, Steve R. Belmain, and Peter R. Brown, ‘Rodent Outbreaks: An Age-Old Issue with a Modern Appraisal’, op. cit., p. 3.
23. Sajal Nag, ‘Tribals, Rats, Famine, State and the Nation’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, March 24, 2001, pp. 1029-1033; Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers In North-East India, Bamboo-Flowers, Rat-Famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*, Manohar, 2008.
24. Sajal Nag, ‘Introduction’ in Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers In North-East India, Bamboo-Flowers, Rat-Famine and the Politics of Philanthropy (1881-2007)*, Manohar, 2008, pp. 15-57; Ken Aplin and James Lalsiamliana, ‘Chronicle and Impacts of the 2005-09 Mautam in Mizoram’, in Grant R. Singleton, Steve R. Belmain, Peter R. Brown, and Bill Hardy (eds.), *Rodent Outbreaks: Ecology and Impacts*, op. cit., pp. 13-47.

25. Steve R. Belmain, et. al, 'The Chittagong Story: Studies on the Ecology of Rat Floods and Bamboo Masting' in Grant R. Singleton, Steve R. Belmain, Peter R. Brown, and Bill Hardy (eds), *Rodent Outbreaks: Ecology and Impacts*, op. cit., pp. 49-64; S.K.M. Ahaduzzaman and Santosh K. Sarker, 'The Chittagong Story: A Regional Damage Assessment during a Rodent Population Outbreak', in Grant R. Singleton, Steve R. Belmain, Peter R. Brown, and Bill Hardy (eds), *Rodent Outbreaks: Ecology and Impacts*, op. cit., 65-78.
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27. C. Rokhuma, *Tam Do Pawlin Engnge A Tih? (The Secret of Famines Found)*, op. cit., p. 132.
28. Ibid., p. 132.
29. J. Herbert Lorrain, op. cit., p. 86.
30. Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers in North-East India*, op. cit.
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32. CB-23, G-290 (MSA)
33. Herbert Lorrain, 'Amidst Flowering Bamboos, Rats, And Famine' Report of 1912 of the B.M.S Mission in the South Lushai Hills, Assam, *The Annual Report Of Bms On Mizoram 1901-1938*, Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn (Mizoram), pp. 85-90.
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 41. Ibid.
 42. Ibid.
 43. Ibid., p. 88.
 44. Ibid., pp. 88-89.
 45. Nirmal Nibedon, *Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade*, Lancers Publishers, New Delhi, 1980, p. 36.
 46. F.W. Savidge, 'Report for 1911....' op. cit., p. 79; also see Herbert Lorrain, J. Herbert Lorrain, 'Amidst Flowering Bamboos, Rats, And Famine' op. cit., p. 86.
 47. The practice of eating rats on the part of the Mizo before coming into the fold of Christianity has been even noticed by J.H. Lorrain (Pu Buanga):
 "The Lushai children love baby rats- nice pink ones you know without any fur on them- they nurse them until they are tired and then alas poor little mouse is devoured- not by the pussy but by the little boy or girl. So when they grow up they love big full grown rats and go to much trouble in catching them." entry dated 16 April 1996 in *Log Book* maintained by J.H. Lorrain, *Log Book* (1889-1936), Archive maintained by Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, p. 55.
 48. C. Rokhum, op. cit., p. 136.

49. Ibid., pp. 136-139.
50. Ibid., p. 99.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., p. 100.
53. C. Rokhuma, op. cit., p. 101.
54. Ibid.
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56. See Nan Lin, *Social Capital: A Theory of Social Structure and Action*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.
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58. This was his pen name but actual name was Hmarlutvunga.
59. R. Vanlawma, *Awithangpa* (Aizawl: M.C. Lalrinthanga, 1989), p. 214, quoted by Nancy Lalrenmawii Rokhum, *Ethnic Memory And History: Recollection Of Bamboo Famine In Mizo Hills* (1959-1986), pp. 78-79; *Nikhumpa* and *Lalsiamlianpa* are the names of the persons.
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65. CB-I (File No. A-16) MSA
66. CB-23, G-290 (MSA)
67. Thupek. No.234 a/27.3.1925 (Order No. 27.3.1025), File No. CB 23, G-292 (MSA) I am indebted to one of my Ph.D scholars Miss Ruatkimi for translating this into English.
68. File No. CB 23, G-290 (MSA)
69. Letter No. 2143.G dated 19 January 1925 from N.E. Parry, The Superintendent, Lushai Hills to The Commissioner, Surma Valley and Hill Division, Silchar, CB 23, G-290 (Mizoram State Archives).
70. Ibid.
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CHAPTER 4

Food and Man-Nature Conflicts and Contradictions

Introduction

The Mizos' access to, and control and use of natural resources for production of food led them to conflict with other groups or forces. The conflict created various responses: non-violent and violent depending upon the situation. Even non-violent resistance, too, took different shades. Whatever the group, the zones of conflict created the food crisis for the society. How do different social groups dealt with conflict over food resources forms the subject matter of this chapter.

For the sake of convenience, the chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Pre-Colonial 19th century.
2. Colonialism and Christianity in Mizoram
3. Post-Colonial Period

Sources of Conflict in the Pre-Colonial 19th Century Mizoram/Lushai Hills

Raids and the Expeditions

Why the 'Mizos' used to conduct 'raids' against the communities residing in the frontier areas of the British empire? The various explanations have been provided by scholars. Vanlalringa Bawitlung argues that some of the sailo chiefs had become very

powerful in the 19th century because of the availability of firearms and were trying to subjugate the minor tribes and therefore they were in need of more labour for surplus food production.¹ The need for wealth in the form of (female and child) human labour is also one of the explanations provided by Jangkhomang Guite.² Sajal Nag provides the following explanation for demand of labour supply on the part of the chiefs:

In any manpower-short economy, control of labour was the source of power. Chiefs wanted to command as much manpower as possible, which was done either by attachment of free labour to him permanently or procurement of labour through kidnapping, which the most elementary mode of labour supply. After all, the Lushai economy survived on headhunting and kidnapping. The primary objective of headhunting raids was to kill and obtain human heads for the last rites of dead tribesmen and kidnapping people alive to replenish the labour supply. Such forced labour could be from war prisoners, neighbouring villages, tribes, or plainsmen living in the foothills.³

However, it was the women, argues Indrani Chatterjee which comprised major labour force.⁴ “Among all the hill people,” writes T.H. Lewin, woman “is the hardest worker, the chief toiler.”⁵ Writing about ‘*Impuichhung*’ a category of ‘Boi’, J. Shakespear says:

The Impuichhung are looked on as part of the chief’s household and so all the chief’s work in return for their food and shelter. The young men cut and cultivate the chief’s jhum and attend to his fish traps. The women and girls fetch up wood and water, clean the daily supply of rice, make cloths and weed the jhum, and look after the chief’s children. In return the boi get good food and live in the chief’s house.⁶

The question of labour for food production is also apparent in Colonel Lister’s Report.⁷ There was a shortage of labour for food production as a result of the famine of 1881-82 and some chiefs took resort to ‘plunder’ for survival.⁸

Imperial expansion

The colonial officials seem to have imperialist designs over the hill regions of south-east Bengal including the ‘Lushai hills’. It

is implicit even in T.H. Lewin's works. His writings are imbued with two opposite 'structures of feeling'⁹ simultaneously. A 'deconstructive' reading of his work *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, is a good example of such ambivalence. Thus, despite his critique of those incharge of the affairs of India, he had unflinching faith in the 'great continuing work' of the imperial masters. This work obviously was meant for English readers in Britain. In the introduction of this work he remarks:

The mighty empire of Hindostan is bound up by a hundred ties of interest with the present and future of England..... and the books relating anything of this far-off but no longer strange land of the East, are studied by all classes of English people with sentiments of growing attention and admiration for the great but unfinished work we are carrying there.¹⁰

But T.H. Lewin despite the valorization of 'the great but unfinished work we are caying on' is also impelled into a fundamental questioning of the enterprise by his innate humanness¹¹. While writing about the resources of the Chittagong hill district he writes:

Throughout the whole district are found large tracts of valuable forest trees. Teak is not indigenous, but thrives if planted...but the hitherto unsatisfactory relations existing between us and the more remote hill tribes have prevented any use being made of these otherwise valuable forest products.¹²

The 'more remote hill tribes' he is referring to were the various hill communities including the 'Lushais' who were preventing them from commercial use of the timber through raiding these areas. Another official a J. Knox Wight also highlights the importance of timber and rubber trade besides the suitability of the area for tea plantation:

With decent protection secured to the traders, a great impetus would be given to the timber trade. Valuable land well suited for tea is to be found in the South. The rubber trade may be revived, and it will be found remunerative to have pantations, as the soil and climate are well adapted to the growth of the plant.¹³

Therefore, J. Knox wight "advised the Government of Assam to take the entire responsibility of the Lushais."¹⁴ However, the

officials were divided in their views over exercising direct control over this region till the annexation of Upper Burma in 1885 with the British Indian empire after which the official policy seems to be undergoing a change in relations to the Lushai region.¹⁵

Tea Plantation and the Mizos

In the 19th century the European tea planters had expanded their areas of operation right upto the bordering regions of Cachar. Thus, R.G. Woodthorpe wrote:

The tea-gardens, which were originally confined to the northern part of the district, have of late years been sweeping further and further south, as enterprising individuals have been found to take grants from the Government for the cultivation of the tea-plant.¹⁶

In the process, large areas covered by forest had to be cleared for plantation. These 'zones of contact' were the sources for food production for the communities inhabiting Lushai Hills. Forests provided a source for not only hunting but also other forest products which they used to barter with bordering communities for other commodities which were necessary for their living.¹⁷ Among these the salt was the uppermost necessity for their sustenance.¹⁸ The importance of salt for the Lushais was also noticed by the early missionaries. Thus J.H. Lorrain's entry dated 14.03.1894 in his Log Book:

(The Lushais love of) the Lushai's eyes sparkle when we give salt out in the evening as a present with the wage or as wages just as though we were giving out pots of gold – only they like salt better than gold... to bring a refractory chief to his senses the government stopped the sale of salt in the bazaars. For the first 5 weeks it did not cause a straw. But when salt had all gone in their houses they began to feel the pinch. We gave out that we would pay workmen in salt (when building our house) we thus got all things up from Sairang by giving salt (we had wondered how we were going to get our good up) also plenty materials for building our house – simply besieged by men, women and children bringing wood, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, beans, sugarcane, fowls, eggs etc in exchange for salt until our storeroom was full up and our backyard one great pile

of wood. Workmen would sleep on verandah in order to be sure of work next morning¹⁹.

Returning to our argument about the expansion of tea plantation in the bordering regions of Lushai Hills, the Mizos apprehended that it would further encroach upon their resource areas. In a fascinating work, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, the ecological historians Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha have theorized such differencing modes of resource use as follows:

As one mode of resource use comes into contact with another mode organised on very different social and ecological principles, we expect the occurrence of substantial social strife. In fact the clash of two modes has invariably resulted in massive bursts of violent and sometimes genocidal conflict. One of the best documented of such conflict is the clash between the indigenous hunter-gatherer/shifting –cultivator populations of the New World on the one hand, and the advance guard of European colonists practising an altogether different system of agriculture on the other.²⁰

In this respect, H.K. Barpujari quoting the archival sources, specifically ‘Bengal Judicial Proceedings’ and ‘Foreign Political Proceedings’ brings out this anxiety on the part of the chiefs as reflected in these archival sources.²¹

The differing views by the chiefs and the colonial officials over these ‘resource’ areas have been also summed up by us In this aspect A.S. Reid :

...it had been discovered in 1855 that the tea plant was indigenous to Cachar, and soon after gardens, for the cultivation and production of this important article of commerce, began to be opened out in the southern part of the district, with rather a disquieting effect upon the neighbouring tribes, who fancied they saw possible encroachments upon their hereditary hunting grounds. The suspicion found expression in a raid upon the tea gardens of Loharband and Monierkhal in the beginning of 1869. The usual military demonstration followed, but on this occasion, owing to delay in the despatch of the force, lateness of the season and other causes, the troops employed were obliged to retire with the object in view unattained, and, as a result, our prestige with the wild tribes on

our frontier considerably diminished.”²²...the theoretical frontier laid down by Mr. Edgar a few months before and acquiesced in by Sukpilal, was not recognised even by the subjects of that chief, and, on the present occasion, the alleged grievance of the Lushais was that the tea planters cleared forests on the Cachar frontier, under the promised protection of the civil authorities, in tracts which were claimed by the former as their rightful hunting grounds, although regarded by us as well within the newly defined line.²³

In this regard Nirmal Nibedon writes:

The opening of a string of tea gardens in Cachar produced a rather disquieting effect upon the hillmen who viewed it as an encroachment upon their hereditary hunting grounds. So they struck often and dramatically.²⁴

“The quick advance of the tea planters into the hilly region,” argues Sajal Nag,

was a threat to the tribal land, their ancestral habitat, and their sovereignty. Their livelihoods were in danger too. It was not just tea gardens that were coming up in their land. Their forests were being depleted for timber and wild animals. The Lushais were expert collectors of rubber, which they sold to the traders from the plains. The rapid expansion of tea estates in the foothills of the Lushai Hills meant the loss of forest and this affected rubber collection of the tribes.²⁵

Thus, the chiefs became alarmed and therefore they led ‘raids’ on the tea plantation areas which led to encounter with the colonial army. However, the colonial rulers described their attack on the Lushai villages as ‘punitive expeditions’. There were a series of ‘punitive expeditions’ by the British army in the Mizo territories throughout the 19th century. Though in the official archive the term ‘punitive expedition’ is used but in practice it was colonial expansion. And the Mizo chiefs had sensed this expansion and, therefore, their ‘raids’ were in fact strategies for self-defence. The British Indian army had been burning the Mizo villages’ granaries and paddy fields and therefore we find that food basically became a weapon on the part of the colonial officials to terrorize the Mizo chiefs.²⁶

Therefore, these 'punitive expeditions' created food scarcity for the people of the Lushai Hills. For example, in the Lushai Expedition of 1871-1872, the colonial army destroyed their villages including the granaries:

Storehouses full of grain were found in each joom, which were all destroyed...two villages recently constructed were reached and burnt down...²⁷

"In the Lushai Expedition of 1871-1872", not only was the British satisfied with the destruction of their crops and the seizure of all the stored grains and domesticated animals, but also obstruct them to take up cultivation for the next year. Their main attempt was to cripple the back-bone of their economy in its totality. The destruction of the villages caused the inhabitants dispersed,²⁸ and wiped out their power to stand against the British.²⁹

During the Operations of the Northern Lushai Column in the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-1890, A.S. Reid writes:

The Lushais were driven out of their stockade with little difficulty, and their granaries and "joom" houses were destroyed. Several of the enemy were seen to be hit.³⁰

The conflict between the chiefs over 'resource use' and the colonial state culminated into the full-scale war between the two forces leading thereby the victory of the British Indian army and annexation of the Lushai hills by the British in 1890.

Bazaars and Sources of Conflict

The British Indian government officials had encouraged the traders from Barak region to establish bazaars in the 'Lushai Land'. But why were the colonial officials keen to open trading markets on the frontiers of 'Lushai land'? It is probable that these tribes who were regarded as 'wild' and, as earlier discussed, the 'raiders' as perceived by the officials had to be 'controlled' and therefore had to be under surveillance. The traders from plain areas could work as conduits to provide information about their activities. Secondly, they wanted to bring the tribes into the fold of money

economy. Here George Simmel's work becomes very helpful in understanding the role of money in bringing the tribes of Mizoram into the fold of colonial market and, thus, into colonial modernity or rationality.³¹ Writing about tribal regions in Bengal region, Prathama Banerjee argues:

Beginning from the late eighteenth century we find colonial administrative effort in region largely concentrating on the settling of official markets in the 'tribal' area".³² The reasons for this policy, as Prathama Banerjee argues, were that the money was perceived to be an "embodiment of reason"³³ and its absence could lead to disorder.³⁴

These three bazaars were: Tipaimukh Bazaar on the Barak, where the Tipai falls into it; the Sonai Bazaar on the Sonai River; and the Changsil Bazaar on the Dhaleshwar.³⁵

The Archival sources divulge to us how the trade between Lushai Chiefs and the traders from the British Indian subjects went on and also how the trade was not only profitable to both the parties but it also became a source of conflict.³⁶ Major exchange of commodities was rubber with salt. Burland recorded that in 1971 about 1500 maunds of rubber was procured by traders from the Mizos.³⁷ Before the establishment of these bazaars, the Lushais used to acquire the salt from various springs in their region. However, these springs were few and insufficient. Therefore, these springs had become the site of conflict among various chiefs residing in these areas. In fact, Colonel Melleuch, the political agent of Manipur arbitrated in such a dispute.³⁸ However, after the annexation of Cachar into Raj and opening of these bazaar especially after the Expedition of 1871-72, the Chiefs started depending upon these bazaars for supply of salt.³⁹ However, the traders from the Plain areas at times used to cheat the Lushais by providing less quantity of salt and in exchange receive huge quantity of rubber.⁴⁰ The rubber had been tapped extensively and it was getting diminished gradually and, therefore, the traders were losing interest in this trade. But the Lushai chiefs demanded salt and sometimes out of desperation they used to impose huge taxes on these traders since they perceived that they were the sovereigns of those areas where these bazaars were located and, therefore, they considered it their

right to impose taxes or rents on them.⁴¹ It became a source of conflict between the chiefs and the traders involving thereby the intervention of the colonial officials.⁴²

Colonialism and the Nature of Conflict

Sources of Conflict

Disarmament

After having annexed the Lushai hills, all the chiefs were disarmed and in this respect the government did use both persuasion as well as violence to disarm the chiefs. But some chiefs avoided surrendering of their guns through various means and the most prominent of this was what James Scot terms as 'weapons of the weak'⁴³. The evasion is one of the weapons which some chiefs used. The retention of guns was important for the chiefs since they were also dependent upon hunting as a source of food. However, the colonial officials used violence in such cases to disarm unruly chiefs.

House Tax

The colonial officials had imposed house-tax on each family. It had to be either in cash or in kind. The Lushai resented against such compulsion to pay both land revenue either in cash or kind (in the form of rice).⁴⁴ It affected their food security. It also became a source of conflict.

Forced Labour

The colonial officials had been making efforts to secure large workforce for road building, clearance of forest and 'porters' for officials on tour. Lipokmar Dzuwichu has presented an excellent analysis of the colonial efforts to secure circulating workforce for various infrastructural projects as well as porters/coolies for carrying the baggage of the touring officials in the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ He writes:

In the nineteenth century north-east, an expanding frontier in the hill tracts generated a demand for a flexible and mobile labour corps. Annual tours by frontier political officials meant that coolies had to be found to carry their baggage and supplies. A steady supply of labour was also needed to develop colonial infrastructures such as roads in the hills. While roads enabled the British to extend their reach into the hills, they also enhanced the ability of the colonial state to extract labour resources from the hill communities.⁴⁶

The colonial officials *“had to engage with the ‘traditional’ structures and institutions. In their effort to tap into the labour resources, the colonial state had to create and draw upon native agents such as headmen and interpreters.”*⁴⁷

Though Lipokmar Dzuwichu made these generalizations in the case of North-East in general and Nagas in specific but it is applicable to Lushai Hills as well. The labour force (*coolies/porters*) were also conscripted by the ‘Lushai Battallion’⁴⁸. However, the Lushai were not interested to become coolies firstly because it affected their agricultural activities and secondly they not only were reluctant to do such a job but also were not in favour of leaving their own villages.

Resistance

Though a number of chiefs agreed to toe the officials line under pressure but some of them resisted in various ways. This resistance took two forms: a. symbolic and b. armed resistance. The former was in the form of what James Scot termed as ‘weapons of the weak’: evasion, migration, dissimulation.⁴⁹ The later was in the form of taking arms against the colonial officials.⁵⁰ One such a case of violence was the murder of an official Captain H.R. Browne.⁵¹ It invited reprisals from the government. There was another violence response of a Chief in the Eastern area of the Lushai Hills. It was also violently crushed by the colonial army.⁵² It was towards the close of 1895 that all the Chiefs were subjugated.⁵³

Post-Colonial Period

Famine, Insurgency and Food

In Mizoram, the Mautam of 1959 led to insecurity of food. It is asserted by many writers that the surfacing of 'Buai' (the Troubles⁵⁴) or 'insurgency' (official term) in 1966 was directly the result of *Mautam* of 1959 thereby resulting into food crisis. We have already examined in chapter three of this monograph that there were different memories of food crisis during the Mautam of 1959 and there was no one-to-one relationship between the Mautam and 'insurgency' lead by the Mizo National Front. In fact the seeds of secession had already been sown on the part of one section of the political elites on the eve of Independence. There may be discerned two political imaginaries among the Mizo Intellectuals on the eve of India's Independence⁵⁵: (i) One: imagining a greater Mizoram consisting of 'Zo' cultural areas of Manipur, Tripura, Burma and Bangladesh; (ii) Other: 'integration' with Indian nation-state.⁵⁶ The former stood for either merging with Burma along with all Kuki, Lushai and chin group of tribes or favouring secession from India. The leaders of this group invoked the images of 'Jesus' and 'Hindu India', 'Hindi dominating Mizoram', etc.⁵⁷ The 'other' is divested of diversity and India is imagined constituting only of Hindus. It reinforced the theoretical categories of the binaries of *us* versus *them*. The later group was in favour of merging with India initially for a period of 10 years and then in case India develops Mizoram and the right to secession. However, the 'commoners' were more concerned with liberation from the oppression of the chiefs than with the issue of whether joining India, Burma or Pakistan.⁵⁸ This 'structure of feeling'⁵⁹ is represented in one of the folk songs:

Baithakarva

Artuikhawnlehlalhnugvirengkaningtawh

Kawluchawilaldaltuannisazaihianpui an ni

("one gets tired of following the Chief's orders to give eggs and chickens, and to do everything he wants. By following the Chief, one gets delayed in one's work and it is equivalent to punishment")⁶⁰

Another folk-song reinforces these sentiments:

India Zawm duh chulal ban na
Independence duh chulallalna. ⁶¹

The folk-songs are part of the oral tradition and its significance has been pointed out by Jan Vansena:

Oral traditions make an appearance only when they are told. For fleeting moments they can be heard, but most of the time they dwell in the minds of the people. The utterance is transitory, but the memories are not. No one in oral societies doubts that memories can be faithful repositories which contain the sum total of past human experience and explain the how and why of present day conditions...whether memory changes or not, culture is reproduced by remembrance put into words and deeds. The mind through memory carries culture from generation to generation. ⁶²

“The common Mizo people,” writes B.B. Goswami, “could not tolerate the ‘idle’ chiefs sitting at the top of the village hierarchy,” and therefore, “the tension between the chiefs (lal) and commoners (vantlang) was high.”⁶³ The Mizo Union was the representative of the common Mizo people. The Mizo Union consisting of a large number of educated persons who composed many songs to disseminate the anti-chief feelings.⁶⁴ It led to the split of the Mizo Union in 1947 and therefore, the sentiments of secession were further got entrenched in the other group consisting mainly of the chiefs.⁶⁵ A civil servant has described the situation at that time in these words:

The Mizo Union retaliated by launching a movement to boycott the chiefs altogether...The people were urged to defy the authority of the Government as well as of the chiefs and join together in a full-scale Civil Disobedience Movement.⁶⁶

The Mizo Union Left Wing’s main programme was the “abolition of chieftainship, representation of the Mizos in the Assam Legislature and the improvement of the socio-economic condition of the Mizos.”⁶⁷ But the common people just wanted liberation from the chieftainship.⁶⁸ Ultimately, of course chieftainship was abolished.

The ideological strands, one representing the 'secessionism' and the other 'integration' with India are weaved in its complexity in a Hindi novel *Jahan Baans Phulate Hain (Where Bamboos Flower)*⁶⁹ by Shri Prakash Mishra an officer from Civil Intelligence of the Indian state. He was posted in Mizoram during the period of insurgency and was involved in the peace-process, in persuading the leaders who had gone underground to surrender arms. The novel has been written in the background of Mautam of 1959 and consequent insurgency in Mizoram. The two categories 'vai' and 'vairama' do recur repeatedly in this narrative. Any non-Mizo is generally termed as 'vai' in Mizoram but in this novel this category overlaps: at times any one from plain areas specifically from the rest of India. And the category 'Vairama' denotes the land of the non-Mizos but in this novel it mainly refers to India and at times 'mainstream' Indian culture.

Laldawla is one of the central characters of the novel. He is orphaned early in his life and lives in poverty. The village priest gives him work to clean the utensils and other works and in turn provides him education up to the primary level and then hands him over to one of his superiors at Aizawl. Subsequently, he receives his education at Shillong and Guwahati. Finally he returns to Mizoram.

But on returning home, he is in a strange state of mind. Till today he had been 'seeing' 'vairama' from Mizo point of view, now he was viewing Mizoram from 'vai point of view'. He perceived Mizoram to be culturally and economically 'backward'. He sets out an agenda for bringing about revolutionary change in the society. It was dual in nature: (a) to throw out vai from Mizoram and (b) to 'develop' Mizoram to such an extent that it surpasses vairama. He strives to reformulate the Mizo traditions and therefore his conception of tradition comes in clash with traditional cultural practices followed by the people in the village.

He is invested with 'double consciousness'⁷⁰. This double consciousness permeates throughout the novel.⁷¹ In fact, there are two types of educated persons who have received education from the institutions at shilling and Guwahati. One such category constituting Lal Dawla wants to take Mizoram beyond

‘vairama’ and therefore working to bring about change in the society by reforming various cultural practices and also fights for Independence from India. The other like Kaami wants to bring Mizoram closer to ‘mainstream’ India but at the same time retaining its own cultural identity.⁷² However, both feel that the entry of vairs has brought all types of social evils in the society as the harbingers of all evil practices in Mizoram.⁷³

The food crisis of 1959 acted as lightening conductor for igniting further the sentiments of secession from the Indian state. Various relief organizations had come into being to stem the food crisis and ‘Mizo National Relief organization’ was one of such organizations whose followers “staged huge demonstrations when leaders from Assam came to the hills. The Front started a tabloid called Miz-Aw or the “Voice of the Mizos” through which it demanded food.”⁷⁴ Sajal Nag argues that the politics over the distribution of relief fund played between the Chief Minister of Assam and the Mizo Union Party did play a role in fomenting the crisis further. Sajal Nag’s narrative related to the nature of this politics is summarized below:

As the famine approached, the Mizo Union Party demanded that the relief be distributed to the people through itself as it was the dominant party which was in power in the Lushai Hills District Council. But Assam Chief Minister Bimola Prasad Chaliha was contemptuous of the Mizo Union and was jealous of its popularity. He wanted his own agents to be incharge of the relief. He picked up Laldenga to be the man in-charge. With his blessings the Mizo Cultural Union was converted into a non-governmental organization called Mizo National Famine Front which was the agency entrusted to distribute the relief in preference to Mizo Union. A clerk in the District Council Laldenga joined MNFF and immediately became the most powerful man there. Being an excellent organizer, he immediately put Manliana and Vanlawma in his shadow. Chaliha’s patronization made him the supremo in the organization; the MNFF was successful in promoting its own agenda during the relief operations. It recruited Mizo youth and sent them to remote villages to distribute the relief material. Even though the relief was sent by the Assam government MNFF spread hatred towards the Assam government and held it responsible for the misery of the people. He propagated anti-India feelings amongst the masses and popularized the concept of a sovereign

Mizoram which would be for Mizos only and would be ruled by Mizos without depending on any non-Mizo people.⁷⁵

Therefore, distribution of relief fund became a site for leading an armed struggle against the Indian nation-state. However, the violence on the part of the 'underground' as well as on the part of the Indian army (insurgency and counter-insurgency) did disturb the peoples' everyday life specifically in the procurement of food. Conflict, particularly armed conflict augments critically to food insecurity; food insecurity causes conflict.⁷⁶ This serves to "establish a vicious, self-reinforcing circle of conflict, food insecurity and underdevelopment, from which countries find it difficult to escape".⁷⁷ Armed conflicts, together with natural disasters, present the greatest threats to a population's food security.⁷⁸ Social scientists have written extensively about food and conflict.⁷⁹

In order to contain 'insurgency' the policy makers devised a heinous, obnoxious device of displacement of massive rural population and relocated them into grouping centres established close to the national high-way.

Grouping (Khokhom) of Villages and Food Scarcity

Meaning of Khokhom

In Mizoram, "grouping" is known as "*khokhom*". It 'literally means driving villagers here and there; a term that sums up a world of terror'.⁸⁰ The British colonial masters had experimented with the grouping on the rubber and tine mine workers in Malaya.⁸¹ It had also been tried by the Indian army in Nagaland but failed miserably. The Government of India under the Defence of India Rules enforced the operation called 'Operation Security' in January and February 1967 by grouping the villages.⁸² A population of "fifty thousand from hundred villages was regrouped in 18 Grouping Centres along the Silchar-Aizawl-Lunglei road."⁸³ The number of persons moved into the PPV centres was 50,000 from 106 villages.⁸⁴ In the relocated villages, the people were issued identity cards so as to monitor their movements.⁸⁵ The grouping of villages resulted into

disruption of the daily lives of the Mizos and it undermined the ability of people to grow or procure their own food.

‘The number of forcibly displaced persons in the world was 45.2 million at the end of 2012 (up from 37.5 million in 2005), of which 15.4 million were refugees, 937,000 were asylum seekers, and 28.2 million were internally displaced persons.’⁸⁶

Objectives of Grouping

The main purpose of grouping was to isolate the rebels from the rural population and cut off their food supply.⁸⁷ Nirmal Nibedan contends:

Ostensibly, and theoretically perhaps, Operation Security was intended to bring the villages into protected perimeters to snap the supply line to the guerillas. In actual practice, it was an attempt to subdue the tribesmen by strictly controlling the rations so that no food was funnelled out to the men in the jungles.⁸⁸

Consequences of Other Counter-Insurgency Measures and Grouping of Villages

DISPLACEMENT LEADING TO MISERY

The process of displacing the rural population led to extreme misery. An Army officer who was involved in implementation of the order for relocation of the villagers of Darzo provides us a detailed account in his reminiscences. In order to bring out the intense suffering faced by the villagers it is worthwhile to give the long quotation:

Darzo (Mizoram) was one of the richest villages I have ever seen in this part of the world. There were ample stores of paddy, fowls and pigs. The villagers appeared well-fed and well-clad, and most of them had some money in cash. We arrived in the village at about ten in the morning. My orders were to get the villagers to collect whatever moveable property they could, and to set their own village on fire at seven in the evening. I also had orders to burn all the paddy and other grain that could not be carried away by the villagers to the new Centre so as to keep food out

of the reach of the insurgents. For about three hours I tried to convince them that they would have to shift bag and baggage to Hnathial Protected and Progressive village, as the Group Centres were officially known. They argued with me endlessly, until I had no choice but to tell them that the soldiers would deal with them if they did not obey my orders. It was obvious they could not carry away even one fourth of the paddy they had in storage. Now, it was a dilemma as I had order to burn all paddy that could not be carried away so that the insurgents don't benefit from it. Imagine, we were supposed to destroy all that food for which hundreds of families had toiled for months. I somehow couldn't do it. I called the village Council President and told him that in three hours his men could hide all the excess paddy and other food grains in the caves and return for it after a few days under army escort. They concealed everything most efficiently.

Night fell, and I had to persuade the villagers to come out and set fire to their homes. Nobody came out. Then I had to order my soldiers to enter every house and force the people out. Every man, woman and child who could walk came out with as much of his or her belongings and food as they could. But they wouldn't set fire to their homes. Ultimately, I lit a torch myself and set fire to one of the houses. I knew I was carrying out orders, and would hate to do such a thing if I had my way. My soldiers also started torching other buildings, and the whole place was soon ablaze. There was absolute confusion everywhere. Women were wailing and shouting and cursing. Children were frightened and cried. Young boys and girls held hands and looked at their burning village with a stupefied expression on their faces. But the grown-up men were silent; not a whimper or a whisper from them. Pigs were running about, mithuns were bellowing, dogs were barking, and fowls setting up a racket with their fluttering and crackling. One little girl ran into her burning house and soon darted out holding a kitten in her hands.

When it was time for the world to sleep, we marched out of Darzo—soldiers in front, with the Mizos following, and the rear brought up by more soldiers. We had enough troops for the job, if anyone had tried to run away from the column, he would have been shot. We walked fifteen miles through the night along the jungle and the morning saw us in Hnathia. I tell you, I hated myself that night. I had done the job of an executioner. That night when I saw children as young as three years carrying huge loads on their heads for fifteen miles with very few stops for rest, their noses running, their little feet faltering, with pregnant women hardly able to carry their burden up the hill from the Mat river

valley-for the first time in my life as a soldier I did not feel the burden of the fifty pound haversack on my own back. It was a miracle that we reached Hnathial without a casualty, or perhaps the Mizos are very tough people, physically and emotionally. But there was something more to be carried out. I called the Darzo Village Council President and his village elders and ordered them to sign a document saying that they had voluntarily asked to be resettled in Hnathial PPV under the Protection of Security Forces as they were being harassed by the insurgents, and because their own village did not have communications, educational, medical and other facilities. Another document stated that they had burnt down their own village, and that no force or coercion was used by the Security Forces. They refused to sign. So I sent them out and after an hour called them in again, this time one man at a time. On my table was loaded revolver, and in the corner stood two NCOs' with loaded sten-guns. This frightened them, and one by one they signed both the documents. I had to do it as I had no choice in this matter. If those chaps had gone to the civil administration or the courts with complaints, there would have been all kinds of criminal cases against us. We had to protect ourselves with these false certificates. We had no choice. All individual officers were expected to carry out their tasks in such a manner that it left no scope for embarrassment to our higher formations.”⁸⁹

This anguish is well articulated in the folk songs composed during that period.⁹⁰ Analysing one such song “Khawkhawm Hla” (“Grouping Songs”), Cherrie Lalnunziri Chhangte argues:

it transmits the agony of villagers who were typically given a day's notice to prepare for such groupings. In the space of twenty four hours, they had to leave their homes, their fields, their domestic animals, and everything that had given them a sense of security and identity. With just the bare necessities, they were relocated and grouped into one of the bigger villages. Such moves obviously left deep psychological scars in the mentality of the people, and it is a trauma that many have not yet recovered from this day.⁹¹

She has quoted this song:

*Kan hun tawng zingah khawkhawm a paw ber mai,
Zoram hmun tin khawtlang puan ang a chul zo ta,
Tlangtin a mi hruai khawm nu nau mipui nen
Chhunrawl an van, riakmaw iangin an vai e.*⁹²

The English translation as provided by her is:

Grouping is the most tragic of all that has befallen us,
Every corner of Zoram is faded like an old cloth,
Children, women, people from everywhere,
Starve under the noonday sun, lost, like the *riakmaw*.⁹³

There are folksongs which represent how the beauty and charm of their displaced village life has been replaced by dreariness in the grouped village.

Pity of pity
our villages are 'Grouped'
everywhere in zoram
life has lost its beauty
women, children, men
gathered from every hill
feel homeless and stranded
like the *riakmaw* bird...⁹⁴

The bard does not fail to see the lifelessness in the daily chores of life in the new settlement. He could see the agony of uprootedness and the pining for the native villages :

In the new (grouped) habitat
friends and loved ones have gathered
(but amidst all)
I still pine for our old motherland (village)
where the gentle prince (God)
still dwells.⁹⁵

The distress caused by displacement has also been represented in a fictional narrative *Zoramthangi*, (*Daughter of The Hills*) by Pramod Bhatnagar. Sangzuala, one of the main characters of the novel and father of Zoramthangi, the protagonist, first loses his farming land to the army since it is required for camp of the army and then the village where he resettles is forced to relocate in a grouping centre. It is worthwhile to discuss in brief both these episodes of displacement. The author narrates:

With the large number of Armymen coming into Aijal, almost all the

open spaces were taken up by them for setting up their camps. Open spaces in Aijal are in any case very few. So, many of the fields nearby were occupied for this purpose. Sangzuala's field was one such. When he wanted to meet the officer-in-charge of the Army unit, he was told that he should see the Deputy Commissioner. There he was asked to apply in writing. When he insisted on meeting the officer and explaining his case, he was taken to the Administrative Officer, a Mizo, with long years of service. He told Sangzuala that he could do something only if a written petition was made to him. Sangzuala said: "Kapu, this is the only land I have. I and my two children survive on the earnings from this land. What will I do if the Army takes it over?"⁹⁶

"That is for you to decide. The Army needs that land and they have to take it. You will be paid sufficient compensation."

"I don't want any compensation. I want my land back."⁹⁷

"You cannot get it back. So be reasonable and take whatever you can get for it."⁹⁸

"what will I and my children do?"

"Take the money and start some business. Or do something else. I cannot help you beyond that."⁹⁹

Finding no other alternative, Sangzuala put in his application for being given compensation for the land acquired by the Army. A fortnight later he was called and paid Rs. 2,000 for his land. He protested that his land was worth much more and that it was plain and simple robbery to give him so little for his land. The clerk who was offering him the money said that he should consider himself lucky that he was getting any compensation at all. Angry and frustrated, Sangzuala took the money, signed the receipt and left.

That same week, Sangzuala, Robert and Zo moved with their meagre belongings to Lungdai.¹⁰⁰

Sangzuala again had to suffer and lose his land and livelihood when the notice for vacating this village was also received:

When Zo was visiting her father in the summer of 1972, she saw an atmosphere of hopelessness and despair in Lungdai. It was expected any moment that a decision to shift the village would be announced. A strange helplessness prevailed.¹⁰¹ For once Zo hoped that Robert and his friends would be able to do something about it. Probably at the last minute, they would come out of their hiding and stop this callous step of the authorities...But nothing happened!¹⁰²...On A Warm Day In June,

A Posse of The CRP (Central Reserve Police) arrived in the morning followed by the Administrative officer and the decision to shift the entire population of Lundai village to a road-side village, called Farlawn, was announced. The whole operation was to be completed within two days. There was a wave of resentment in the village but little choice was left to the villagers as there was no one to oppose the decision.¹⁰³...Once more uprooted from their hearth and home, Sangzuala now sixty-one and Zoramthangi of nineteen years, made their preparations to move to the new locale. It was heart-breaking for them to leave the place where they had lived for more than six years and where they had faced so many vicissitudes of life.¹⁰⁴...Farlawn was closer to Aijal on the main Lunglei Highway... The most impressive building in the village was the headquarters of the Army Company, which had a commanding view of the village... The population touched the figure of 2,000 with the new influx. The village Council distributed the jhum plots to the newcomers. Sangzuala also got a plot nearby. Except for his meager pension, this would be the only source of income for him. The school was enlarged and some more teachers were to be appointed. Finding Sangzuala in a very depressed state of mind, Zo decided to stay with him and leave her education at Aijal incomplete, at least for the time being. It was frustrating but she knew that if she left Sangzuala alone at this time, he would brood and sulk and probably die. Her living in the village would mean a lot to him and help him to adjust himself in the new environs. Her appointment as a teacher in the village school gave her added inspiration to make this sacrifice for her father.¹⁰⁵...They constructed again their little house and while Sangzuala slogged in the field, she taught at the school. She took on the dual responsibility of the house and her job.¹⁰⁶

Zoramthangi, though authored by a Vai (non-Mizo), forms a part of what has generally been termed as ‘Rambuai’ literature which “means literature of the ‘troubled land’”.¹⁰⁷ In other words, “the fiction, non-fiction, songs and poems that have been generated by the troubled history of the Mizo National Front movement, be they MNF or non-MNF.”¹⁰⁸ Another example of Rambuai literature worth discussing in brief is *Silaimu Ngaihawm* (*The Beloved Bullet*), a novelette by James Dokhuma (1932-2007).¹⁰⁹ Though he received education only upto fifth standard but was regarded as one of the leading creative writers in Mizoram. He had “joined the ranks of the MNF in 1966 and rose to the rank of Member of Parliament

and Deputy Speaker of the ‘under-ground’ government. He was arrested and imprisoned from 1968 to 1971”.¹¹⁰ This fictional narrative brings out the pangs and sufferings the ordinary villagers as a result of displacement caused by the “grouping” of villages. For example the people of *Hualtu* village were grouped with the village of Baktawng:

“The elderly clung to their doorposts, weeping openly.
But circumstances demanded their departure, and they did so
most unwillingly. Their homesickness did not diminish, and from
the hills of Baktawng, they would gaze at their old village and
chant tearfully,
Low hills and high, where once we roamed
Where lovers lingered, we will haunt again
Yearning for the hills where once we danced
And again
Those trees adorning the hills
Are now but home to birds
Singing their young ones to sleep.”¹¹¹

The displaced persons were haunted by the memories of the their lost homes, as Chalkimi tells Ramliani:

Before the grouping our village was cohesive and complete. But now it is nothing more than the reluctance to part with what the we’ve already lost. No matter which way we turn, memories haunt us. The past is not going to return, that’s for sure.¹¹²

The ‘insurgency’ and the ‘counter-insurgency’ had transformed the mutual relationships among the Mizos, as Ramlian, the protagonist in this narrative remonstrates: “Right now there is no love in the land, only hatred and mistrust. Even neighbors are no longer close and friendly with each other.”¹¹³

Since James Dokhuma followed realistic mode of representation, therefore this narrative may be studied what Pierre Macherey terms it ‘double perspective’.¹¹⁴ It can be studied ‘in relation to history, and in relation to an ideological version of history’.¹¹⁵ However, a historical period says Pierre Macherey ‘does not spontaneously produce a single, monolithic ideology, but a series of ideologies determined by the total relation of forces; each

ideology is shaped by the pressures upon the class which generates it.¹¹⁶ The fictional narratives are not monological but dialogical.¹¹⁷ In *The Beloved Bullet* other trend is representation of Mizo Union's efforts to dissuade people from joining the secessionists. However, the narrative representing Ramliani's suffering and the pangs resulting from grouping 'interpellate' us much more than the narrative representing the Mizo Union. Althusser calls the process by which ideology 'grabs' people 'interpellation'. 'All ideology hails or interpellate concrete individuals as concrete subjects.'¹¹⁸ Interpellation is like someone calling out, 'Hey, you there' in the street, when the hailed individual turns round, 'by this mere one-hundred-and-eighty-degree physical conversion, he becomes a subject.'¹¹⁹ The person imagines the call is directed to him/her personally, and by reacting, becomes subject to it and to the person calling out. Interpellation explains how the lure of a narrative unconsciously gathers readers into the value-system, beliefs and ideology of the narrator. Thus, the narrative representing the suffering caused by the grouping of the villages is very effective in generating the 'affect'.

BURNING OF VILLAGES

Thus, when the peace committee led the delegation to the president of the underground, the later commented "We have seen whole villages burnt to ashes, the people left without food or shelter or even cooking pots to cook jungle roots."¹²⁰ In one of the Governor's papers the subject of which is 'Brig T Sailo's Memorandum to the Prime Minister of India' in the annexure a description of atrocity is provided:

At village Zaingen on 21 May 1966, a detachment of Ist Assam Rifles, Dargawn Camp came to village Zaingen. They burnt down the whole village. The villagers lost everything their paddy, their household goods, their domestic animals, for eg pigs, sheep, etc. when they arrived at the village, they caught hold of the first man they met and shot him dead. His name was Valbunga.¹²¹

Even the farmers' temporary storage huts '*chhekin*' were also not

spared from burning at times. It was done with the purpose of depriving the ‘insurgents’ from appropriating these ‘chhekins’.¹²²

DISLOCATION OF TRIBAL ECONOMY SPECIFICALLY THE FOOD PRODUCING ACTIVITIES

The grouping has been detrimental to economy of the people wherever it has been practised. It has led to major civilian mortality, decline in food production, and severe dislocation of the social fabric.¹²³ The regrouping operation was “striking at the heart of the tribal economy”.¹²⁴ It ensured permanent damage to farming operations at the original sites.¹²⁵ The laws enforced during the ‘insurgency’ further eroded the farmers relationship with the traditional jhum.¹²⁶ In the grouped villages the imposition of curfew had *restricted movements*.¹²⁷

The government had introduced certain laws during insurgency which were detrimental to tribal economy especially the production of food:

No person present within any area shall, between such hours specified in the order, be out, except under the authority of a written permit... An order of curfew, it is stated widely, was imposed upon Mizoram from dusk to dawn for a period of nearly seven years. The compulsion to return by nightfall imposed very clear limits to the cultivable area; it had to be within a half-day’s march. Hunting had already been denied to the people as a result of the taking away of all small arms owned by them. Food-gathering, beyond the perimeter had also to be given up. Contravention of these orders meant a five-year prison term or fine or both.¹²⁸

Those who managed to escape from the centres:

had to return before twilight. Hunting had already been denied to the tribesmen as most arms were confiscated. Food gathering beyond the perimeter was out of the question. A lot of time was taken over checking the identity cards in the mornings and evenings... The number of cultivation days were cut down owing to the gun battles in the adjoining areas which generally ended in collective interrogation or in re-checking the identification papers. Slapping suspects was monotonously commonplace.¹²⁹

In the relocated villages there was more pressure on agriculture as a result of more number of persons dependent upon limited availability of Jhum land. As C. Nunthara states:

The concentration of agricultural workers in the grouping centres exhausted the available land in many cases, and the already short cycle of jhumming had to be further shortened.¹³⁰

The tribal institution of the “tlawbawk huts built near the jhum for camping during harvesting and weeding period was abolished”.¹³¹ And top of all some male agricultural workers either were “sent off to work on the Border Roads in Kashmi” or were enforced by the army to work as porters for their camps.¹³²

The farmers “could not perform their weeding operations on time, which were usually done three to four times in a year in their jhums. Their inability to complete the weeding on time resulted in low productivity, thereby, the food-security of the villagers could no longer be ensured.”¹³³ Citing her interview with C. Rokhuma in September 2014, Laltanpuui Ralte contends:

The Mizos often carried packed food and passed it to the insurgents in the jhums, therefore, the military personnel often visited, sought and harassed the farmers who were in the jhum. Some of the insurgents often spent the nights in the jhum huts called ‘thlam’. Both the insurgents as well as the military often hunted for each other in the jhum lands. Thus, the farmers, who often spent the nights in the jhum huts in times of peace in order to save the time required for travelling to and fro from their villages to jhums could no longer do so for their safety. Therefore, they had to spend considerable time for travelling to and from their residences to the jhums. This tremendously reduced the time they would have otherwise utilised for their jhumming works. Moreover, the jhumias were always worrying about the old and young who were left at home because of which they wanted to return home earlier than usual which further reduced the time spent in the jhum.¹³⁴

All these reasons led to the decline of productivity and leading thereby to the food crisis.¹³⁵ There was a drastic fall in food production. In fact, “It was a crippling of food production,” says Amritha Rangasami, “on a continuing basis”¹³⁶. It made the people dependent upon the government rations “which included wheat

flour, which Mizos in the interiors seldom ate, and which could be halted at will as and when collective punishment was found necessary.”¹³⁷

CURFEW AND FOOD SCARCITY

In order to curb the movement of the ‘insurgents’, the Army imposed curfew every now and then. It led to misery of the people since a number of people had to go without food when long hours curfews were imposed.¹³⁸ Thus Zonunthara, teacher of the High School at Kawnpuui recalls a week-long, 22-hour curfew that was imposed: “Many people had to go hungry”.¹³⁹

RISE IN RICE PRICE

The prices of commodities, specifically rice, had risen so much that “at one time,” says C. Rokhuma, “1 kg of rice had cost 1,200 rupees, such being the condition, no one was in a position to do farming in a proper way.”¹⁴⁰

STARVATION DEATHS

Amritha Rangasami cites many examples of starvation deaths on the basis of the interviews conducted.¹⁴¹ One person remarked that “more people died after ‘grouping’ than during the last Mao Tam(famine).”¹⁴²

FORCED URBANIZATION

Near about 80 per cent of rural population estimated to be 1 lakh 60 thousand people (about 65 per cent of the population of Mizoram) had been displaced by 1970 as a result of these operations.¹⁴³ A large number of people from the grouped villages migrated to urban settlements leading thereby to the process of urbanization and thus by 1971 its ratio in the North-East was the highest.¹⁴⁴ The food scarcity triggered great inflow of rural population to urban areas.¹⁴⁵

EROSION OF SELF-DEPENDENCE ON FOOD AND DEPENDENCE UPON
OUTSIDE FORCES INCLUDING INDIAN STATE

One of the serious consequences of grouping was that the Mizo community became dependent upon Indian State for foodgrains and comparative self-sufficiency in food-production had eroded. According to Thangchungnunga, Mizoram was comparatively better off before the insurgency since almost all the villages were self-sufficient or produced enough for living.¹⁴⁶ Before the insurgency, commodities imported from outside the district were mainly K.Oil, sah and cloths while the district exported ginger, chilli, orange and other agricultural products.¹⁴⁷ After the insurgency, the district was, and is depending on imports of foodgrains and other essential commodities. In a survey done by the faculty of Department of Economics, North East Hill University, Mizoram Campus in 1986 on a grouped village Lungdai it was found that in the course of two decades from early sixties to early eighties, there has been drastic change in the component of family expenditure. "Farming, plantation and jhuming " says Thangchungnunga

do not appear to be the predominant source of income from production activity, and it has been found that less than 28 percent of the total income is contributed by the farming activity and 22 percent by jhum farming. It has also been found that 47.6 percent of the total expenditure is on food item... The trend shows that more people are dependent for purchase of rice from the government fair price shops.¹⁴⁸

Thus concluding his argument on grouping Thangchungnunga argues:

The structural consequences of grouping of villages has, thus, been tremendous. Hitherto remote villages have been brought into larger units. But the masses of the villagers who were left to fight for their survival became poorer.¹⁴⁹

Conclusion

To sum up: The Mizos' conflict with other forces used to emanate from use of the food resources: in the nineteenth century with

the expansionist designs of the British imperialism which took a different form of conflict once the area was annexed by the British Indian government. It used to create difficulties for the Mizos in terms of availability of food. A section of the Mizo society also came into conflict with the Indian nation state. This section led an armed movement for secessionism and the result was various measures taken by the army leading to food crisis for the Mizos.

NOTES

1. See Vanlalringa Bawitlung, *Chieftainsip and the Processes of State Formation in Mizo Society*, Ph.D thesis (unpublished), Department of History, School of Social Sciences, North East Hill University, Shillong, 1996.
2. Jangkhomang Guite, 'Civilisation and Its Malcontents: The Politics of Kuki Raid in Nineteenth Century Northeast India.' *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 48 (3), 2011, pp. 339-76; also see Joy L.K.Pachau and Willem Van Schendel, *The Camera as Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India*, Cambridge University Press, Delhi, 2015, p. 27; also see Assam Secretariat Record and Archives (ASR), Pol.A, July 1872, No. 304-305,
3. Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial State, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India, 1908-1954*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2016, p. 26.
4. Indrani Chatterjee, 'Slavery, Semantics and the Sound of silence', in Indrani Chatterjee and Richard Eaton (eds) *Slavery and South Asian History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 2006, pp. 285-315. cited in Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial State, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India, 1908-1954*, op. cit., p. 27.
5. T.H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein: With Comparative Vocabulary of The Hill Dialects*, Bengal Printing Company, Limited, Calcutta, 1869, Reprinted by Tribal Research Institute, Department of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 2004, p. 63.
6. J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, Macmillan, London, 1912, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1988 (reprint), p. 46.
7. Cited in Alexander Mackenzie, *The North-East Frontier of India*, (photographically reproduced from 1884 edition entitled *History of*

- the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal*), Mittal Publications, New Delhi, 2005, pp. 292-294; also see Indrani Chatterjee, *Forgotten Friends: Monks, Marriages, and Memories of Northeast India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2013.
8. Suhas Chatterjee, *Mizoram Under the British Rule*, Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985, p. 96.
 9. For the concept of 'structures of feelings,' see Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 1977, pp. 128-135.
 10. T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, W M H. Allen & Co., London, 1870 (Reprinted by Firma Klm Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1978), p. 1. emphasis added.
 11. T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, op. cit., pp. 33-34, 21.
 12. Ibid., p. 14.
 13. J. Kox Wight to Secretary, Chief Commissioner, Assam cited in Suhas Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 97.
 14. Ibid., p. 96.
 15. Ibid., pp. 97-116.
 16. R.G. Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872*, Firma KLM Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1978 (first edition 1873), p. 8.
 17. See T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races Of South-Eastern India*, op. cit., pp. 12-13; Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, op. cit., p. 34; Burland's Note: Foreign Proceedings, May, 1871, Nos. 637-641, Pol.A ; J.V. Hluna, Education and Missionaries in Mizoram, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, Delhi, 1992, p. 28; Örestes Rosanga, *The Economic History of Mizoram From 1900-1940*, unpublished thesis, Department of History, University of Delhi, Delhi, 1990, p. 5; Vanlalringa Bawitlung, *Chieftainship and the Processes of State Formation in Mizo Society*, Ph.D thesis (unpublished), Department of History, School of Social Sciences, North East Hill University, Shillong, 1996.
 18. In fact the control salt had also been the site of conflict between the chiefs. It is evident in an official report, see *The Lushais 1878-1889*, Published by Firma Klm Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1978, p. 23 (this book is a compilation of official reports).
 19. PU Buanga (J.H. Lorrain), *Log Book (1889-1936)*, Archive maintained by Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, p. 31.

20. M. Gadgil, M and Ramachandra Guha, 1993, *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1993, p. 53.
21. See H.K. Barpujari, *Problems of the Hill Tribes: North-East Frontier, 1843-1872*, Volume II, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 1998 (Reprint), pp. 136-138; also see Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial State, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India, 1908-1954*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2016, p. 4.
22. A.S. Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, Reprint 2008 (first published by Firma-KLM Private Ltd, 1893), pp. 8-9.
23. Ibid, p. 11.
24. Nirmal Nibedon, *Mizoram: The Dagger Brigade*, op. cit., p. 15.
25. Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial State, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India, 1908-1954*, op. cit., p. 10.
26. We get good account of burning of villages, paddy fields and granaries in official as well as non-official writings: see W. Shakespear, *History of the Assam Rifles*, p. 74; T.H. Lewin, op. cit., pp. 263-267; AG McCall, op. cit., p. 47; Suhas Chatterjee, *Mizoram Under the British Rule*, p. 63; Lalthanliana op. cit., p. 29; also see K. Lalzuimawia, *John Shakespear In The Lushai Hills (1888-1905)*, Ph.D thesis (unpublished) Department of History & Ethnography, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram.
27. R.G.Woodthorpe, *The Lushai Expedition, 1871-1872*, Firma KLM Private Limited on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1978 (first edition 1873), pp. 130-131.
28. Assam Secretariat, Foreign – A, Progs., August 1891, Nos. 30-38, *Political Report of the Northern Lushai Hills for 1890-91*, Excluded Areas Records, Exbt. 24 (unfiled), (MSA), cited in K. Lalzuimawia, *John Shakespear in the Lushai Hills (1888-1905)*, op. cit., p. 65.
29. K. Lalzuimawia, Ibid., p. 65.
30. A.S.Reid, *Chin-Lushai Land*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, Reprint 2008 (first published by Firma-KLM Private Ltd, 1893), p. 219.
31. George Simmel, *Philosophy of Money*, 1900, reprint, London, 1990, cited in Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Time, 'Primitives' and History-writing in a Colonial Society*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2006, p. 17.

32. Prathama Banerjee, *Politics of Time*, op. cit., p. 17.
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CHAPTER 5

Creating New Tastes

Introduction

All over the world, transforming indigenous cultures had been an agenda central to colonial domination.¹ In ‘civilizing’ the tribes of North-East India, the agendas of both the colonialists as well the Christian missionaries synchronized. Taste had been an important site of exercising cultural hegemony over the Mizo tribes. In this chapter an attempt has been made to analyse how the colonial officials as well as the missionaries made efforts to create new taste among the Mizos. It also deals with the role of civil society organizations to advancing this agenda further and continued it in the post-colonial period also. For the sake of convenience the chapter is divided into the following sections:

1. Concepts of ‘taste’ and ‘hegemony’
2. Christianity, colonialism and food practices
3. Anti-hegemony: Resistance against the missionaries
4. Negotiation
5. Public sphere and civil society organizations
6. Post-colonial Mizoram: The creation of new taste
7. Food and identity
8. Food and Memory

‘Taste’

Raymond Williams has surveyed the historical trajectory of the meanings of the word ‘taste’ in the English language.² He notes

that, in the physical sense, the word 'taste' has been operative in the English language since the thirteenth century.³ In the 15th century, it was understood in the wider sense of good taste, meaning 'good understanding'.⁴ In the 17th century and early eighteenth the word 'taste' became equivalent to discrimination.⁵ Taste has become, in other words, a 'power of the mind' identifiable to and acknowledged by a *community of taste* which recognizes certain criteria for the establishment of 'good' and 'bad' taste. Concluding his survey Raymond Williams notes:

the idea of taste cannot now be separated from the idea of the consumer;... The two ideas, in their modern form have developed together and responses to Art and Literature...have been profoundly affected...by the assumption that the viewer, spectator and reader is a consumer, exercising and subsequently showing his taste.⁶

This concept of 'taste' is equally applicable to the food ways. In this context Rachel Spronk and Christien Klaufus write:

Taste concerns processes of communion through food, style or knowledge, all of which communicate social positioning and relations of hierarchy. As a verb, 'to taste' means to undergo, to experience, to try; tasting is an active process of coming into contact, or being in contact, with things or ideas. As a noun, taste indicates processes of discrimination, of judgement regarding style. On a daily basis, people make choices about food, dress, and many other things, based on private and subjective preferences of individual taste, and yet these decisions point to taste patterns that indicate socially binding standards of conduct... The ability to appreciate the 'good things in life' can become an indication of social status or group member.⁷

Pierre Bourdieu argues that the 'taste is central to processes of social stratification'⁸. Differences between 'good taste' and 'bad taste' create and represent a social hierarchy of connoisseurs and lay people.⁹ Exhibiting good taste in cultural products can be an important mechanism for retaining control over resources and symbolic representations of power.¹⁰

Food is an important cultural marker of identity and it has provided a fruitful site for understanding social relations, family and kinship, class and consumption, gender ideology, and cultural

symbolism.¹¹ Food is also central to cultural identity in the way it evokes memory.¹² Enjoying a good meal is a universal human capacity, and this enjoyment comes in many forms and guises, as the evaluation of a meal can include the appreciation of food and drinks, the presence of good company and ambience, or the (non) use of eating utensils.¹³

Concept of Hegemony

The concept of hegemony is associated with the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who developed his thoughts on this subject in *Prisons Notebooks* written between 1929 and 1935 during his incarceration in a fascist prison at Turin in Italy.¹⁴ The concept is related to the question of dominance and subordination in modern capitalist societies. A condition of hegemony exists when a 'fundamental social class' (that is, a class which plays a 'decisive function' in 'the decisive nucleus of economic activity') exerts 'moral' and 'intellectual' leadership over both allied and subordinate social groups through the creation and perpetuation of legitimate symbols. The ruling groups must also seek to win the consent of subordinate groups to the existing social order.¹⁵ Hegemony simply requires that the subordinate be accomplices in perpetuating the symbolic structures that uphold existing inequalities.¹⁶

Since no professional/educated/middle class has yet been formed during the early period of Christianity and colonialism in Mizoram that could play a decisive role in exercise of hegemony in the society, this task was performed by the colonial state as well as the Church. The concept of State here is being taken in the way Gramsci has advocated:

State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance but manages to win the active consent over whom it rules.¹⁷

The defining characteristic of the modern democratic State, according to Gramsci, is its educative and formative role. The State organizes society on a broad front through practical, moral and

intellectual leadership:

...every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level; a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interest of the ruling classes. The school as a positive educative function, and the courts as a repressive and negative educative function, are the most important State activities in this sense; but, in reality, a multitude of other so-called private initiatives and activities tend to the same end—initiatives and activities which form the apparatus of the political and cultural hegemony of the ruling classes.¹⁸

Christianity, Colonialism and Food Practices

The missionary as well as colonial hegemony in the context of Mizoram has been exercised in various aspects of the society. But here we have discussed briefly the fields of education, hygiene and sanitation to explain this hegemony. However, these questions are intertwined with issues related to food.

Missionaries and Education

Education has been a site of exercising cultural hegemony. The colonial government in Mizoram left the question of education in the hands of the missionaries. Thus writing on the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary of the BMS Mission in Mizoram 1903—2003 K. Thanzauva writes:

Education is an area where the Baptist Church of Mizoram along with the Presbyterian Church and Roman Catholic Church made very significant contribution. In 1904 the British Administration took decision to hand over the school management to hand of missionaries in Mizoram. Thus, the school education became under the care of the Christian mission for about 50 years, until the Government took control of education in 1952. Gradually almost all the schools under the church were returned to Government and the involvement of the Baptist Church in education was greatly reduced. It was during that 50 years, significant changes were brought about in the Mizo society through education. Within a short

span of time, the Christian children of a previously marginalized section of society became salaried persons and leaders of society.¹⁹

But the colonial officials did provide financial support in one way or another to the schools run by the missionaries.²⁰ In most cases the students had to bring rice from their homes. They also were made to grow vegetable in the kitchen gardens adjoining the hostels as well as the mission quarters.²¹

Hygiene, Sanitation and Food

The missionary as well as colonial hegemony was also expressed in the issues related to hygiene. In this context questions related to food are intertwined with the matters related to hygiene, sanitation etc.²² It is apparent in the way the missionaries as well as the colonial officials represented the Mizo villages in their writings. The metaphors of dirt, filth, garbage, squalor permeate the works of early missionaries.²³

J.H. Lorrain's first impression of a Lushai village was: "the sight of pigs, fowls and youngsters all rolling and scrambling about in the dirt and the squalid hovels in which they lived..."²⁴ Lorrain writes in his Log Book:

I am sure if you were trying to walk through a Lushai village and were to see the pigs, fowls and youngster all rotting and scrambling about in the dirt and could peep inside the squalid hovels in which this people live, you would think that it was high time that they were taught to live a little less like beasts... We can see the difference between those who have come in contact with their conquerors and those who have not. The formal class wash their faces and some even make themselves look very nice.²⁵

As early as 1870, when the Mizo area had not yet been colonized, T.H. Lewin, one of the earliest colonial ethnographer wrote about the people: "As a rule they bathe but seldom, as their villages are generally situated at a long distance from water, and at an elevation which much reduces the temperature".²⁶ This image continued even in the later colonial official's writings. Thus, N.E. Parry, the Superintendent of South Lushai Hills, writes about the Lakher villages:

The villages are very filthy, being littered with the dung of mithun, pigs, and other domestic animals. No attempt is made to clean them, and it is only thanks to the voluntary scavenging done by the pigs and dogs that they are kept even moderately decent, and that the people are not a constant prey to serious epidemics²⁷.

Dorothy Glover, a missionary of the Baptist Missionary society who visited the Hills in 1928, had vividly described that when in 1904, villagers who came out from their houses to get a glimpse of Mr Lorrain's wife were "....all dressed in clothes the colour of mud, all the old women's wrinkles were full of dirt, all the children's eyes were sore....."²⁸ It was probably in response to this and also to secure regularity in schools that cakes of soap and combs were distributed as prizes to those who had the best attendances.²⁹

Another young female missionary Kitty Lewis who was based at Aizawl used to write letters to her parents and in one of her letters to her mother she narrated in detail about a young Mizo girl:

If you'll promise not to show this to Daddy, I'll tell you a very nice story about a "hrik" (lice?)-that is, an animal that lives in your hair. One Sunday afternoon Mrs. Jones left three little girls in charge of the house when we went to chapel- they rather enjoy it and had been very good up to then. That night, as she took up her comb to brush her hair, a large krik walked out of it! You can imagine her horror! ... One of them was Lawmi, & to her horror, she found her hair full of hriks. ... But Lawmi continued to be a disgrace to the Compound, so the day, I took a large pair of scissors and started to cut it off, and Suektuoma-being a professional haircutter and hating to see anybody else, at his job-finished it. Poor Lawmi! She felt as though all the joy had gone out of life. But I gave her a piece of red hanky ... to cover head with, and that quite cheered her up, and a piece of Carbollic soap, & now she 's beautifully clean-as far as her head goes. ..But it is no small job to teach the Lushais cleanliness. For one thing, there is so little water and then, they think it quite natural to have a little really dirt about.³⁰

The missionaries, in fact repeatedly wrote about unclean habits of the Mizos. Thus, J.H. Lorrain writes in *Log Book*:

one of the best-loved children's game was to wallow in the monsoon-drenched mud along with the pigs. It was hard to distinguish between

swine and children. Their hair would be matted with clumps of mud, and instead of taking baths afterwards, they would wash themselves in the rain...one can easily access their homes at any time. The first thing that struck us when we first saw their homes was the filth. They smoke filled and black cobwebs hung from the beams. Insects scurried about freely, and right in the centre, they would have the hearth, where a fire would always be kept going. The ceilings were very low, and if you stand upright, your head would touch the ceiling...During mealtimes, the whole family would sit on the floor, crouched around a common wooden trough. One of the elder women would spoon a huge quantity of rice onto it, and one of the boys would spoon some side-dish in the centre. They usually eat near the hearth, and they all used a common spoon to drink the stew... Clean drinking water was not a chief concern of theirs. The village water points were usually unclean, having a coffee-coloured appearance.³¹

At another place in his log book dated 28 October 1896, Lorrain writes:

Dirty lushais numbers would rather die than have a bath. The dear little children are left in a state of revolting filth. It is impossible for anyone in England to imagine the state of these hills people. The dirt literally comes off in cakes. The most many mothers do for their infants is to pick off little projecting pieces of filth with their finger nails and then because the little ones, who are covered from head to foot with dirt, object to this painful process and set up a scream, they excuse themselves from washing their children by saying, "Oh, they won't let me!"³².

However, the missionaries asserted that those Mizos who had come to the fold of christianity had discarded the 'unclean' habits and look different from the non-christian Mizos. As Kitty Lewis writes in one of her letters to her mother:

But really, the aijal Christians are more beautifully clean compared with the villages far away. It's wonder the difference Christianity has made to them.³³

The missionaries introduced western notions of cleanliness among the christian Mizos. Thus J. H. Lorrain writes:

We can see the difference between those who have come in contact with their conquerors and those who have not. The former class wash their

faces and some even make themselves look very nice.³⁴

Writing on Lushai meal, Lorrain puts in his *Log Book*:

one old women then a little girl, then a boy, then a women with a baby and lastly a ... of a girl all sitting on a floor round a huge wooden dish into which the old lady from time to time ladle lumps of boiled rice which is eaten up by the whole company who use their hands. One boy has at his side a post of chawhmeh (dish) from which he occasionally takes out a spoonful and places it on the central dish. They all take a pinch of it occasionally and eat it with their handful of rice. In evening they eat by the light of the fire. Feeding place is always in front of the fireplace³⁵.

Even the Lushai's gaze at a 'big sun flower' in Lorrain's kitchen garden was imagined to be a their craving for food:

Big sunflower in our front garden. The biggest we have ever seen. Only one blossom. Lushai lean on fence and gaze at it. From their remarks it is evident that they think it is a great pity that it is NOT FIT TO EAT (their question always is- when they see some strange plant or flower in our front garden – "so it good to eat?").³⁶

Similarly, the Lushais' food habits and cuisines were represented as squalid. Thus Lorrain provides us a glimpse of 'Lushai delicacies'

White ants as they come out fully winged in fountains, are caught by children and are either eaten then and there raw or taken home and fried...Grubs and maggots are said to be very nice raw or fried...Milk however they consider unfit for human consumption.³⁷

On another page of the *Log Book*, we observe the following representation by Lorrain:

At home you can have no idea what havoc death works in these rude hill tribes. They die like flies. Today a man is well and hearty, tomorrow he is in grave. Their sour food and filthy habits deprive them of all stamina and the least illness such as a European would scarcely notice cuts them down like grass before the scythe and they are gone. We have often pulled a man through a slight illness and then had him die for want of energy to rouse himself.³⁸

Lorrain also commented on Lushai food in his Log book dated

26 April 1897:

If 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 vegetables from these Lushai houses³⁹.

This language ‘speaks’ of what Dipesh Chakravarty calls as “the language of modernity, of civic consciousness and public health”.⁴⁰

In fact, it is what Neeta Kumar states M.A. Sherring’s 1868 description of Banaras as “evidence of a particular way of seeing”.⁴¹

This ‘particular way of seeing’ is apparent in D.E. Jones’ representation of Mizos’ practice of leaving adequate quantity of rice in the cooking pots to be “thrown out as food for pigs” as wasteful:

One fault in the Mizo character is wastefulness or prodigality. No doubt this seems odd in a country which often suffers famine and lacks many important things. Mizoram is in such a frequent danger of famine that one would think there could be no waste. But hey are reckless of their future needs... This reminded me of accusations in France in 1914 against the Mizo namely, that much rice was always left in the cooking pots, and that was thrown out as food for pigs...⁴²

Dirt, Disorder and Disease

“Dirt took on new dimensions in the colonies,” says David Arnold, “as it was seen as something inherent in the colonized people and that the dirt carried by the local people spread disease.”⁴³

In fact the missionary sources are replete with references to “dirt and disorder” while representing the Mizos. Here we are reminded of Mary Douglas’ premise that dirt equates disorder.⁴⁴

In his study on the bubonic plague and urban native policy in South Africa in the early 1900s, Maynard W. Swanson refers to the ‘sanitation syndrome’ as a broad description of the invidious process by which medical officials and other authorities associated the imagery of infectious diseases as a ‘societal metaphor’⁴⁵. He states that disease was both a biological fact and a social metaphor⁴⁶. This metaphor became so powerful that it influenced British and South

African racial attitudes and paved the way towards segregation, culminating in the creation of urban apartheid.⁴⁷ Disease and epidemiology became widespread societal metaphors during the late 19th and early 20th centuries not only in South Africa but outside Africa as well.⁴⁸

The synchronization of missionaries' and colonial officials' hegemony is evident in a note by a medical official related the maintenance of kitchens by the Lushais in the market place since the later was represented as a locus of promiscuous contact and contamination. Thus, the Civil Sub-Head Surgeon in a note dated 11/6/1924 reported to the Superintendent Lushai Hills about the maintenance of kitchens run by the Lushais in the Aizawl bazaar :

The kitchens of the Lushais of Bazar are very untidy and I find flies flying about. It is possible this should be made tidy, and overcrowding in the kitchen owing to the influx of visitors from the interior who covert the kitchens into sleeping compartments during their stay at Aijal at nights time be stopped. I have reasons for apprehension that the rustics from the interior spread the disease at Aijal⁴⁹.

As a result the Superintendent, Lushai Hills, issued notice

The shopkeepers in the bara bazaar are hereby warned that they must keep their kitchens clean and tidy, and they must not use kitchens as their dwelling houses. If anyone is found to use kitchens as dwelling house his pass for the building will be cancelled⁵⁰.

The officials enforced ban on some items like "*thangnang*" (a sort of insect consumed by Lushais), "*theipui*" (a sort of fruit), dry fish and decomposed pork during the prevalence of diarrhoea and dysentery for sale in the market.⁵¹

This synchronization of hegemony is suggested in the subtitle of the book *5 Years In Unknown Jungles: For God and Empire* written by Reginald A. Lorrain, the founder of the Lakher Pioneer Mission.⁵²

However, the colonial officials' main motive behind health concern was more subordinated to the overall control of the society. It is evident from the village codes introduced in 1937 by A.G. McCall, the then Superintendent, Lushai Hills.⁵³

Missionaries' Attitude to Zu (rice beer)

The missionaries hegemony is also obvious in their attitude to *zu* (rice-beer). *Zu* is the colloquial name given to 'beer or any fermented liquor', or 'fermented grains ready for converting into beer by adding water'⁵⁴. The beer is made of fermented rice, millet, maize, etc. mixed with yeast.

There was a variety of *zu* in pre-colonial Mizo society: 'zu pui', 'zu fang' and 'rak zu'. Of these, the first was the most common drink and were taken especially on the occasion of popular festivals. *Zu fang* was taken within the family and 'rak zu' was the prerogative of the chiefs and the *upas* (elders).⁵⁵

Besides its food value, *zu* also played a significant social and religious role in early Mizo society.

The missionaries pronounced *zu* as "one of the curses of this land". In his annual report of the Lushai Hills, 1899-1900, Edwin Rowlands wrote: I was stuck 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 &c.; the chiefs, because they have more time, seem to be rather worse than the villagers. The people are steeped in drinking, superstition, ignorance and carnality.⁵⁶

J.M. Lloyd writes about Mizos/Lushais: "...lazy, cruel, superstitious and very prone to drunkenness."⁵⁷ Another missionary, David Kyles, writes:

The Lushai had very little joy in their lives. Do you wonder that the only time they were ever known to sing was when they were drunk? And they were a drunken people; for ever making large quantities of rice beer and drinking and drinking until there was nothing left to drink.⁵⁸

Lorrain made the following entry on 5/10/1903 in his *Log Book*:

all our converts are total abstainers, this generally recognized that Christian living is incompatible with the drunken raves in which the Lushais delight. There is no such thing as temperance in the matter of beer and spirit drinking out here. The liquor is never taken merely to quench thirst or at meals. It is made in the quantities and raves lasting 2 and 3 days and nights and the recognized mode of enjoyment. I have

made myself heard almost incessant singing for 3 days and nights on end which only ended when the beer gave out. They sit round the pot and sing the most doleful things imaginable drinking from a bison horn turn and turn about. Thus the drink leads to many of the worse vices which the Lushais have and even the habitual drunkards confess that the drink is the sources of more evil in the country than anything else.⁵⁹

Therefore, they introduced prohibition as one of the main agenda for Christian converts. The denial of *zu* was not merely abstinence from drink but an entire way of life associated with it. It also meant discontinuing of numerous religious rites and other social festivals.

The missionaries promoted the drinking of tea as an alternative⁶⁰ which they regarded as symbol of civilization.⁶¹

Counter-Hegemony

There was simmering resentment among the people against missionaries' interference into their cultural practice. Since it was not possible to take arms against the missionaries since they were backed by the powerful colonial state. Therefore, they took resort to what James Scot terms as the 'weapons of weak'⁶² or symbolic resistance⁶³. It took various forms as discussed below:

Ridicule

The Mizo generally enjoy laughter. A number of non-Mizo residing in Aizawl have informed me, specially who had long stint of living in this city and can converse very well in Mizo language, that number of Mizos exchange jokes about Vais (non-Mizos) with each other and this evokes laughter among them. I have been observing when Mizo ridicule others, it is accompanied with huge guffaw.

In fact, the jokes become a vehicle for criticism. Sigmund Freud in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* deals specifically with the motives of jokes and postulates two types of jokes: jokes that have a purpose (tendentious), and those that do not have a purpose and are an end in themselves (innocent)⁶⁴.

“Where a joke is not an aim in itself... There are only two purpose that it may serve... It is either a hostile joke (serving the purpose of aggressiveness, satire, defence) or an obscene (serving the purpose of exposure)”.⁶⁵

Freud writes that “by making out enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him”⁶⁶. When “external circumstances” do not permit political criticism, jokes become especially favoured in order to make aggressiveness or criticism possible against persons in exalted positions who claim to exercise authority. The joke then represents a rebellion against authority, a liberation from its pressure.⁶⁷

There are many cases of such jokes invented by the Mizos of that time about the missionaries. At times, the Mizos viewed the Missionaries as fools and also so were they teased when Missionaries used to pass through village, the Mizo children used to sing:

*‘Sap ka hmu
Sak vak vai ka hmu
Puk zing tlanga vak vai
Sak ka hmu’*

This means, “I see white man, big white fools, Two I see along the ridge of Pukzin, Two wandering white fools, I see (or meet)”.⁶⁸

Occasionally, the young preachers were “challenged by a village ‘tough’ (as Lushais used to challenge visitors) to a bout of wrestling. Sometimes men used to try to compel them to drink Zu (Lushai Beer).”⁶⁹ Llyod himself revealed that he himself had to undergo such experience. A bamboo cup full of *zu* was pushed in his face and almost down his throat.⁷⁰ Gradually such hostility towards evangelization became so vehement that the ‘converts’ began to be victimized in different ways. John Vanlal Hluna narrates these as follows:

If a Christian died the other villagers would refuse to bury him (this is a recognized Lushai obligation). At other times, some Christian families after having cleared and prepared their rice-fields had the fields forcibly

taken from them. Christians were often forced to work on Sundays or punished for not helping to make beer for a village feast. If the chief wanted chickens for some special entertainment he took mostly from the Christians. This was a very common occurrence and in fact, majority of the chiefs made great exertions to stop the rising tide of Christianity.⁷¹

One of the chiefs went to the extent of expelling “those converts from his village under the torrential rain of midnight”⁷².

D.E. Jones, in his annual report of 1906-07, informed:

This year will long be remembered as the year in which persecution broke out, and for many months the Christians were in great fear. Many were driven from their houses and out of their villages. The chiefs soon found out that they dare not injure the Christians without bringing down upon their heads the punishment of Government, so they compelled relatives of the christians to beat them, to threaten them and many were ostracised by the heathen community. Public meetings were prohibited, and children were forbideen to go to school. 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. It is also reported that several have done the same in Hrangliana’s village. Some chief fine their village for listening to the preaching of the Gospel.⁷³

In fact embracing Christianity entailed giving up agricultural activities on Sundays and other community festivities. These were related to fertility rites etc.⁷⁴ In fact, even such a perception did exist among the tribal communities of other regions of north-east also. For example in one of the grievances among the leaders of the Adi community of post-colonial Arunachal Pradesh was that the ‘conversion’ to christianity involved disruption of some of activities related to agricultural production specifically on Sundays.⁷⁵ Therefore, food was central to the grievances against the Church.

Drink and Feasting, A site of Resistance-Carnival

Gradually this resistance took the shape of movement popularly known as ‘Puma Zai’ movement. The ‘Puma Zai’ (the song of

Puma), originated from a northern village called Ratu in 1907⁷⁶. Puma Zai was a '*Zai*'⁷⁷ "composed of a double-lined refrain of any number of verses with an ambiguous appellation *Puma* at the end of the first line of every refrain. Hence the name *Puma Zai*."⁷⁸ J. Herbert Lorraini in the annual report for 1908 wrote:

A strange song, called "Puma Zai", which is said to owe its origin to a man possessed by demons, made its appearance in the north some months ago, and spread like wildfire over the country...In village after village the song was welcomed by the heathen as a revelation from the Evil One, and sacrifices were offered, accompanied by much beer-drinking and dancing to inaugurate its use.⁷⁹

The song spread like "blazing bits of cotton", and quickly "filled the land and excited the entire population"⁸⁰. Great feasts were held during which the young men and girls danced in ecstasy. These demonstrations were made in every village⁸¹. The singing was accompanied by ecstatic movements. The excitement "became so great while it was being sung that even as they ate the the young people would dance around, holding their food in one hand and waving the other".⁸² At a later stage of the movement, it came to be known as *Tlanglam Zi*-The Communal Dance.⁸³

The feast and drinking became the site of what Bakhtin terms as 'carnival'. According to Bakhtin, carnival "celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order"⁸⁴. Carnival laughter is "licensed affair", "a permissible rupture of hegemony"⁸⁵ as well as a vehicle for social protest,⁸⁶ a means of projecting counter hegemony on the part of the subordinate classes of the society. It may often act as "catalyst and site of actual and symbolic struggle".⁸⁷ The Mizos, in fact, symbolically inverted the relationships between the dominant and the dominated. Barbara Babcock defines "symbolic inversion" as:

as an act of expressive behaviour which inverts, contradicts, abrogates, or in some fashion presents an alternative to commonly held cultural codes, values and norms be they linguistic, literary or artistic, religious, social and political.⁸⁸

It was a rebellion against the authority. Rebellion, says Albert Camus in his book *The Rebel* (*L'Homme révolté*, 1951), “is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms.”⁸⁹ The rebel according to Camus “is a man who says no” — a man who until recently has remained silent and has accepted the circumstances of his life, although he believes them to be unjust ; a man who suddenly turns and faces injustice.”⁹⁰

In fact the contemporary missionaries did perceive Puma Zai as rebellion against the church.⁹¹ Liangkhaia pronounced it as “the work of the spirit of Satan and a great manifestation of the power of darkness”⁹² For Lloyd, it was “a sudden resurgence of heathenism.”⁹³ Lorrain viewed it as a “device of Satan, to retard the progress of the Gospel in these hills.”⁹⁴ J. Meirion Llyod states:

While the movement lasted many Christians felt stunned, a few indeed recanted and even the singing of the Christian hymns lost its flavour for the time being... The cause of Christ seemed doomed in Lushai.⁹⁵

A verse to ridicule the evangelists like this is taken up in support of the movement as anti-Christian.

Lehkhabu keng vai lemchang
Chanchin hril reng reng Puma

Carrying book, imitating foreigners,
Always proclaiming something Puma⁹⁶

The missionaries were so alarmed by this movement that they officially put a “complete ban on beer drinking, participation in any feasts and festivals of any form, native songs and tunes together with religious chants of any kind, or on any other practical connections with the old religion.”⁹⁷ They enforced the ban in a very rigid manner as observed by Zairema “if you as much as lick your fingers dipped in rice- beer, you are liable to excommunication” and the church “would discipline any member who even hummed the (*Puma Zai*) music even unconsciously.”⁹⁸

Finally, the missionaries could muster the support of the colonial officials to enforce prohibition.

End of the Puma Zai Movement

There has been an assumption that the outbreak of bamboo flowering of 1911-12 leading to food crisis defused the popularity of Puma Zai.⁹⁹ According to Sajal Nag the ‘famine’ provided an opportunity to the missionaries to provide relief to the affected people.¹⁰⁰ The colonial officials provided support to the missionaries in buttressing the relief further. Herbert Lorrain, the missionary believes that the relief abetted in dispelling whatever ‘feelings of resentment’ lingering in the hearts of some of the Mizos against the missionaries as well as the British Indian government.¹⁰¹ In this manner missionaries could earn the esteem of the indigenous communities.¹⁰² It therefore led to another revival wave in 1913.¹⁰³ Now onwards, the spread of Christianity took a speedy momentum in Mizoram.

Negotiation

It has been argued by a number of historians that the ‘famine’ in colonial Mizoram created conditions for the emergence of a new religious movement termed as ‘Revival’. It was a movement within Christianity. There were four major waves of this movement spanning over a period of 30 years (1907 to 1937)¹⁰⁴. During this period Christianity spread like ‘wild fire’ in Mizoram. Sajal Nag argues that it was the politics of the missionaries which was responsible for the imposition of ‘Revival’ among the Mizos. Despite the efforts made by the missionaries to increase the number of ‘converts’ to Christianity they could not achieve much success. Famine provided them an opportunity to reach the Mizos with relief and thus could get wide acceptance among them. This was one of the major reasons for the remarkable growth of Christianity.¹⁰⁵ There is no doubt that famine did create a space for the spread of Christianity but to impute this to the politics of missionaries is to ignore the agency of the popular classes. The masses are not passive and ‘inert’. They are invested with an agency of their own. It was the collective efforts on the part of the Mizos to “change their established way of life”¹⁰⁶ The peasant consciousness

was religious in nature.¹⁰⁷ If we accept the definition of religion as constituting 'assimilated folk beliefs'.¹⁰⁸ Writing about the Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935 Partha Chatterjee argues that the peasant consciousness was 'necessarily suffused with religion':

the ideology which shaped and gave meaning to the various collective acts of the peasantry was fundamentally religious. The very nature of peasant consciousness, the apparently consistent unification of an entire set of beliefs about nature and about men in the collective and active mind of a peasantry, is religious. Religion to such a community provides an ontology, an epistemology as well as a practical code of ethics, including political ethics. When this community acts politically, the symbolic meaning of particular acts –their signification- must be found in religious terms.¹⁰⁹

Though the peasants' consciousness is based on their own experiences of lived life but perhaps it may not be totally autonomous since it also gets evolved in the process of time and in this respect one may not completely rule out the role of 'elite hegemony'. They may receive the ideas from outside but they have the choice to 'remake' them in terms of their own agenda. In other words, there is always a possibility of negotiating with the 'elite' hegemony and in the process infuse their own subjectivity. That is the reason that the Mizos reshaped the 'western Christianity' and made it more 'indigenized'. The spread of christianity, therefore was the work of the 'local' persons as well as missionaries. In this regard two key areas : education and medical activities did play a significant role in further development and growth of the Christianity.

Once there developed 'local church' the others who had not yet come into the fold of the new faith could still emulate their practices through observation. It may equally be applied to the spread of new food-ways, as Andrea Willey remarks:

It is worth noting that culinary behaviors can spread very rapidly through observation, teaching, and diffusion, while genetic change is relatively slow, with advantageous genes spreading through the population over many, many generations.¹¹⁰

It is evident in the way the Lakher (Maras) observed with curiosity the food practices of the founder of Lakher Pioneer mission Reginald A. Lorrain, when he along with his wife having constructed a house and settle down to taking their food:

We found ourselves bustling round our little bamboo hut, making the little abode which was to be our home for the next two and a half months as comfortable and cosy as it was possible under the circumstances. Our first meal was spread, and thanking God for preserving us during the past night, we sat down to partake of it, while outside of the hut with staring eyes stood a large crowd of Lakher children and Lakher men and women watching us manipulate to their great wonder our knives and our forks, and eating our food seated upon chairs-a thing totally unknown amongst themselves naturally, for squatting on the ground with a common dish of rice in their midst, seizing their food by their hand and thrusting it into their open mouth, was the only manner in which they knew where with to supply the inner man with the necessary food.¹¹¹

Public Sphere: Civil Society Organizations and Food Practices

The missionary print culture¹¹² along with 'new literacy' contributed to the creation of 'Mizo public' (Mizo public sphere)¹¹³. The Young Mizo Association (YMA) civil society organization started playing the role of 'moral and intellectual leadership' in the Mizo society.

The question arises whether the concept of 'civil society' is applicable in the context of colonial Mizoram? The 'existence of civil society' in the Third World countries says Niraja Gopal Jayal 'remains a contentious question'.¹¹⁴ According to Sudipta Kaviraj, the civil society, in the sense of associational groups in the context of India, cannot be considered as civil society.¹¹⁵ But there are others who have offered anthropological models to provide an alternative model to the western model of civil society. In this respect Chris Hann says:

These show that different human communities are concerned with establishing their own version of a civil society in their own differing ways, and therefore the search for the replication of a universalist (i.e. Western) model of civil society all over the world should be abandoned.¹¹⁶

Therefore, we are following this concept of civil society in the context of various forums. Here we would be taking the case of Young Mizo Association (YMA) in the context of Mizoram. This organization was established on 15 June 1935 and was known as 'Young Lushai Association'. It was started by early Mizo Christians under the inspiration of the Welsh missionaries.¹¹⁷ On 7 October 1947, in accordance with the resolution passed by the Central Committee of the YLA, the YLA was changed to 'Young Mizo Association' (YMA). The periodical *Kristian Tlangau*, published by the Welsh Mission, Aizawl from 1911, became a weapon in the hands of YMA for forging its 'civilizing role' in the society.¹¹⁸

Along with the questions of sanitation, YMA also intervened in the practices related to 'table manners' related to dining. Issues related to cleanliness of cooking utensils, spoons, cups, saucers, etiquettes related to dining became significant sites of creating new tastes on the part of YMA.¹¹⁹ In April 1950, a General Conference of the YMA passed a resolution which dealt with matters like 1) observation of rules of sanitation, 2) proper eating habits or etiquettes concerning table manners and 3) matters concerning *zu* or drinking of liquor.¹²⁰ In fact, YMA intervened into all practices related to cuisine and also critiqued the existing manners and morals connected with eating of food and washing of utensils.¹²¹

As the missionaries scoffed at the Mizos' practice of sharing food from the same plate *thlangra*¹²², Young Mizo Association, therefore censured this practice since it was perceived to be detrimental to health.¹²³

Food and Ethnic Identity

The relationship of food with one's individual and even social identity has been recognized by a number of food scholars. Thus, David Inglis et.al maintained:

Finding out what someone eats, and what s/he does not eat, can tell you a great deal about that person and wider cultural context which has shaped them in which they live.¹²⁴

Continuing their discussion, David Inglis et al. argue:

What people eat is to a certain degree individually idiosyncratic; but it also very much reflects the nature of the group(s) they belong to, and the life conditions of those groups.¹²⁵

In fact, it is the food that unites us with all our ancestors.¹²⁶

For example the sharing of food from a common plate (*thlangra*) does reveal the group or social identity of the Mizos. And this gets affirmed during the community feasts wherein the practices of eating from *thlangra* still exists. I remember that in 2008 I had accompanied the fourth semester students to *Reik* for picnic and observed this practice. I saw a group of students were putting rice and dishes including meat, salad etc. on the side of *thlangra*. However, it was a wooden *thlangra*. The students offered me a separate plate along with cooked rice, vegetables, salad and meat but I offered to share food with them and sat and ate from the *thlangra*. The students felt embarrassed since they were conscious of my ethnic identity. But I wanted to share the food with them. Ultimately, they not only gave consent but also were delighted. One student narrated to me the history of this practice of commensality. I was told that their ancestors used to take food everyday like this only. All the family members used to share the food from common plate. In fact, among the Mizos there does not seem to be the concept of *jutthhan* (leftover) and I have myself observed this on a number of occasions. As discussed earlier that there was a tradition of keeping the leftover for the pigs and dogs. It may also indicate the practice of 'communal' values.

However, I observed that one of the female students was taking food from a tiffin box brought from home. She had brought empty tiffin box and had put the food prepared by the picnic party and was eating with the help of a spoon. Other students were having it with hands. When I enquired from her, she informed me that Young Mizo Association (YMA) had forbidden to take from common plates and also had advised everyone to use spoons. She informed me in whispering tone that taking food from *thlangra* is an unhealthy practice.

But why did the students assert that it is a marker of our identity? Is it part of the larger Mizo identity which has been developing since colonial times? The Young Mizo Association

(YMA) has been striving to consolidate the Mizo identity which has been developing since colonial times. The 'revival' of a number of traditional practices has been an important aspect of forging of this identity. The revival of *thlangra* is a good example of forging identity. However, the 'revival' of tradition is a very selective process. It involves rejection of some and selection of other practices. However, tradition is not something fixed permanently. It is a dynamic process. It can be reformulated or modified to suit the needs of existing society. At times, the tradition may be invented and 'grafted on the old'.¹²⁷ Thus, the practice of use of a common plate *thlangra* was revived with some modification. The Mizos were advised to put clean plantain leaves on *thlangra* before sharing the food from this common plate.¹²⁸ It is evident from the following pictures:

Food-Fests

Organizing food-fests in different regions of Mizoram is another example of manifestation of Mizo ethnic identity. I observed one such food-fest organized by the State Food Processing Mission under National Mission on Food Processing, Industries Department, Government of Mizoram from 5-8 March 2014. Participants were divided into two: Processing and Servicing. The question is: how is it related with the question of identity? An identity is not a fixed entity, it is not a marble piece. Identity is a dynamic process and keeps on evolving. Though the Mizo processing industry is claimed to be indigenous but it is indigenous to the extent that the product produced in Mizoram get modified according to the changing needs of the society. Thus, special mixed pickle and meat balls, beef pickle, beef grind-masala-ginger tlem-garlic, black peppers, banana chips, yam chips, etc. All of these commodities were being demonstrated in this food-fest and also the customers were buying them. Even the Mizo food was being prepared there itself and sold.

The following are some of the pictures taken by me during that Food-Fest (Pictures No. 37-42). These photographs were taken by me during my field-work:



Picture 35: Young boys and girls sitting around *thlangra* and sharing the food. Source: <https://vibbi.com/tag/thlangra>, https://www.google.co.in/search?q=thlangra&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN748IN748&oq=thlangra&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l2.507j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 accessed on 4/12/17.



Picture 36: Young boys and girls sitting around *thlangra*. It may be a part of the community feast. Source: https://www.google.co.in/url?sa=t&rc=t=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=14&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0ahUKEwiIosDf7e_XAhVJv48KHcQuAMYQfghgMA0&url=https%3A%2F%2Fvibbi.com%2Ftag%2Fthlangra&usg=AOvVaw06S63EJbDzZnB5E89nx_9A <https://vibbi.com/tag/thlangra>, https://www.google.co.in/search?q=thlangra&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN748IN748&oq=thlangra&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l2.507j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 accessed on 4/12/17.

It is to promote the 'authentic' Mizo food¹²⁹. I do understand the implications of the category 'authenticity' since it is a constructed one. No culture in this sense may be regarded 'authentic' since it does interact with other cultures and there is always a negotiation and, therefore, exchange of culture does take place. However, gradually the people do infuse their own meanings into it and



Picture 37



Picture 38



Picture 39



Picture 40



Picture 41



Picture 42

make it their own. I am using category of 'authenticity' in this aspect only.

It would be worthwhile to provide another example of a food coming from outside, getting digested and being given a new meaning and in the process becoming an indigenous food. On visiting any tea stall or small restaurant, the most conspicuous food item that one may find local persons eating would be *chana* and *parontha*. It is in fact refashioning of *puri-bhaji* taken as breakfast or evening tiffin among the Bengalis. Of course, now in the whole of eastern India, it is popular in one form or another. Even in Punjab one may see people taking *puri* and *alu sabzi*. How did it enter Mizoram and how did it become such a popular snack item in whole of Mizoram? I had been enquiring from various local persons about *chana* and *parontha*. The majority of the young boys and girls (mainly students from Mizoram University and specifically our own post-graduate students from the Department of History and Ethnography) who asserted it is very much a Mizo food. When I further questioned that the wheat was never grown in Mizoram, they just got puzzled. The elderly persons to whom I put this question, I got different answers. Some argued that it was Nepalis who had accompanied the British Indian army and after annexation of Lushai Hills were given land in and around Aizawl, had brought this food. Others argued that it was Bengali officials who had introduced this. There were a number of respondents who asserted that *chana* and *parontha* became more popular during the food crisis of 1959 caused by bamboo flowering. It was termed as 'Mautam'.¹³⁰ Here we are reminded of observations made by an anthropologist Sidney Mintz who claimed that the acceptance of new foods by a group usually requires major disruptions, like war, or crop failure, or migration, in their ordinary diets. Both migration from one country to another and migration within a single country are important (particularly rural to urban migration), as are agricultural reforms, especially if they result in the displacement of a segment of the population from the land.¹³¹

The food crisis of 1959 and the 'insurgency' (1966-1986) in Mizoram was a major period of disruption in society since the grouping of villages had led to displacement of the rural

population. One of my respondents had informed me that when the government started providing *atta* (wheat flour) in rations, his mother (in Lunglei) used to make balls of *atta* after kneading and would boil these into water and thus 'we used to take this as an alternative food'¹³². The wheat flour is made into *chapatis* (*rotis*) in north India but Mizo adapted this in their own way.¹³³ Similarly the *puri* and *channa* was adapted and became *parantha* and *channna*. Again citing from Sidney Mintz, the diffusion of new foods requires adapting that food to local tastes and dietary habits, mixing it with other indigenous foods. In the case of potato, Europeans gradually learned to enjoy the potato by making it their own.¹³⁴ Charles L. Harper, Bryan F. Le Beau provide us the example from United States of America:

The United States evolved from the thirteen British colonies of North America. Most of those colonists were English, but Dutch, French, German, Scotch-Irish, Spanish, African, and Swedes were also included. They came for various reasons, and some, like the Africans, had no choice. But all had to adapt or modify their cuisines... But as the colonists drove Indians inland, they also began to import the foods to which they were accustomed, and they created hybrid and blended cuisines.¹³⁵

Similarly the Mizo adapted the food from outside and modified and created hybrid and blended cuisines. Thus, the manner of eating *parantha* (termed as *puri* in other parts of India) is different. Some local persons roll the *puri* and take it along with sipping *thingpuui* (tea). Others take it with *chana*. Nevertheless it is treated as a snack and not either breakfast or full meal. It is a clear case of a food coming from outside and gets different meaning when the local people digest it and make it their own. In other words, it transforms the 'foreign' components in the process of domestication. In fact, there are many such examples where the food coming from outside is 'remade' and given a different meaning in a recipient society. One may term it as 'hybrid' food.¹³⁶

Cook Books

A number of historians and anthropologists have been taking keen interest in cookbooks. Their spread is an important sign of what

Norbert Elias has called “the civilizing process.”¹³⁷ The cookbooks tell remarkable cultural stories. The cookbooks provide us an insight into the issues of literacy, ethnicity, women and domesticity of a particular culture¹³⁸. The most significant work dealing with comparative treatment of cuisine is that of Goody.¹³⁹ Besides, there are a number of other works which have provided a comparative study of cuisine.¹⁴⁰

There have not been many cook books written in Mizoram. I could come across only two cook books written in Mizo language and published during 2012 to 2015. Here we get a glimpse of food which is not only Mizo but the methodology to cook Mizo food is also new. There is also some pages devoted to Indian and Western food to be cooked in different style. In other words, the cook books are about hybrid foods.

Internet Cook Books

In the post-colonial period, some of the persons from Mizoram adopted some attributes of ‘mainland’ ‘Indian food’.¹⁴¹ They learnt how to prepare them at their homes. Some experienced people posted the preparation process and the ingredients with pictures in social networking sites so that others might learn from them. That is why I have used the category ‘Internet cookbooks’.

The following are some of the pictures of ‘mainland Indian food’ pasted on the social network by the above-mentioned persons.

I have been informed by my respondents that these foods have become popular among the ‘educated’ Mizo families.¹⁵⁶

Food and Memory

There is also a tendency among the Mizo migrants to other cities of India to crave for Mizo food. Once during winter vacation when I was preparing to leave for my home town (New Delhi), a faculty member (a Mizo) from Mizoram University requested me to hand over to his niece residing at Delhi two packets: one containing smoked pork and the other some ‘special’ Mizo green leaves. When I handed over these packets to her, I could espy a sense of



Picture 43: Bhundia prepared by Dingi hauhna (female).¹⁴²



Picture 44: Dhokla prepared by Jandy Laldumtei Kiangte (Female)¹⁴³



Picture 45: Raj Kachuri prepared by Rosie L. Ralte (female) ¹⁴⁴



Picture 46: Alu Dum prepared by Esther Joseph (female) ¹⁴⁵



Picture 47: Pani Puri/Pushkha, prepared by Elentia Ralte (female) ¹⁴⁶



Picture 48: Alu Tikki prepared by Esther Joseph (female) ¹⁴⁷



Picture 49: Beef Kabab prepared by Irene Hnamte (female)¹⁴⁸



Picture 50: Coconut Ladoos prepared by Priss Zopari (female)¹⁴⁹



Picture 51: Ghajar Ka Halwa, prepared by Kawlthan Zami (female)¹⁵⁰



Picture 52: Bengali Style Fish Curry prepared by Rosie L Ralte (female)¹⁵¹



Picture 53: Chholar Dal Halwa prepared by Rosie L Ralte (female)¹⁵²



Picture 54: Jelebi prepared by Dingi Hauhnar (female)¹⁵³



Picture 55: Chicken Masala Curry prepared by Priss Zopari (female)¹⁵⁴



Picture 56: Chicken Biryani prepared by Benjamin Ht (male)¹⁵⁵

happiness in her face. Once I saw the similar leaves in the hands of a fellow Mizo traveller to Delhi in flight and I asked him why he is carrying this. And the answer was “for my daughter”. When I informed him that such leaves are available at the INA market in south Delhi, he told me that there is no comparison with Mizo leaves which are very delicious.

How do we explain this tendency? One explanation may be that cuisine has also been the site of ethnicity as has been argued by many anthropologists, sociologists and historians. Through repeated meals, ethnicity is performed and produced. A particular habitus¹⁵⁷ is inculcated, and a tight knot drawn, which binds together groups of people through the type of food provided and the modality of eating it¹⁵⁸.

In this respect, the work done by Duncan McDuie-Ra on migrants from the North-East in Delhi is relevant.¹⁵⁹ He argues:

Northeasters cannot get by in Delhi without access to Northeast food. ... Respondents would mention the centrality of food time and time again. Food is what respondents missed most about home. Being unable to get food is what they hated most about Delhi¹⁶⁰.

... Food is embedded in ethnic and tribal identities, and being a Hmar, a Khasi, or a Nishi in Delhi means being able to eat the food of home. Knowing where to locate food is fundamental to Northeast knowledge of Delhi. Veterans of the city build this knowledge over time and pass it on to newcomers¹⁶¹...Migrants eat a lot of meat, including beef and pork. ... Alongside pork, an essential part of most cuisine is bamboo shoots (again a product of hill ecology), as well as chilli, fermented fish (known by different names among different communities), yam, garlic, and ginger. Chicken and fish are also popular. In several hill areas, people eat dog, much to the consternation of others in India¹⁶²...As migration has increased, there are several restaurants serving Northeast food in Delhi.¹⁶³

Duncan McDuie-Ra takes four main components of ‘north-east’ map of Delhi: neighbourhoods, food, religion, and protest. He uses Henri Lefebvre’s concept of ‘the production of space’¹⁶⁴ and takes these four components as site of producing north-eastern space in Delhi.¹⁶⁵

I do agree with Duncan’s views since I also have been observing

and interacting with North-East students as well as the working people in Delhi. However, I also have noticed that within the North-East group, the Mizos have also created a group within the group. The Mizos prefer to mingle with their fellows from Mizoram and sharing Mizo food in each others' rented houses becomes a site for them where they produce a mini space of Mizoram. Sharing food in such house with Mizo friends makes them imagine that they are eating food in the family. I have observed the Mizos enjoying dining in the evening with their family members. A number of my Mizo friends used to display reluctance when I used to invite them sometimes for evening dinner at my home. Though they never refuse but their body language could divulge the sense of reluctance. One day I requested such a Mizo friend who was very close to me and he informed me that "we don't want to miss evening dinner with the family."¹⁶⁶ Here what Alan Beardworth and Teresa Keil write about the significance of food and eating within the private sphere of family, seems to me applicable to Mizo society as well:

The domestic world of the family is inextricably linked to the structures of the wider social system, and this is no less true of eating than of any other aspect of family life...the family's continuing importance as a unit of consumption and the powerful formative influences it continues to assert over its members.¹⁶⁷

However, I was aware of the fact that it was the responsibility of Mizo women for buying, preparing and serving food in the family. When I put such questions— "Do you enjoy buying, preparing and serving food in your family?"— to my women respondents across age during my fieldwork, I received different views. Large number of them remarked that it is their duty to prepare and serve food and therefore they enjoy this as their 'sacred' duty. It is not burden for them. However, I received a different answer from one of my respondents at Aizawl whom I knew as my ex-student and was working in one of the offices at Mizoram Secretariat and one of her brothers was based in a different city in North-East India. She said:

You see, Pu Dawar, these men come and order us to cook this and that and a variety and it is burdensome to me because while I reach home from office it is already late and I feel tired and therefore I advise my brother when he visits Aizawl for some official work to stay in the State Guest House. However, when he comes for a longer period, naturally, he stays in my house.¹⁶⁸

But this may be an exceptional case and requires further intensive fieldwork.

I also examined the question of 'nutritional inequalities'¹⁶⁹ related to gender and age within the family. Delphy provides such an example of such inequality in a study of the foodways of the traditional peasant family in rural France.¹⁷⁰ Men, the author points out:

customarily held a privileged position in relation to scarce food resources, this applying particularly to male heads of households. Thus, butcher's meat, a relatively rare item on this traditional menu, was largely reserved for men or, if it was shared, men were allocated the choice cuts¹⁷¹.

I sent an e-mail to one of a former PhD scholar, Vanlalremruata Tonson, enquiring about existence of such a practice in Mizoram and I received the following reply through e-mail. I am providing a few lines of the message he sent. He informed me that he is writing it from his childhood memory:

The internal organs of meat are usually taken by the elders – the intestine, stomach, subsidiary stomach of ruminant, heart and kidney. However, liver and spleen are usually given to children, kidney also often given to children. With regard to chicken some families used to be divided in parts among themselves, for instance, the head will be taken by a young boy, the leg will be taken the mother etc. In some cases all the family members have their own portion, but not always...The practices are uniform among different communities of Mizo.¹⁷²

However, I put the following question through e-mail:

There was a practice among many indigenous communities that men need more nutrition since they do hard work and women need less nutrition since they do soft work. this was assumption in some communities. what

about Mizo pre-modern society? were the women given less importance in terms of nutrition?¹⁷³

I received the following message the next day:

There was no such practice. But, recently married women used to say that they did not take food to the full as a show of modesty or manner. At night they used to visit their parents and take food there to the full.¹⁷⁴

However, when I put this question to women they refuted the above generalization and informed me that there is no gender discrimination on the question of sharing food in the family. Each one in the family is free to take as much food as they like and it applied to all women members of the family equally.¹⁷⁵

Nevertheless, the Mizo boys residing in Delhi do relish the taking of food with the family and when they share the food at Delhi with fellows from Mizoram at some Mizo's house they imagine it as taking food in their own families back in Mizoram. Thus, a number of Mizo migrants to Delhi informed me that they would prefer the raw food reaching directly from Mizoram through friends and relatives and cook the same at home.

Even the Mizo diaspora 'produce' their space for Mizo food on the basis of their memory. They grow such food either in their kitchen gardens if sufficient space is available otherwise they grow this in pots. They either dry or freeze it for preserving the traditional foods. For example bamboo shoots as a food is relished in whole of North-East India and so in Mizoram also. Thus, Alexander Ralte (a Mizo migrant from Mizoram) from New Bern, North Carolina, has been growing bamboo in his garden so as to get Bamboo shoots. The following picture (No.57) represents this crop.¹⁷⁶

Another good example is that of *hmarcha* (chili) which is very popular in Mizoram and its consumption is very widespread. It is shown below.¹⁷⁷

Similarly there are many such examples of which just a few have been selected.

This edible plant is believed to have medicinal qualities. The Mizo advise it to the persons with high blood pressure. But it is

regularly taken by everyone. It is available in the wild form itself. One may visit any vegetable market or vendor and would find this edible plant.¹⁸⁰



Picture 57

Similarly, Ramthianghlimi Bungst from Berkely, California, grows in her kitchen garden edible plants popular in Mizoram. The following picture is good example of this.



Picture 58

Mizo soldiers participated in the First and Second World Wars as British soldiers, and they went to France. From France



Picture 59: *Culantro* or *Bahkhawr* (wild coriander): It is a specific variety grown in Mizoram.¹⁷⁸



Picture 60: *Mizo dawl rep* / dried taro: The Mizo are very fond of this food.¹⁷⁹



Picture 61: *Phuihnam*. Biological name is *Clerodendrum Colebrookianum* Walp

they brought home one kind of mustard seeds, the Mizo grew it and named it Feren Antam meaning France Mustard (since they cannot pronounce France correctly, they pronounced it FEREN). Mizo's favourite way of using this kind of mustard is to cook/boil it with pork.¹⁸¹

Conclusion

Colonialism and Christianity had created new tastes in terms of food. The missionaries not only represented their food practices in a negative way but also endeavoured to intervene into these specifically those who had embraced the new faith. Even the civil society organizations who had been highly hegemonized by the missionaries, introduced new manners and moral in terms of food



Picture-62: *Feren Antam* (France Mustard)

practices and continued to do even in the post-Independence period. Though new food had been introduced from outside but the local people adapted these in their own terms and recreated these and made it their own.

NOTES

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3. Raymond Williams, *Keyword*, cited in Jagdish Lal Dawar, *ibid*.
4. *Ibid*.
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13. Mann Anna, et al. 2011 Mixing Methods, Tasting Fingers: Notes on an Ethno graphic Experiment. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 1(1): 221-243.
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15. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 55-60; Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980, ch. 6, esp. pp. 170, 173; and Perry Anderson 'The Antonomies of Antonio Gramsci', *New Left Review*, 100, (1976-77): 5-78.
16. T.J. Jackson Lears, 'The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 3, 1985, pp. 573, 578.
17. Antonio Gramsci, *Selection From The Prison Note Books*, p. 244.
18. Ibid, p. 258.
19. K. Thanzaupa, 'Bcm Today And Tommorrow' (Chapter 21), in *Compendium: The Baptist Church of Mizoram in Honour of BMS Mission in Mizoram, 1903-2003*, The Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkaun, Lunglei, 2003, p. 202.
20. I have made this generalization after having gone through the

following works:

(a) David E. Jones & Edwin Rowlands, 'Report of the Lushai Hills, 1899-1900', in K.Thanzauva, *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957*, The Synod Literature and Publication Boards, Aizawl, 1997, pp. 5-9; (b) For Baptist Mission, see F.W. Savidge, Reports of 1903, in Baptist Mission Report of 1904, 1905, in *The Annual Report Of Bms On Mizoram 1901-1938*, Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn (Mizoram), pp. 11-13, 21-22; (c) Lalhmuaka, *Zoram Zirna Chhinchhianhna*, Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1981 (d) C. Lalkung, *History of Mizo Education*, Hnamte Press, Aizawl, 1979; (e) J.V. Hluna, *Education And Missionaries In Mizoram*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, Delhi, 1992. This author has provided the descriptive account of the role of missionaries in developing the education among the Mizos.

21. As in food note no. 20.
22. I have taken up this issue in the paper "Waste Management in North-East India: Mizoram in colonial times" presented in the Ninth Conference of European Society For Environmental History (ESEH) Biennial Conference 'Natures in between, Environments in areas of contact among states, economic systems, cultures and religions' held at Zagreb, Croatia, 28 June to 2 July 2017. However, I have not sent it anywhere for its publication.
23. See J. Meirion Lloyd, *On Every High Hill*, Synod Publication Board, Aizawl, 1984, p. 60.
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25. Pu Buanga (J.H.LORRAIN), *Log Book* (1889-1936), Archive maintained by Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, p. 27.
26. T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, Reprinted by Firma KLM Private Ltd, on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 1978 (first published in 1870) p. 142.
27. N.E. Parry, *The Lakhers*, Scientific Book Centre, Guwahati, 2016 (Reprint), First published in 1932 by Macmillan and Co., Limited, St. Martini's Street, London, p. 66; also see J. Shakespear, *The Lushei Kuki Clans*, Tribal Research Institute, Department of Art and Culture, Aizawl, Mizoram, 2008, p. 22.
28. Dorothy Glover, *Set on a Hill*, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn, 1993, pp. 15-16.

29. J. Meirion Lloyd, *On Every High Hill*, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
30. Kitty Lewis to her mother dated Aijal, Sunday, 22 April 1923 in *Letters of Kitty Lewis* (former missionary) to her family 1922-23, J.H. Lorrain Archive, Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, Mizoram, pp. 1-2. Since the letters are in her own handwriting and the paper had become so brittle that at times I found difficult even to decipher the letters.
31. J.H. Lorrain, Logbook manuscript, Calvinist Methodist Archives (CMA), National Library of Wales, p. 46; quoted in Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial State, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India*, 1908-1954, op. cit., p. 40. emphasis added by me.
32. PU Buanga (J.H. Lorrain), *Log Book* (1889-1936), Archive maintained by Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, p. 56.
33. Kitty Lewis to her mother, dated Aijal, Sunday, 22 April 1923 op.cit.
34. Lorrain 1936: entry for 16 January 1894, cited in Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem Van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India*, op. cit., p. 48.
35. PU Buanga (J.H. Lorrain), *Log Book* (1889-1936), op. cit., p. 30.
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37. J.H. Lorrain, *Log Book*, 1889-1936, dt. 26 March 1895, p. 46. ATC Archive, C.2.
38. J.H. Lorrain, *Log Book*, 1889-1936, dt. 7 January 1896, p. 52.
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40. See Paul Rabinow (1989), *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment*, Cambridge, Mass, pp. 30-34. Also Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (1986), *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London. Cited in Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'Of Garbage, Modernity and the Citizen's Gaze', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol.27, No.10/11 (Mar. 7-14, 1992), pp. 541-547 (quoted at p.No. 541).
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43. David Arnold, *The Tropics and the Traveling Gaze: India, Landscape*

- and *Science 1800–1856*, Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005, cited in Cecilia Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, Routledge, London and New York, 2011, p. 114.
44. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, London: Penguin, 1970, p. 48.
 45. Maynard W. Swanson, “The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony”, *Journal of African History* XVIII(3), 1977, p. 387.
 46. Swanson, ‘The Sanitation Syndrome’, p. 408.
 47. Swanson, ‘The Sanitation Syndrome’, p. 387.
 48. Swanson, ‘The Sanitation Syndrome’, p. 389.
 49. Note dated 11/6/1924 in No. 631-G d/12.6.24 , General File: CB-23 (G-294) (MSA)
 50. No. 631-G d/12.6.24 , General File: CB-23 (G-294) (MSA)
 51. Ibid.
 52. Reginald A. Lorrain, *Five Years in Unknown Jungles: For God And Empire*, Spectrum Publications, Guwahati, 1988 (published on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl). It is a reprint of this book published by Lakher Pioneer Mission, London in 1912; also see Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial state, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India, 1908-1954*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2016, p.33.
 53. Memo. No. 1628-33G.21-9-1937, Village Code, A.G.McCall, Superintendent Lushai Hills.
 54. J.H.Lorrain, *Dictionary of the Lushai Language*, Calcutta, 1975 cited in V.L.Thianga, *Some Aspects of the History of Mizoram Since 1974*, unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2004, p.75.
 55. *Zu in Mizo society* (Past and Present) Tribal research Institute, Mizoram, , Aizawl, 1983, p.3. it is a booklet on the role of Zu in Mizo society.
 56. David E. Jones & Edwin Rowlands, ‘Report of the Lushai Hills, 1899-1900’, in K. Thanzauva, *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957*, op. cit., p. 7.
 57. J.M. Lloyd, *On Every High Hill*, (Liverpool: LMS, 1930), p. 24. quoted in Sajal Nag, *The Uprising: Colonial State, Christian Missionaries, and Anti-Slavery Movement in North-East India, 1908-1954*, op. cit., p. 43.
 58. David Kyles, *Lorrain of the Lushais: Romance and Realism on the North-East Frontier of India*, The Carey Press, London, (year of

- publication not mentioned) ATC Library & Archives, Aizawl, Mizoram.
59. PU Buanga (J.H. Lorrain), *Log Book* (1889-1936), p. 88, Archive, ATC, Aizawl.
 60. A.G. McCall, *Lushai Chrysalis*, Tribal Research Institute, Dept. of Art and Culture, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, 2003 (Reprint), p. 209
 61. See Kitty Lewis Letters to her parents dated 30th December, 1922 and 27th April, 1923 in Letters of Kitty Lewis, op.cit.
 62. For the concept of 'weapons of the weak', I have been influenced by James C. Scot, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Yale University Press, 1985.
 63. Though there are plenty of works that deal with the theme of symbolic resistance but I have been influenced by Peter Stallysbrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca, 1986.
 64. Cited by Samer S. Shehata, "The Politics of Laughter: Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarek in Engyptian Political Jokes", *Folklore*, vol. 103: i, 1992, p. 75, further cited in Jagdish Lal Dawar, 'Representation of Popular Culture in Premchand's Works', *Social Scientist*, Vol. 24, No. 4/6 (Apr. - Jun., 1996), p 124.
 65. quoted by Samer S. Shehata, op. cit., p. 75.
 66. Ibid.
 67. Ibid.
 68. Cited in B.B. Goswami, *The Mizo Unrest: A Study of Politicisation of Culture*, Aakesh Publishers, Jaipur, 1979, p. 44.
 69. John Vanlal Hluna, *Church & Political Upheaval In Mizoram* (A Study of Impact of Christianity on the Political Development in Mizoram), published by Mizo History Association, Aizawl, 1985, p. 16.
 70. J.M. Lloyd, *On Every High Hill*, Liverpool, 1955, p. 33.
 71. John Vanlal Hluna, *Church and Political Upheaval In Mizoram* op. cit., p. 16.
 72. John Vanlal Hluna, *Chanchin Tha chu Ka Zahpui silova*, a play/drama in Mizo based on a true story, published in cyclostyle Form by the Shillong Mizo Church Youth Fellowship, 1970, cited in John Vanlal Hluna, *Church & Political Upheaval In Mizoram* op.cit.,p.16.
 73. The Report of the Lushai Hills, 1906-07 in K. Thanzauva, *Reports of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957*, op. cit., p. 34.
 74. See J.V. Hluna, *Khandaih Harhna*, Aizawl, Dr John V Hluna, 2006,

- pp. 7-17.
75. See Jagdish Lal Dawar, *Cultural Identity of Tribes of North-East India*, Commonwealth Publishers,, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 59-66.
 76. Liangkhaia cited in J.M. Llyod, *History of The Church in Mizoram*, op. cit., p. 108.
 77. According to Rohmingmawi, “Zai’ means the way of singing, or sometimes the term is used to mean ‘a song’”. Rohmingmawi, *Society And Religion In Mizoram: A Study Of Revival Movaement* (1906-1937), unpublished thesis, Department of History & Ethnography, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University, Aizawl, 2013, p 164.
 78. Thanpuui Pa, “Mizo Hla” in J.Malsawma, *Zo Nun*, Aizawl Literary Society, 1971, p. 168 cited in Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram*, ISPCK, Delhi, 2006, p. 180
 79. J. Herbert Lorrain, “Arthington Mission in the South Lushai Hills, Assam, India: Report for 1908”, in *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901-1938*, op. cit., p.48.
 80. Saithanga, Mizo, p 25 cited in Vanlalchhuanawma, *Christianity and Subaltern Culture: Revival Movement as a Cultural Response to Westernization in Mizoram*, op. cit., p. 183
 81. J. Meirion Llyod, *On Every High Hill*, op. cit., p. 55.
 82. K. Zawla, *Pi Pute* p. 316 cited in Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, The Encounter Between Christianity and Zo Culture in Mizoram, Mizo Theological Conference, Aizawl (Mizoram), 1997, p. 238.
 83. J.M.Lloyd, *History of the Church in Mizoram*, op. cit., p.108.
 84. M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (tr. H. Iswolsky), Cambridge, Mass, 1968, p. 109, cited in Jagdish Lal Dawar, ‘Representation of Popular Culture in Premchand’s works’, op. cit., p. 124.
 85. Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin: Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*, London, 1981, p. 148.
 86. See Roger Sales, *English Literature in History 1780-1830: Pastoral and Politics*, London, 1983, p. 169.
 87. Peter Stallysbrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, Ithaca, 1986. p. 14.
 88. Quoted by Peter Stallysbrass and Allon White, *ibid.*, p. 17.
 89. Camus, A. (2012). *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, (Vintage International), Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, Kindle Edition. Cited in Eitan Ginzberg, “Weapons of the Weak orThe Culture of Everyday Resistance to Power Relations”, *GSTF International*

Journal of Law and Social Sciences (JLSS), Vol.3 No.2, April 2014, GSTF International Journal of Law and Social Sciences (JLSS) Vol. 3, No. 2, April 2014, <http://www.globalscienceejournals.com/content/pdf/10.76>, p. 2.

90. Ibid.

91. The resentment against the missionaries was noticed by Herbert Lewin See Herbert Lorrain, Report of 1912 of the B.M.S Mission in the South Lushai Hills, Assam, *The Annual Report of Bms on Mizoram* 1901-1938, Mizoram Gospel Centenary Committee, Baptist Church of Mizoram, Serkawn (Mizoram), p. 85.

92. Liangkhaia, *Mizo chanchin*, The Mizo academy of Letters, 4th edition, Aizawl, 1976 (first published in 1938), p. 136. cited in Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, op. cit., p. 230.

93. J. Meirion Llyod, *On Every High Hill*, Synod Publication Board, Aizawl, 1984, p. 54.

94. J.Herbert Lorrain, 'Arthington Mission In the south Lushai Hills, Assam, India: Report for 1908, in *The Annual Report of BMS on Mizoram, 1901-1938*, op. cit., p. 48.

95. J.M.Llyod, *On Every High Hill*, op. cit., p. 55.

96. C.L. Hminga cited in Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, op. cit., p. 230.

97. Lalsawma, "Holy Spirit and Tribal Emotionalism", p. 37; Minutes of Presbytery, April 1910, Nos. 1-3, 67 all cited in Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, op. cit., p. 257

98. Zairema, *God's Miracle in Mizoram: A Glimpse of Christian Work among Head-Hunters*, Synod Press & Bookroom, Aizawl, 1978, pp. 11, 18 cited in Mangkhosat Kipgen, *Christianity and Mizo Culture*, op. cit., pp. 257-258.

99. Saithanga, cited in J. Meirion Llyod, op. cit., p.108; Mangkhosat Kipgen, op. cit., p. 234.

100. Sajal Nag, "Famine as a Site for Politics of Humanitarianism" Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers in North-East India*, op. cit., pp. 157-234.

101. Herbert Lorrain, 'Report of 1912...', op. cit., p. 85.

102. ibid.,90.

103. See Rohmingmawi, *Society And Religion In Mizoram: A Study Of Revival Movaement* (1906-1937), op. cit.; Mangkhosat Kipgen, op. cit., p. 234; Lalsangkima Pachuau, *Ethnic Identity and Christianity*, Peter Lang, New York, 1998, pp. 140-141

104. See Rohmingmawi, *Society And Religion In Mizoram: A Study Of Revival Movaement* (1906-1937), op. cit.; Lalsangkima Pachuau,

- Ethnic Identity and Christianity*, Peter Lang, New York, 1998 and Sajal Nag, *Pied Pipers In North-East India*, op. cit., pp. 157-234.
105. Sajal Nag, op. cit.
 106. The phrase borrowed from David Hardiman, *The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India*, Oxford University Press, 1995, p. 6.
 107. Here the category of 'peasant' is used in the context of the Mizos. They were the peasants but a different mode of food production, that is, through shifting cultivation.
 108. David Hardiman, *The Coming of the Devi*, op. cit., p. 10.
 109. Partha Chatterjee, 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal, 1926-1935', *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 1, p. 31 quoted in David Hardiman, *The Coming of the Devi*, op. cit., pp. 10-11.
 110. Andrea S.Wiley, *Cultures of Milk*, The Biology and Meaning of Dairy Products in the United States and India, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2014, p. 11.
 111. Reginald A.Lorrain, *Five Years In Unknown Jungles*, For God And Empire, Spectrum Publications On behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1988. (First published in the United Kingdom by the Lakher Pioneer Mission, London in 1912), pp. 70-71.
 112. On missionary Print Culture, I am highly influenced by David Vumlallian Zou's unpublished thesis *The Interaction of Print Culture, Identity and Language in Northeast India*, School Of Geography, Archaeology & Paleocology (GAP), Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland, 2007 (especially the chapters-3: 'Uphill Ascent of God's Machine: The Making of an Evangelical Print Culture', pp. 64-83; Chapter-4: 'Imaginative Geography and Print Culture: Gazing the World through the lens of Mizo missionary magazine', pp. 87-117; chapter-6: 'Mapping Print, Language and Identity: Imagining Mizo community through Bible-based print literacy', pp. 167-194. I am highly grateful to him for sharing his thesis with me. *Kristian Tlangau* (first published in 1911 by the Welsh Mission Bookroom) is a good example of the missionary print. It played an important role in disseminating the values of hygiene, food ways etc.
 113. I am influenced by the writings of a German Philosopher Juergen Habermas for understanding the concept of 'The Public Sphere': Juergen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere', *New German Critique*, 3 (1974): 49; Juergen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*

of the *Public sphere*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1989 (German edition, 1962). He defines public sphere as “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private individuals assemble to form a public body.”

However, I am aware of the pitfalls of using a concept which was generated in the context of the development of bourgeoisie in western Europe and there was hardly any development of this class in Mizoram during this period. However, the educated social group in Mizoram had been performing the role which is analogous to ‘public sphere’.

114. Niraja Gopal Jayal, *Democracy and the State*, Welfare, Secularism and development in Contemporary India, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1999. p.
115. Sudipta Kaviraj, “On State, Society and Discourse in India”, in James Manor (ed) *Rethinking Third world Politics*, Longman, London, 1991; also see James Manor, “Civil Society in India?” Paper presented at seminar on Civil Society, Public Sphere And Organization Behaviour: Approaches to the Study of State-Society Relations in the Non-Western World’, University of Oslo, April 1996.
Implicitly drawing on the first meaning, Partha Chatterjee argues that civil society was the most important site of transformations in the colonial period while political society is the corresponding site in the post-colonial period. He sees an emerging opposition between civil society and political society in the latest phase of the globalization of capital. See Partha Chatterjee, “Beyond the Nation-State? Or Within?” *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. XXXII, nos 1-2, 4-11 January 1997.
116. Chris Hann, “Political Society and Civil Anthropology”, Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn (eds), *Civil Society: Challenging Western Models*, Routledge, London, 1996, p. 20.
117. C.Lalroipua, *YMA Chanchin- YMA Golden Jubilee(1935-1985) Nghilh loh nan*, Central Young Mizo Association, Mizoram, 1985, p. 1.
118. For the concept of ‘civilizing’ I have been influenced by Norbert Elias Elias work, *The Civilizing Process*, Volume 1: The History of Manners, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1978. This ‘civilizing’ role played by Young Mizo Association is evident in the following

articles published from time to time in various issues of *Kristian Tlangau*, see 'Mizoram Y.L.A Chanchin leh Thiltih Tlangpui' Kristian Tlangau Thubelh, Young Lushai Association appendaged to *Kristian Tlangau*, August, 1946, printed at the Loch Printing Press, Aizawl, p. 4; also see Pu Muka, 'Awmdan tha zawk', Kristian Tlangau Thubelh, Young Lushai Association appendaged to *Kristian Tlangau*, June 1936, Welsh Mission Bookroom, Aizawl, pp. 74-75; Kristian Tlangau Thubelh, Young Lushai Association, appendaged to *Kristian Tlangau*, September, 1936, Welsh Mission Bookroom, Aizawl, p. 113; See 'Dan Mawilo Sawina', Speeches made by Pu Hrawva, Pu Mena, Pu Muka, Pu Zalawra and Pu Pasena, Kristian Tlangau Thubelh, Young Lushai Association, appendaged to *Kristian Tlangau*, September, 1937, Welsh Mission Bookroom, Aizawl, pp. 84-86; also see Kristian Tlangau Thubelh, Young Lushai Association, appendaged to *Kristian Tlangau*, February 1938, Welsh Mission Bookroom, Aizawl, p. 9; all the citations in this foot note have been taken from Zothanpuui, 'Civil Society Organizations and Health Care in Mizoram' in Zothanpuui, *History of Health Care in Mizoram: Pre-Colonial Period to 1972*, unpublished thesis, Department of History & Ethnography, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University, 2014, pp. 173-191. Though Zothanpuui has discussed the role of Civil Society Organizations in the development of Health Care but I have interpreted this in terms of exercising their hegemony and thus their role in 'civilizing' process.

119. See *Kristian Tlangau*, February 1938, p. 9, 15-16 cited in Zothanpuui, op. cit., pp. 177-78.
120. C. Vanlallawma, *YMA History, (1935-1995)*, Central YMA in collaboration with NFI, Aizawl, p. 37 cited in Zothanpuui, *History of Health Care in Mizoram: Pre-Colonial Period to 1972*, op. cit., p. 179.
121. see YMA *Thuchah* (Notification), 9 May 1951, Aizawl, also see C. Lalropuia, *YMA Chanchin - YMA Golden Jubilee (1935-1985) Nghilh loh nan*, Central Young Mizo Association, Mizoram, 1985, p. 81, cited by Zothanpuui, op. cit., p. 182.
122. *Thlangra* is a large bamboo tray for sifting and winnowing grains.
123. *Kristian Tlangau*, September, 1940, p. 73, cited in Zothanpuui, op. cit., p. 181.
124. David Inglis, Debra Gimlin and Chris Thorpe, Editors' Introduction: "Food And Human Existence: Understanding Diverse Modes of Culinary Life", in David Inglis, Debra Gimlin and Chris Thorpe (eds), *Food, Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*, Volume 1,

Thinking Food, Routledge, London and New York, 2008, p. 1.

125. Ibid., p. 2.

126. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Food: A History*, Pan Macmillan Ltd, London, 2002, p. 2

127. For the concept of 'Invention of tradition' I am influenced by Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Invention of Traditions', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 1-14.

128. YMA *Thuchah* (Notification) 9 May 1951, Aizawl, cited in Zothanpuui, op. cit., p 181.

129. Interview with one of the govt. officials. The festival was organized under the tutelage Government of Mizoram.

130. See chapter three.

131. Sidney Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1996, cited in Charles L. Harper, Bryan F. Le Beau, *Food, Society, and Environment*, op. cit., p. 55; also see E. Messur, 'Three Centuries of changing European Tastes for the potato' in H. Macbeth (ed.), *Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change*, Berghahn Books, Providence, 1997, p. 107.

132. Conversation with my colleague, Dr. Lalngurliana Sailo, 2014.

133. Nowadays, Mizo women can make *chapatis/roti* just like those in other parts of India.

134. Sidney Mintz, *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, op. cit., 1996, cited in Charles L. Harper, Bryan F. Le Beau, *Food, Society, And Environment*, op. cit., p. 55; also see E. Messur, 'Three Centuries of changing European Tastes for the potato' in H. Macbeth (ed.), *Food Preferences and Taste: Continuity and Change*, Berghahn Books, Providence, 1997, p. 107. emphasis added by me.

135. Charles L. Harper, Bryan F. Le Beau, *Food, Society, and Environment*, op. cit., p. 56 emphasis added.

136. For the concept of 'hybridity' I am influenced by Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London, 1994.

137. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process*. Oxford University Press, 1978.

138. See Arjun, Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History*, Vol. 30, No. 1, January, 1988, pp. 3-24; R.S. Khare, *Culture and Reality: Essays on the Hindu System of Managing Foods*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1976; R.S. Khare, *The Hindu Hearth and Home*, Carolina Academic Press, Durham, 1976; K.C. Chang (ed.) *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical*

- Perspectives*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1977; W. Root, *The Food of Italy*. New Random, New York, 1977; M.M. Ahsan, M.M. 1979. *Social Life under the Abbasids*, Longman, London, 1979.
139. J. Goody, *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982.
 140. F.J. Furnivall, *Early English Meals and Manners* (Early English Text Society, no. 32), London, 1868; T. Austin (ed.) *Two Fifteenth-Century Cookbooks* (Early English Text Society, no. 91). London, 1868; C. Roden, *A Book of Middle-East Food*. New York: Knopf, New York, 1972; M.P. Cosman, *Fabulous Feasts: Medieval Cookery and Ceremony*, Braziller, New York, 1976; K.C. Chang (ed.) *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1977; R. Forster and O Ranum, *Food and Drink in History*, vol. 5 of *Selections from the Annales: Economies, Societies, and Civilizations*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1979.
 141. I feel that both 'mainland' and 'Indian food' are problematic categories: since it is difficult to say which part of India can be termed as 'mainland'. When I am using the category of 'Indian food' I subscribe to the view that there is plurality in Indian food, that is, different regions have their own categories of food.
 142. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamnaleh-hmangchang/bhundia-by-dingi-hauhnar/693197024069344>, accessed on 20-8-14
 143. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamnaleh-hmangchang/dhoklawith-purunsen-by-jandy-laldumte-ikhiantge/672274666161580>, accessed on 20.8.14
 144. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamnaleh-hmangchang/raj-kachuri-by-rosie-l-ralte/650817054974008>, accessed on 20.8.14
 145. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamnaleh-hmangchang/alu-aloo-dum-by-esther-joseph/622249367830777> , accessed on 21.8.14
 146. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamnaleh-hmangchang/pani-puripuchka-by-elentia-chhantge/685851874803859> accessed on 19.8.14
 147. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamnaleh-hmangchang/alu-tikki-by-esther-joseph/504198259635889>, accesses on 21.8.14

- 148 Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamna-leh-hmangchang/beef-kabab/424059697649746>, accessed on 19.8.14
149. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamna-leh-hmangchang/coconut-ladoo-by-priss-zopari/398288303560219>, accessed on 19.8.14
150. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamna-leh-hmangchang/ghajar-ka-halwa-by-kawl-thanzami/472093859512996>, accessed on 19.8.14
151. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=731778310217078&set=gm.678376545551392&type=1> accessed on 19.8.14
152. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=724614914266751&set=gm.672249112830802&type=1>, accessed on 18.8.14
153. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=219033698281395&set=gm.605715756150805&type=1&theater>, accessed on 18.8.14
154. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/notes/ei-in-siamna-leh-hmangchang/chicken-masala-curry-by-priss-zopari/395731133815936>, accessed on 20.8.14
155. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=510853715647751&set=gm.502662406456141&type=1&theater>, accessed on 20.8.14
156. Most of the respondents who informed me about this were our postgraduate and PhD students.
157. Pierre, Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992.
158. P. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1989; P. Stoller, *Embodying Colonial Memories*, Routledge, New York, 1995; D.E. Suttan, *Remembrance of Repasts: Anthropology of Food and Memory*, Berg, Oxford, 2002; Ashis. Nanady, 'Ethnic Cuisine' in Ashis Nandy and Lal (eds) *The Future of Knowledge and Culture*, Penguin, 2005; Caroline, Osella, C and Filippo, Osella. 2008. "Food, Memory, Community: Kerala as both 'Indian Ocean' Zone and as Agricultural Homeland", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, n.s., Vol. XXXI, no.1, April 2008, pp. 170-198.
159. Duncan McDuie-Ra, *Northeast Migrants in Delhi: Race, Refuge and Retail*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2012, pp. 145-176.
160. Ibid., pp. 152-54.

161. Ibid., p. 154.
162. Ibid., p. 154.
163. Ibid., p. 156.
164. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Oxford: Blackwell, Oxford, 1991.
165. Duncan McDuaie-Ra, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 47, No. 30 (July 28, 2012), pp. 69-77, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23251770> Accessed: 03-02-2018.
166. He requested me to conceal his name.
167. Alan Beardworth and Teresa Kei, *Sociology on the Menu*, An invitation to the study of food and society, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 73.
168. I was directed by her not to publish her name.
169. The phrase taken from Alan Beardworth and Teresa Kei, *Sociology on the Menu*, op. cit., p. 77.
170. C. Delphy, 'Sharing the same table: consumption and the family' in C. Harries (ed.) *The Sociology of the Family: Sociological Review Monograph* Number 28, 1979, cited in Alan Beardworth and Teresa Kei, *Sociology On The Menu*, op. cit., p. 77.
171. Ibid.
172. ruatatonson@gmail.com to jldawar@gmail.com dated 23 August 2017.
173. jldawar@gmail.com to ruatatonson@gmail.com dated 23 August 2017.
174. ruatatonson@gmail.com to jldawar@gmail.com, date 24 August 2017.
175. Information collected from my fieldwork.
176. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10203715317073686&set=a.10203208932334384.1073741837.1540664772&type=3&theater>, accessed on 7.8.14
177. Retrived from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201385493149544&set=a.10200519389537495.1073741825.1540664772&type=3&theater>, accessed on 7.8.14.
178. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10201827429317672&set=a.10200519389537495.1073741825.1540664772&type=3&theater>, accessed on 7.8.14
179. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=4373989678162&set=a.3453892276302.156883.1540664772&type=3&theater>, accessed on 7.8.14
180. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=56>

4098043694253&set=pcb.677526915665374&type=1&theater, accessed on 8.8.14.

181. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=500365476693122&set=a.500365113359825.1073741826.100001590215028&type=3&theater>, accessed on 8.8.14.

CHAPTER 6

Bakery Products: The Promise of Modernization

Introduction

In Mizoram, a Mizo woman would help me with the household chores.¹ She was not school educated. And while she could not speak English or Hindi, I did not know the local Mizo language. Therefore, we used to interact essentially through sign language. I used to share my breakfast with her which essentially was bakery bread either with jam or butter. However, quite often in the absence of either jam or butter, we would do with plain toast along with a cup of milk tea with sugar. She was very fond of bakery bread and a number of times I used to ask the question: “why do you like bakery bread”; through sign language she would flex her muscles indicating thereby that bakery bread provides strength. In short, for her bakery bread makes our muscles strong. Once when she went on leave and another Mizo girl replaced her, the opinion about bakery bread remained the same². She was of the opinion that bakery bread is good for health. Later in my interviews, I found that the perception that bakery products have high nutrient value is widespread.

In contemporary Mizo society, taking into consideration that there was an absence of baking tradition, how did this perception about bakery bread and other bakery products become prevalent? The raw material used in making bread and bakery products were and even now are not available in ‘Lushai Hills’ region since wheat was and even now normally not grown in this region. Conceivably

bakery and its products like cakes biscuits and so on have been welcomed as symbols of modernity in Mizoram?

Perhaps, we could understand the nature of social transformation and transition through analysing the emergence and appreciation of consumer goods particularly those related to food? It would be worthwhile to trace the history of bakery in Mizoram to understand these seminal questions.

I

It was the missionaries during the colonial period who introduced the bread/bakery products in Mizoram since they themselves needed it. The raw material for bread, cake, biscuits specifically *maida* (refined wheat flour) was imported from Calcutta and it was mainly the missionaries' wives who baked the bread. The women missionaries also disseminated this technology to some of Mizo women Christians. As:

The English Missionaries who came from Wales taught me the art of baking, those missionaries were Mrs Gwen Rees Roberts (Pi Teii) and Pi Zopuii with whom I used to stay with³.

By 1930s, we get evidence that the Mizo women had already not only learnt the technology of baking but also had made it as the means of their livelihood. As Katie Hughes in her report of "The Report of the North Lushai Hills, 1934-35" reports:

The women at the time of the Conference baked bread and made tea, and erected stalls in the open, to sell them to the workers. The profit was given to the Collections...⁴

The letter written to her parents by a missionary, Kitty Lewis, reveal to us that the missionaries regarded taking tea, cake and other bakery products as symbol of 'civilization'. Thus, in a letter dated 16 June 1923 writtern from Aijal she writes to her mother and Daddy:

...When my cake , if my cake comes-if it hasn't been eaten by the customs and if the rain hasn't got in-I've promised to give them each a little bit,

& I'm going to ask the teachers to tea. Then for tea we invited Pasena, Chhuakhama, Zokunga & Rsema (father of nutea whom I've sent to Silchar)-since they are the Lushais I know best-among those who are "civilized" enough to eat tea! They were very pleased at being asked & I've seen it gave more pleasure than if I'd asked any of the Europeans, besides enjoying it much more myself.⁵

The Mizo who embraced new faith and were hegemonized by the missionaries developed the taste for bakery products. For example, J.H. Lorrain in his *Log Book* provides us an example of a conversation between two Mizos Khawngaihbul and Challiana:

Khawngaihbul asked Challiana "Has Jesus got many biscuit in heaven, because if He has I want to go there". Khawngaihbul always has a biscuit in early... & loves them.⁶

The missionaries were also very cautious before taking the bread made in a damp climate. Thus Lorrain made an entry in the *Log Book* dated 26/09/2003:

It would amuse you if you did not happen to be hungry, to see the transformation which takes place in a loaf of bread in the short space of 12 or 15 hours. I don't mean that the rats have a knack of making it disappear. If we were to put a loaf in the cupboard say today after finishing tea, by tomorrow morning you would scarcely recognize it and might easily mistake it for a fluffy rabbit. The whole of the loaf by that time would be covered with a fur like mold, in some places an inch thick. I expect we should get like that if we did not keep moving about⁷.

II

The Bakeries in the Post-Independence Period

The bakery products in the post-colonial Mizoram got widespread acceptance only gradually. It is worthwhile to discuss briefly the development of bakery business as developed in some of the prominent towns of Mizoram. I had conducted interviews of bakery owners, managers, workers and consumers, etc. at Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Kolasib, Champhai, Serchip, Mamit towns⁸. Most of the bakeries in Mizoram developed in 1980s, 1990s of 20th century and first and half decade of the 21st century. In Aizawl city,

the most prominent bakeries are: Hmingliani Bakery, 'Holy Cross Bakery' and Zote Bakery.

There seems to be a number of Mizo families who had embraced Christianity and had been making bread and cake for their consumption within the family and also on the occasion of Christmas, etc. Such persons had been taught this technology by the white missionaries. Thus, Selhranga's parents (from South Mizoram-Serkawn) were taught by E.M. Mattby (Pi Zohnuni)⁹ who was from Baptist and stayed at Serkawn, Lunglei from 1953-1968 for missionary work.¹⁰ They used to prepare bread and biscuits and scon (*skon*). They used *degchi* (*pateela*)¹¹ and condensed milk for preparing cakes.¹²

However, *Pi Hmingliani*¹³ seems to be the first Mizo who ventured into the business of bakery products. She learnt this technology from the White missionaries, took up this as full time profession as a source for her livelihood in Aizawl. She claimed that she was 'first' woman who started this business:

As my husband left me, I didn't have anything to bank upon to support my children. Since I had acquired the technology of baking, I started baking cakes at home for selling on the basis of order placed by different people from 1956 onwards. My first customers were for Capt. Vanpuilala and Mrs Remveli for whom I baked wedding cake. I am the first one to start the business of selling cakes. I used to carry the cakes in my basket and walk from house to house to sell.¹⁴

Pi Hmingliani was so poor that she could not afford to buy even an oven and no money for buying charcoal for preparation of cake. Therefore, she used to collect wooden piece for baking.¹⁵ It is only in 1982 that she acquired an oven as a gift from 'Pu Denghnuna' and she started baking on more regular basis and even supply to different shops.¹⁶

Similarly Selhranga's wife, Lawmawmi from Lunglei (south Mizoram), established a separate household at Chandmari, Lunglei, during 1970s and started preparing bread and biscuits at home for selling and she herself used to sell it on the roadside in front of the market using a mobile *thela-gari*.¹⁷ Later on they started Khiangte-Tlau bakery.¹⁸

An account of R.L. Bakery¹⁹ started by Lalngura Ralte at Zohnuui about 4 to 5 km. from Lunglei also needs to be provided. When we conducted his interview he was of 85 years of age. Both he as well his wife, Pi Darpuui, was sitting there when we started talking to them. It would be useful to write the narrative in his words:

I joined the Assam Regiment in 1941. I visualized that I have to do something after retirement from the military service. Therefore, I requested his Commanding Officer to sponsor his name for doing catering course in Bareilly. He agreed and sponsored my name officially and I was sent there for six and a half years. Since the instructor found me very sincere in work, he taught me all the aspects of catering: how to prepare food, vegetables, biscuits, bread etc. I even learnt how to make chulah²⁰...during that period I had a mind to open a good hotel in Lunglei. But unfortunately an incident took place during November, 1962 which changed the direction of my life. An officer was murdered and culprit could not be traced and as a result entire regiment was disbanded. I had no money but luckily a Nepali officer from the Industry department, Government of Mizoram gave me a loan of Rs.2, 500 to start my business. I started a bakery (R.L. Bakery) with this money...I was also contemplating to join Naga militants so as to take revenge for being discharged from the military service. But, meanwhile Pu Laldenga (the leader of the Mizo National Army) convinced me to join his underground movement. My wife was jailed in 1966 and released only in 1970. I had risen to high position in the Mizo National Army. Since my wife had been jailed therefore the bakery had to be closed²¹.

His wife informed us that all their bread was purchased by Mizo National Army since their house was near the headquarters of MNA.²²

Lalngura Ralte informed us that during famine, they used to carry bread in their pockets²³. This reminds us Sydney Mintz's argument that the acceptance of new foods by a group usually requires major disruptions, like war, or crop failure, or migration, in their ordinary diets.²⁴ Therefore, bakery bread became an alternative food.

The history of Hmingliani bakery was provided in brief since Pi (Madam) Hmingliani was the first to undertake this mode of livelihood. However, it would be worthwhile to make

generalizations about bakeries in Mizoram instead of taking each bakery separately.

Who are the Consumers?

The customers in the beginning used to be a specific social group, i.e. the educated middle class Christians who had been benefitted by missionary education, the salaried social group and the non-Christian salaried, contractors, traders, etc. though a number of them had not yet embraced Christianity but they aspired to be socially mobile and emulated the educated social group also had developed the tea culture and taste for bakery products. Besides, there were number of persons from other parts of India who had been either part of the bureaucracy or involved in various trading activities who constituted the consuming class of bakery products.²⁵

However, gradually this social group of 'haves' expanded, specifically after the 'peace accord' of 1986 between the 'underground' and the Central government.

During 1980s, the consumption of bakery products was mainly confined to this social group. The owners of 'Holy Cross Bakery'²⁶ and 'Zote Bakery'²⁷ had provided this information.²⁸ But at the same Pi Hmingliani claimed that at a later stage she started manufacturing biscuits which even the commoners could afford to buy and therefore her business expanded.²⁹ Her business took a new dimension in 1994 when she shifted from home based bakery to modern bakery system and established the shop in the market area. Then her youngest son started helping her and gradually took the business in his own hands.³⁰

Progressive Increase in Bakery Business

Most of the bakeries get boost in their business activities since the first decade of this century. Thus, Pi Hmingliani claimed that "twenty two outlets were selling products exclusively manufactured by Hmingliani bakery" in 2007 and she "herself owned three outlets".³¹ Now, of course they "have good transportation to supply

to various shops not only in Aizawl but also to shops located in other towns”.³² She informed me that she earned on an average: Rs. 4,000 to Rs. 5,000 from 1994 to 1999; Rs 4000 to Rs 5000 from 1999 to 2004; Rs 8000, Rs 10,000 and Rs. 20,000 from 2004 to 2007 on daily basis.”³³

The owner of the ‘Holy Cross Bakery’ provided us the average income on everyday basis: Rs. 4,000 to 8,000; 1990 to 1995; and 1995 to 2000 Rs 10,000 per day.³⁴ He claimed that after the year 2,000 the average everyday income rose to Rs. 40,000.³⁵

Zote Bakery was founded by Lalthanzama and his wife Neihthangi in 1985. Over the years, Zote Bakery has continually transformed itself “in order to provide the quality goods and services our customers have come to expect from us. The bakery currently has eight owned outlets and supplies its products through more than forty distributing agents”.³⁶

Lawmawmi of Lunglei (Khangte-Tlau, i.e. K T Bakery) informed us that they used to earn Rs. 20,000 per month before 1986 and they also used to sell their products in the nearby villages and especially *tuipui* and *Leiti* (the name of the place where the workers used to collect ‘balu’(sand) for construction works³⁷. Her daughter who was also present at that time and listening to our conversation intervened:

They took financial assistance sanctioned by Zidco KVI etc. now they prepare varieties of cakes like plain cake, butter-cake, butter-cake, fruit-cake etc.and butter-biscuits, salted, sweet, plain, etc. (ten varieties of biscuits) and they prepare plain bread, Italian bread... They transport their products to Saiha, Lawngtlai, Serchip, Chawngte, Tlabung, Tawipui, Thingfal, Mualthum.³⁸

Bakery and Modernity

I realized through my interaction with large number of Mizo intellectuals that they perceive that it is Christianity which brought about modernity in Mizoram. It was also noticeable when one of my respondents PI Hmingliani asserted that her bakery products have more demands because people are aware that she was trained by a missionary:

As the art of baking is taught by the English missionaries and even some ingredients are sent from foreign country (those relatives of my teacher) people prefer the products from our bakery. We have better understanding of mixing the proportion of various ingredients because of the training from white missionaries, therefore our products taste differently and better. We also try our best to be the best bakers. On top of that we sell only fresh bakery products. The people were aware that I expertise especially in Wedding Cake and Birthday Cake, therefore we don't need any special advertisement to promote our business.³⁹

Pu (Mr.) Mapuia the owner of R.C. Baking and Cooking Institute Started in 2013 claimed superiority in terms of modern training in advanced institutions as well as in terms of hygiene.⁴⁰ This institute is located in upper Khatla of Aizawl city. He manufactures not only bakery products but also runs institute to train Mizo boys and girls in new technologies of baking. He also runs 'take-away' restaurant. He informed me:

I did three years diploma in Hotel management in Subhash Bose Institute of Hotel Management ...Then joined the National institute of Hotel Management at Merut, UP as lecturer as food production and bakery lecturer. I was associated with them for 2 years (he showed me the certificates)⁴¹ upto 2008.⁴² ... after I left the job in the National Institute of Hotel Management, I joined the Café Coffee Day (CCD) as I was the branch manager... I was getting good salary in Café Coffee day...I wanted to set-up institute at Aizawl.⁴³

Mapuia also claimed that his main objective in starting the Baking and Cooking Institute was to provide good, hygienic bakery products to the customers and also train young Mizo boys and girls in 'modern' technologies of baking as well as maintaining hygiene:

I teach everything including hygiene etc. in making the bakery products... I teach for three months and six months every aspect of bakery—right from washing utensils to baking in the oven...teach them from beginning to end...hygiene is important so that contamination may not take place... I teach how to make clean and hygiene food to Mizos...I award certificate course but the degree is not recognized..never applied for registration... within these 3 to 4 years I have produced 400 students and most of them have gone to the bakery business.⁷⁴⁴



Picture 63: Source: <https://it-it.facebook.com/TakeAwayCornerRcBakingcookingInstitute>, accessed on 19/4/18.

TakeAwayCornerRcBakingcookingInstitute, accessed on 19/4/18.
 PUMapuia is standing in the middle of the front row. He is not wearing any cap.



Picture 64: Photograph was taken by me during my fieldwork. This photograph was hanging on the walls of his bakery. I was informed by Pu Mapuia that he gave certificates to those who completed their training in his institute. The following are some other pictures (pictures No.65-66) drawn during my fieldwork in this Institute.



Picture 65



Picture 66

Even ‘taste’ has been represented as a sign of superiority by some bakery owners. Thus, K.Lalneihzami, the wife of the owner of M.S. Bakery (Mami Masiامي⁴⁵ Bakery) of Lunglei town while narrating to me the history of her bakery asserted that their ‘biscuits’ are tasty and that is why it is popular among people. This bakery had been established in 1992 and was closed in 2006. She narrated:

We started with “biscuits, cream-roll, cake, etc. According to the taste of the people and the society of Lunglei they had been adding different varieties. Our butter-biscuits have a distinctive taste. Even though other bakeries are trying to make it out similar way or imitate their technology, they could not succeed. Even from Aizawl, Serchip, Hnahthial also there is a demand for our biscuits and locally also there is a demand for our biscuits, apart from the instant selling at our counter. In the beginning we employed workers from Karimganj to prepare these delicacies and items⁴⁶.

Mr. Lalmachhuana Fanai from Lunglei also claimed ‘taste’ to be the hallmark of his ‘Tepuia Bakery’ which he started in September 1997. The major objective for starting this bakery was that:

No tasty biscuits were available in Lunglei... and he wanted to serve the people. In the beginning we made bread, kukis (S-shaped toast)—sometimes it is called S. Chhang, Chhang means biscuit. Later, according to the taste and demand we added pastry, swiss-roll and different varieties of cakes and biscuits.⁴⁷

Pu (Mr.) Lalmangaiha Sailo the owner of ‘Holy Cross Bakery’ articulated another aspect of modernization when he claimed to be the first in Aizawl to use modern transportation (two wheeler scooter) for selling the bakery products implying thereby that machine technology as superior to the manual one⁴⁸. In other words, he felt pride in owning a modern vehicle for marketing the bakery products. He highlighted another modern technology, that is packaging and also claimed to be the first one to use packing technology in Mizoram since he introduced plastic for packing biscuits.⁴⁹. He narrated:

Ready-made biscuits and cake were distributed to different shops through 10 vehicles in the morning, and 7 vehicles in the afternoon, our cake and

biscuits are also exported to different villages with Maxicab services. The way of selling is mostly home delivery. There are also 3 outlets in Aizawl which is owned by us⁵⁰.

Even Lalhmachhuana Fanai from Lunglei ('Tepuia Bakery') claimed that "we are the first to use semi-automatic mechanized method of processing."⁵¹

Marketing Strategies

The owners of the bakeries used different devices to promote their sale. Lalhmangaiha Sailo utilized social capital to promote his business: through many relatives in different localities and villages.⁵²

Some other used social media like Facebook, etc. to advertise their variety of cakes etc. For example the Hmingliani bakery do advertise its wedding, birthday cakes and also pastry through Facebook since now other bakeries also have started emerging specializing in bread, biscuits, wedding and birthday cakes and pastries, etc. I noticed so many pictures on Hmingliani Facebook and below a sample of the few pictures is provided (Pictures 67-70).

Similarly, Zote Bakery has also been using Facebook for promoting their sale. See some of the pictures (Pictures 71-72).

Labour

Almost all the bakeries have been employing labour from neighbouring areas of Assam: Silchar, Karimganj, Hailakandi, etc. Even some have been employed from as remote areas as Assam and West Bengal. Some bakeries owners employed Mizos as well as non-Mizos.⁵³

Bakery Cafes

Some bakeries have introduced innovations like providing 'hang-out' options to provide facilities like selling tea, coffee and other beverages along with breads, pizzas, pastries, a variety of



Picture 67: Wedding Cake <https://www.facebook.com/hmingliani.bakery/photos/a.467099143453586.1073741833.253305058166330/899122576917905/?type=3&theater> accessed on 15/3/18.



Picture 68: Birthday Cake. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/hmingliani.bakery/photos/a.467099143453586.1073741833.253305058166330/899122576917905/?type=3&theater> accessed on 15/3/18



Picture-69:Valentine's Day Cake Source: <https://www.facebook.com/hmingliani.bakery/photos/a.467099143453586.1073741833.253305058166330/899122576917905/?type=3&theater> accessed on 15/3/18



Picture 70: Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Zote-Bakery-204172006292092/> accessed 15/3/18.



Picture 71: <https://www.facebook.com/Zote-Bakery-204172006292092/>
accessed on 15/3/18.

sandwiches, hamburgers and variety of biscuits and cookies. These may be termed as bakery cafes.⁵⁴ Zote bakery is one of the best examples of this. I had been visiting this bakery since July, 2002. I along with two of my colleagues from other departments used to visit this bakery quiet often in the evening. The bakery owner also had a sitting room with tables and chairs arranged like a fast food restaurant. The bakery owner had appointed in 2002 a non-Mizo manager from north-India who had also some experience of running a restaurant in United States of America.⁵⁵ He had taught the workers (Mizo girls as well as non-Mizo men) to prepare '*chhole bhature*' which basically is a popular dish in Punjab and Delhi but now has become pan-Indian dish. We used to order this dish which, of course was quiet delicious and gave us the taste of Punjabi food. My two other colleagues also used



Picture 72: <https://www.facebook.com/Zote-Bakery-204172006292092/>
accessed on 15/3/18

to enjoy this food. There was also placed a coffee as well as a tea container from where we could take this by buying coupon for the same. The room used to be full mainly with young Mizo boys and girls enjoying the beef hamburger, hot-dog, pastry and cakes, etc. The breads, a variety of biscuits and cakes sold by the Zote Bakery were very popular among the educated middle class of Aizawl. It was the best bakery where one could buy brown bread which was popular specifically among the elites of Aizawl. But within hours of the manufacture of this bread, it was sold and one had to reach early in order to get brown bread in the Zote bakery. However, after a few years they had stopped selling 'Chhole Bhature' since

the earlier manager had left Aizawl, as I was told by a sales girl at the counter. When I visited the bakery again in January 2018 during my latest fieldwork, I found that their products were in great demand. The taste of the variety of the biscuits produced by them was distinct from that of the other bakeries. During my fieldwork in January-February 2017, I had visited almost all the major bakeries located in Aizawl and purchased biscuits from these in order to find how these gave different taste and found the products of Zote Bakery tasted differently from all other bakeries.

Similarly the Glenary at Chandmari operates as bakery café along with dealing with other bakery products. In 2002, we used to visit this sometimes in the evening to take a cup of tea or coffee along with biscuits, etc. The owner of this bakery, a local young man had done Hotel management course and decided to open the bakery in Aizawl. One could get cake, pizzas, pastries and even brown bread here⁵⁶.

III

Why progressive demand and consumption for bakeries? Some of the factors for the progressive increase in demand and consumption of bakeries are: growth in population, migration from rural to urban areas, literacy growth, development in entrepreneurial activities, rise in the population of Christians, continuous development of tertiary sector, increase in the number of educational institutions and increase in number of students coming from other regions of India seeking higher education in these institutions are some of reasons for increase in demand of bakery products.⁵⁷

Conclusion

It were the missionaries who introduced bakery products in Mizoram. Initially, some of the Mizo women who had embraced Christianity had learnt the technology of baking a cake, etc. from women missionaries or the wives of the missionaries. The bakery business continued to develop in the post-Independence period and has become part of food culture of Mizo in the last two

decades. In fact, it is regarded as a sign of modernity by most of the Mizos.

NOTES

1. The domestic help did not give me permission to publish her name.
2. She also directed me not to publish her name.
3. My personal interview with Pi Hmingliani on 17 November 2007, at 13:45 pm in her residence at Aizawl (the capital of Mizoram). She is the owner of 'Hmingliani Bakery' and it is the first bakery in the post-colonial Mizoram. I conducted her interview with the help of one of my students. At the time of conducting interview PI Hmingliani was very old. The interview was in Mizo language and was translated by my student Miss Lalrindiki.
4. "The Report of the North Lushai Hills, 1934-35" in K. Thanzauva, compiler, *Reorts of the Foreign Mission of the Presbyterian Church of Wales on Mizoram 1894-1957*, The Synod Literature and Publication Boards, Aizawl, 1997, p.126.
5. Kitty Lewis to her mother & Daddy, dated Aijal, 16 June 1923 in Letters of Kitty Lewis (former missionary) to her family 1922-23, J.H. Lorrain Archive, Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, Mizoram; also see Kitty Lewis letter to her mother & Daddy, dated Aijal, 30 December 1922.
6. PU Buanga (J.H. Lorrain), *Log Book* (1889-1936), Archive maintained by Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl, p. 1.
7. PU Buanga (J.H. Lorrain), *Log Book* (1889-1936), op. cit., p. 87.
8. See the Appendix for the list of persons whose interviews were conducted.
9. The White missionaries who were popular among the Mizos were given Mizo names. Thus, Miss E.M. Mattby was given the name 'Pi Zohnuni'.
10. Interview with Selhranga's wife Mrs. Lawmawmi, on 31 October 2007. The interview was in Mizo language and was interpreted by Miss Lalmuanpuii Khiangte, Associate Professor, Government College, Lunglei.
11. Degchi is a pot.
12. Mrs. Lawmawmi, op. cit.
13. *PI* is a form of address to the senior/elderly/married women in Mizo society.

14. My personal interview with Pi Hmingliani, op. cit.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. A hand driven cart.
18. The surname (title) of the husband is Khiantge and Tlau is wife's family name or title and therefore the name of bakery is: 'Khiantge-Tlau bakery (KT bakery).'
19. R.L.Bakery (named after Ralte Lalngura)
20. Chulah is hearth but he meant here how to manage cooking.
21. Interview with Lalngura Ralte on 31/10/2007 and it was interpreted by Miss Lalmuanpuii Khiantge, Associate Professor, Government college, Lunglei).
22. Pi Darpuii, wife of Langura Ralte.
23. I had forgotten to put this in my diary at that time. It is only recently that Dr. Lalmuanpuii Khiantge reminded me through our telephonic conversation that she had forgotten to translate this into English at that time by oversight and noticed only now.
24. See the Chapter on "creating new cultural tastes".
25. These generalizations are based on my interview with Pi Hmingliani.
26. My personal interview with Lalmangaiha Sailo on 19 November 2007, at 8 a.m. at Aizawl (the capital of Mizoram). The interview was in Mizo language and was translated by my student, Lalrindiki. The 'Holy Cross Bakery' was first established by a Marwari, who later on sold this to Lalmangaiha Sailo, started this business in 1985.
27. Zote Bakery was founded by Mr. Lalthanzama and his wife Neihthangi in 1985. It was Pi Neihthangi whose interview was conducted with the help of my student Lalrindiki in 2007.
28. Personal interview with the owners in November, 2007.
29. Hmingliani, op. cit.
30. Ibid.
31. Pi Hmingliani, op. cit.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. Lalmangaiha Sailo, op. cit.
35. Ibid.
36. https://www.google.co.in/search?q=Zote+Bakery+in+Aizawl&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN748IN748&oq=zote+bakery&aqs=chrome.0.69i59j69i57j69i59j69i60l2j0.6180j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie, accessed on 18/3/18.
37. Mrs. Lawmawmi, op. cit.

38. Mrs. Lawmawmi's daughter. We forgot to note down her name.
39. Pi Hmingliani, *op. cit.*
40. Interview conducted on 30/1/17. In fact I spent whole day on doing ethnographic work in this institute.
41. See the Appendix. In fact he had also hanged the photo copies of these certificates on the wall.
42. there was lot of noise outside on the road while conducting interview and therefore a number of times our conversation got interrupted.
43. Mapuia, *op. cit.*
44. Mapuia, *op. cit.*
45. Mami and Masiami are the names of their two daughters after whom this bakery was given the name.
46. My personal interview with Mrs. K.Lalneihzami on 30-10-2007, at Lungleih. The interview was in Mizo language and was interpreted by Miss Lalmuanpuii Khiantge, *op. cit.*
47. My personal interview with Lalmachhuana Fanai in October 2007 at Lungleih. The interview was in English (since he was post-graduate in commerce) as well as in Mizo language. The Mizo portion was interpreted by Lalmuanpuii Khiantge, Sr. Lecturer, (now Associate Professor, Government College, Lunglei).
48. Lalmangaiha Sailo, *op. cit.*
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*
51. Lalmachhuana Fanai, *op. cit.*
52. Lalmangaiha Sailo, *op. cit.*
53. I observed this in the process of visiting bakeries as well as conducting interviews in different towns of Mizoram.
54. Idea derived from "Bakery industry in India – Innovations, trends and challenges", by Florist Xpress, November, 23rd, 2016, <http://www.fnbnews.com/Top-News/Bakery-industry-in-India—Innovations-trends-and-challenges>, https://www.google.co.in/search?q=history+of+bakeries+in+India&rlz=1C1CHBF_enIN748IN748&oq=history+of+bakeries+in+India&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60l3.13488j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 accessed on 15/3/18.
55. Based on the personal interview with the manager in August, 2002.
56. Based on my observation.
57. See the Appendix for the progress in population etc.

CHAPTER 7

Restaurants

Introduction

The origin of modern restaurant may be traced to Paris in France.¹ According to Lindsay Wilson, “The word restaurant is derived from the French word, *restaurer*.”² But “why would these new places be called restaurants? What did they have to do with restoring oneself?” inquires Lindsay Wilson. And “The answer lies” says he “in the culture of the Enlightenment and the social structure of the Old Regime. Spang returns to the decades before the Revolution, revealing that long before a restaurant was a place to eat, it was a restorative broth.”³ “Restorative broths were a special form of bouillon, the product of a prolonged cooking process in which meat was broken down and served partially digested to people with weakened digestive systems”⁴. Spang explains how gradually it developed into a social institution,⁵ and slowly it was “adopted elsewhere.”⁶ As a result by the “latter half of the nineteenth century, French cuisine dominated the Western world, and gracious or at least pretentious French restaurants were found in every important city.”⁷

It was from Britain that the institution of Restaurant spread in metropolitan centres such as Bombay(Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata), and Madras (Chennai).⁸ It was from these centres that it further dispersed to other cities and towns of India.

Restaurants and ‘Eating Out’

The modern restaurants have developed the culture of ‘Eating Out’. Yiannis Gabriel explains the concept of ‘eating out’ as the

kind of food made available for money, from commercial outlets such as shops, take-away, fast-food and other restaurants.⁹ “The identification of these commercial food outlets” say Alan Beardworth and Teresa Keil “draws our attention to the fact that the food sold is eaten in public rather than in private and that it is likely to be eaten alongside, but not with strangers.”¹⁰

Now, the question arises: was there any tradition of public dining before the emergence of restaurants in their modern form? What were the other forms of dining out? “Convenience food in the form of prepared meals,” says Paul Freedman, “to take out is much older than the restaurant.”¹¹ There was a well-established tradition of public dining in the early Roman Empire and China.¹² There were a large number of teahouses and taverns in China by about 1000 C.E.¹³ Citing Peter Scholliers Paul Freedman provides another example of public dining in London where in 1850 there were “four thousand people selling ready-to-eat food on the street”.¹⁴

In a very thought-provoking piece on the ‘Dining Out in Bombay’, Frank F. Conlon has briefly traced the history of public dining in India while focussing in detail about the spread of public dining in Bombay.¹⁵ “Traditional India,” he argues,

possessed no enduring tradition of restaurants or public dining, although food played a central role in the life and culture of Indians of all religious communities, social strata, and geographical regions¹⁶.

Though he provides an allusion to Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* where a reference is made to the existence of “various kind of public eating houses” but “the practice of dining out did not find a congenial niche within the traditional values of Hindu orthodoxy”.¹⁷ However, he admits that “isolated evidence suggests that in early South India, at least, public food shops offered cooked rice and meats for sale”.¹⁸

In Medieval India a “limited facility for public dining” for travelers did exist and in specific cities “public bakeries, where almost every variety of cooked food and uncooked victual could be bought at reasonable price”¹⁹ thrived as long as the cities prospered.²⁰

Was there any tradition of public dining in Mizoram? When I posed this question to some of my informants, an *upa* (elderly person) replied:

Yes, we had. We used to take food together during festivals and also when someone used to host feast in our village. Even persons from other villages were also invited on these occasions. There were generally from the same clan.²¹

Another *upa* interpreted the meaning of 'eating out' differently:

We used at times of leisure go to a riverside with our family members and also at times our friends and relatives and eat food there. Either the food was cooked at home and carried there or sometimes the cooking was organized there also.²²

Another person argued that the Mizos had never to face the problem of getting cooked food during travel to the villages inhabited by their own clans in Mizoram. He informed me that there was always a tradition of sharing food and since Mizo are 'hospitable' getting food "was part of Mizo tradition"²³. He felt a sense of pride in this.

It is how my respondents perceived the meaning of 'eating out' and I did not explain the theoretical underpinning of the phrase 'eating out' to them. It was to avoid intrusion into their understanding of this phrase. The two elderly persons whom I have referred to above did not know how to express in the English. They were literate but knew only Mizo language to read and write. However, they informed me that they had English as one of their subjects in Secondary school. My interpreter had conveyed the meaning of this phrase to them in Mizo and translated their response in English for conveying it to me. Perhaps, they understood the phrase 'eating out' as taking food in public or in private but not in their own houses but in the houses of relatives or friends or celebrating picnic near the riverside. They did not have to pay for this food. They also included the feasts on various occasions hosted by chiefs or others as 'eating out'. But the traditional feasts had already been abolished by the missionaries during colonial period but these were reformulated and were being packaged in a

different form. Though they did not have to pay anything in cash but the concept of reciprocal exchange did exist. It could be in the form of gifts.

I had been observing that those Mizos who were invited from other districts of Mizoram for conferences held in Mizoram University they preferred to stay in their relatives' houses. I used to inquire from those who used to be invited as members of the various Academic bodies: Board of School of Social Sciences, Post-Graduate and Undergraduate Studies whether they need accommodation in the University Guest House but they always preferred to stay in their relatives houses and take breakfast and dinner in the relatives' houses. Perhaps, this was cultural hangover from the past. In this respect, it is useful to pay attention to what Alan Beardsworth and Teresa Keil say in their work, *Sociology on the Menu*:

In all the social anthropological and historical accounts of traditional societies there is strong emphasis on the importance of hospitality. Such hospitality would be extended to travellers (many societies had particularly strong culturally defined obligations to welcome strangers). Neighbours too, often identified in terms of lineage and kinship, would be invited to share food, often on the occasions of feasts. ... Indeed, gifts and feasts were often closely interconnected and indicated the ways in which the welcome to neighbor and stranger was embedded in a framework of social relationships ... the feast locked members of the society into a pattern of reciprocal obligations²⁴.

However, 'Eating out' in restaurants is a "particular form of commensality, as opposed to dining at home, on picnics, or on religious occasions (Church suppers or festivals)."²⁵

The Emergence of Modern Restaurants in Mizoram

As stated in preceding section that gradually the urban 'cosmopolitan' institutions spread from the Metropolitan centres like Bombay (Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata), Madras (Chennai) to the interior of the subcontinent and subsequently in Aizawl (Mizoram). Therefore, it is useful to discuss briefly the trajectory of restaurants in Mizoram.

Colonial Period

The colonial officials on their tours to different areas of Mizoram ('Lushai Hills') used to be accompanied by porters and cooks and used to encamp from place to place. However, gradually the 'Dak bangalows' were constructed from place to place for their stay. The missionaries after selection of a specific area for the spread of the gospel message used to get their houses constructed and manage their cooking by taking provisions from the surrounding areas. However, they also used to be accompanied by porters for carrying their provisions bought from Calcutta or other places. Initially, they used to import bread, cakes, biscuits, etc. from other places but gradually they started baking their own bread and other bakery products.

The missionaries condemned the tradition of feasts among the Mizo since they were opposed to sacrificial practices and also because these feasts were accompanied by *zu* (rice beer) and introduced new type of communal feasts on the occasion of Christmas among those who embraced the new faith. However, those who had not come under the fold of Christianity continued to follow the practice of traditional feasts.

We do get evidence regarding tea stalls and small eateries specifically in bazaar of Aizawl during colonial times. As we have discussed in earlier chapter 'creating new tastes'. However, it is in the post-colonial period that the number of tea-stalls had come into being as discussed in the next chapter on 'History of Milk'.

Post-Colonial Period and Restaurants

Though a few bakery restaurants had been established during 1970s and 1980s but it is mainly from the last decade of 20th century and specifically in the last two decades of this century that the modern restaurants were started and became popular²⁶. However, it is in Aizawl, its capital city, there has really been a progressive increase and popularity of restaurants specifically since the last one decade. I visited a large number of restaurants in Aizawl, Kolasib, Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Saiha from time to time since 2014 and conducted

large number of interviews of the owners, waiters (male as well female), customers across age and gender in the various restaurants of Aizawl. Though it is not possible to discuss in detail all the restaurants only a few would be taken into account for making some generalizations.

Introduction of Menu

All the restaurants owners' have introduced menus so as to enable the individuals to select items of their choice and pay for the same. In some of the restaurants the menus are very simple: just printed on a computer paper and with lamination. But other restaurants like 'David's Kitchen', 'Red Pepper', 'Curry Pot', etc. have introduced elaborate menus. I have mentioned just three of these restaurants firstly because I along with friends have been visiting David Kitchen and Curry Pot frequently since 2004. 'Red Pepper' restaurant was started in December 2015 and I spent two days in the restaurant in January-February 2016 conducting interviews of waiters (all female), the owner and the customers. I also discussed their menu at length with the young female waiter who happened to be a post-graduate student from Mizoram University Aizawl. Among the accompanying photographs illustrating restaurants, their building design, menus and customers, some originals are included—others are taken from their Facebook pages.

The sub-title of the name of the restaurant 'Red Pepper' is "Mizo Traditional Restaurant". It seems that the sub-title was meant to convey that traditional Mizo food is served here. The design of the restaurant is based on traditional Mizo houses but with modification. Though the 'traditional' food is served here but it is in a modified form. One may argue that it is based on 'reformulation' of tradition. In the words of Hobsbawm, it is an 'invented tradition'.²⁷ In other words, the cuisines served in this restaurant are based on what earlier in this chapter has been discussed as 'hybridity'. For instance, the Red-Pepper menu's included offerings of Tacos, Enchiladas, Grinders and Hot-Dogs reflect a Mizo appropriation of Mexican-style cuisines, presumably adapted to Mizo taste. The plates (see the picture below) are modified form of *Tlangara*, the

traditional plate as discussed in earlier chapter on ‘Creating New Cultural Taste in Mizoram’. Here the food is not being shared from a single *Tlangara* as was traditional practice but from separate *tlangaras* (plates).



RED PEPPER

TAKEOUT



<h3 style="text-align: center;">GRINDER</h3> <p>Grinder (Ham, Salami, or Turkey).....\$5.19 Add Taco Meat.....\$1.80 Add Colby Cheese.....\$1.20 Add More Meat (Ham, Salami, or Turkey)....\$.80^{ea} Everything Grinder.....\$8.99</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">TACO</h3> <p>Taco.....\$1.39 Soft Shell.....\$1.39 Burrito (Meat & Beans).....\$1.39 Bean Burrito.....\$1.39</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">ENCHILADA</h3> <p>Beef Enchilada.....\$2.99 Bean Enchilada.....\$2.99 Combo Enchilada (Meat & Beans).....\$2.99</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">SOUPS & SUCH</h3> <p>Chicken Tortilla Soup.....\$3.09 Chili.....\$2.99 Chips & Sauce.....\$4.49 Individual Chips & Sauce.....\$2.25</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">SALAD</h3> <p>Taco Salad.....\$5.75 Grinder Salad (Ham, Salami, or Turkey).....\$5.75 Garbage Plate.....\$5.00 <small>Salads come with your choice of White Sauce, Red Sauce, or Chip Sauce</small></p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">DRINKS</h3> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">      </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;">    </div>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">1/2 GRINDER</h3> <p>1/2 Grinder (Ham, Salami, or Turkey).....\$2.60 Add Taco Meat.....\$.90 Add Colby Cheese.....\$.60 Add More Meat (Ham, Salami, or Turkey)....\$.40^{ea} 1/2 Everything Grinder.....\$4.50</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">TOSTADA</h3> <p>Cheese Tostada.....\$1.65 Beef Tostada.....\$2.89 Bean Tostada.....\$2.89 Combo Tostada (Meat & Beans).....\$2.89</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">BETWEEN THE BUNS</h3> <p>Taco Burger.....\$1.99 Mexi Burger.....\$1.99 Hot Ham & Cheese.....\$1.69 Hot Dog.....\$.99 Coney Island.....\$2.49</p> <h3 style="text-align: center;">SIDES</h3> <table border="0" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">4oz.</th> <th style="text-align: center;">8oz.</th> <th style="text-align: center;">16oz.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White Sauce</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Red Sauce (Hot Sauce)</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$.75</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$1.50</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Enchilada Sauce</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$.75</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$1.50</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chip Sauce</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$.75</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$1.50</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$3</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <h3 style="text-align: center;">GRINDER KITS</h3> <p>Everything you need to make 4 Grinders. ~Please call ahead at least 1 hr with kit orders.~ We ship G-Kits overnight anywhere in the US. Inquire at the counter or visit RedPepper.com.</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">RED PEPPER.com</h2>		4oz.	8oz.	16oz.	White Sauce	\$1	\$2	\$4	Red Sauce (Hot Sauce)	\$.75	\$1.50	\$3	Enchilada Sauce	\$.75	\$1.50	\$3	Chip Sauce	\$.75	\$1.50	\$3
	4oz.	8oz.	16oz.																		
White Sauce	\$1	\$2	\$4																		
Red Sauce (Hot Sauce)	\$.75	\$1.50	\$3																		
Enchilada Sauce	\$.75	\$1.50	\$3																		
Chip Sauce	\$.75	\$1.50	\$3																		

Picture 73: Source: <https://www.redpepper.com/menu/> accessed on 31/3/18.



Picture 74: Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Red-Pepper-Aizawl-942856489112888/> accessed on 24/3/18. It seems that a feast is being celebrated but every one is using individual plates (*tlangara*) and not a common plate.



Picture 75: Source: <https://www.facebook.com/Red-Pepper-Aizawl-942856489112888/> accessed on 24/3/18

David's Kitchen, Chandmari, Aizawl

It is worthwhile to discuss very briefly David's Kitchen, a restaurant offering 'hybrid' cuisines. I talked to the owner and the manager of the hotel why did he start this restaurant. He stated that he found no good restaurant in Aizawl and therefore he started this though his friends had warned him not to venture into this business at Aizawl since it would be loss. But he ventured and has never repented because it became gradually the leading destination for travellers, businessmen, traders, etc. coming from other regions of India. He brought the cooks and waiters from Kolkata. But then he trained the local girls and boys in hospitality. I do remember that from 2002 to 2015 we often used to host each other in this restaurant only. This restaurant served Indian, Chinese, Thai, Continental, Mizo and other north-eastern cuisines. He stated that he is a Naga and got married to a Mizo in 1994 and he got converted into a Mizo. He started this restaurant in 1990s. He claimed to create a new taste in food, "since 'ours is a pioneer' restaurant in Aizawl".²⁸ I also have observed that earlier a number of Mizos and others used to host large dinner parties like birthday party, etc. even those who used to come to attend seminars in Mizoram University and other institutions used to visit this restaurant. He agreed that his business had declined because so many similar and even better eateries have emerged in Aizawl. To mention a few of these: Regency, Floria, Red Pepper, etc.

But in order to compensate this, he also started a hotel 'Clover' and also another business.

The other restaurant which used to serve 'hybrid' cuisines during nineties and early period of this decade is 'Curry Pot'. It used to serve Indian food along with Mizo food and was very popular those days but now its popularity has declined as a result of the opening of other eateries.

Fast Food Restaurants

Fast foods are those foods which are "easily accessible and cheap alternatives to home-cooked meals, according to the National

Institute of Health.”²⁹ There are various types of fast food restaurants in different towns of Mizoram. while conducting my fieldwork on 21 October 2014 in the market area of Saiha town, the district headquarter of Mara Autonomous District Council, I was informed that there are five fast food restaurants in the town: ‘Angilena Fast Food’, ‘Basile’s Fast Food Restaurant’, ‘Dolo,’ ‘Southgate’, ‘Emesu F’, ‘Standard’ and ‘TATANDARD’.

The ‘Angilena Fast Food’ was established in 2010 only. The main food served here is *alu parantha*. It seems to be very popular among local as well as outsiders.³⁰ I was surprised that *alu parantha* was perceived as a fast food.

It was in the evening of the same day that I visited ‘Basile’s Fast Food Restaurant’ which is near the Bus Station, Saiha. The moment I reached the restaurant, I saw one person L.S.A. Paw (born on 22 September 1982) carrying two packets of plain *parantha* along with *alu* fry and *matar chana* for his children. He was making a payment at the counter of the restaurant for these packets when I started talking to him. He informed me that his children are very fond of this food and therefore, he very often buys and carries it home. I was informed by the manager that his restaurant started very recently. He also informed me that besides *alu parantha* they sell hamburger, hot-dog, Sandwiches, noodles, fried rice, etc. He was of the opinion that the name fast food restaurant has been suggested by someone because the young boys and girls are tempted towards fast food and *paranthas* etc. as they are fast because it is prepared very quickly and the customers can carry to their homes and take it.

In fact such ‘perceived’ fast food restaurants are in large number in Aizawl.

KFC in Aizawl

KFC, Chanmari (Aizawl) was started from 24 December 2014. I visited this restaurant on 30 January 2017 and 31 January 2018 and spent a few hours each talking to various types of customers. I had conversation with manager Sanjeev Taman who is from Darjeeling and had done course in Hotel Management, from International

Institute of Advanced Study, Siliguri (West Bengal). He was very reluctant to talk to me. He informed me that they prefer to employ local girls as waiters, and at counters and provide them training for three month. And all are taken on casual (contingency) basis. When I wanted to talk to waiters, girls at the counter, he did not permit me. But he willingly allowed me to talk to the customers.

They import raw materials from Kolkata and the manager informed me they are not allowed to use any local products. In fact some of the Mizos did not like the idea of importing everything from outside and how it is against the economy of Mizoram³¹. This corporate on non-local substitutes for KFC supplied products very interesting-illustrative, perhaps, of the structure of corporate franchising in India. I came to know that in the first two months of its opening there used to be long queues for buying KFC products and trying to find how does it 'taste'?³²

The following photographs have been taken from the Facebook pages.



Picture 76: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 77: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 78: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 79: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 80: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 81: source: <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 82: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 83: source : <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 84: source: <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 85: source: <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 86: source: <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>



Picture 87: source: <https://www.facebook.com/548613528620820/photos/rpp.548613528620820/661908530624652/?type=3&theater>

When I visited the restaurant, I could see on the ground floor a number of young girls waiting for their turn to get the chairs on the first floor. In fact, since the space is limited, one is not supposed to spend too much time there. One has to eat and then leave the place to make space for others who are waiting. It is what happens in McDonald restaurants in various cities of India. In fact, a process of ‘McDonaldization’³³ seems to have started taking place in Aizawl.

Restaurants and Social Change

Restaurants have been the site of various changes in modern Indian Life as Frank F. Canlon argues:

Restaurants reflect, permit, and promote the introduction of a wide variety of changes in modern Indian life, including modifications of urban budgets and work schedules, entry of women into the middle-class workforce, new patterns of sociability, and, perhaps, growth of new ways to enjoy wealth through conspicuous consumption.³⁴

Citing Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge say these changes have been accompanied by “very important shifts in ideas about commensality, cuisine, ethnicity, and sociality in India.”³⁵

Restaurants and Social Distinction in Mizoram

I conducted interviews of large number of consumers who were sitting in KFC and taking food. I noticed different types of customers: young boys, girls, elderly persons, etc. But all of them seemed to be belonging to upward mobile social group of educated middle class. I asked some poor persons who were sitting outside the Millenium Centre Mall (platform outside) and all of them remarked that it is beyond their means to visit such restaurants. It is meant for them, meaning thereby the rich people. Some of those who were taking food sitting around the table on the first floor of KFC informed me that they like the brand name 'KFC' and its products are tasty, specially "we, the Mizos, like chicken and KFC chicken is the best". Others argued that it is for the first time that KFC has opened here and "we always wanted such a restaurant in Aizawl." One respondent, who was sitting with his girlfriend, informed: "it is the best in Mizoram where we can share good food with a girlfriend." Another was of the view that there is a Subway³⁶ in Aizawl but "we being respectable persons, prefer KFC because sitting and taking food in KFC is a status symbol for us. And we are different from other Mizos!" This remark reminds of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital or cultural capital.³⁷ Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital refers to:

collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, credentials, etc. that one acquires through being part of a particular social class. Sharing similar forms of cultural capital with others-the same taste in movies, for example, or a degrees fromcreates a sense of collective identity ("people like us"). But Bourdieu also points out that cultural capital are valued over others, and can help or hinder one's social mobility just as much as income or wealth.³⁸

Sitting in KFC restaurant and enjoying the food there, in this sense, becomes a sort of cultural capital for some Mizos. It has also generated borrowing a phrase from Frank F. Conlon that a "distinctive new domain of cosmopolitan "public culture" has been to some extent, created.³⁹ However, it is confined only to: students who had been to higher institution of education in metropolitan

cities of India, Mizo traders, contractors, politicians and those who are economically affluent.

Conclusion

Though the tea stalls and bakery restaurants did exist in the 1950s and 1960s in Mizoram but the emergence of modern restaurants developed from 1990s with the introduction of liberal economy in India and its economic impact on Mizoram. Besides the factors like expansion of salaried class, entrepreneurial activities, development of educational institutions the impact of globalization also did play a significant role in creating a culture of consumerism in Mizoram and the resultant development of modern restaurants.

NOTES

1. I have derived this generalization from the following reviews of Rebecca L. Spang's work *The Invention of the Restaurant*: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture, reviewed by Sydney Watts, *Enterprise & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (MARCH 2001), pp. 146-148, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23699812> Accessed: 04-01-2018; Lindsay Wilson, *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Spring, 2001), pp. 640-641, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/206877>, Accessed: 22-08-2017; Whitney Walton, *The Business History Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), pp. 361-363, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3116651>, Accessed: 04-01-2018; Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 74, No. 1 (March 2002), pp. 175-177, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/343388> Accessed: 04-01-2018 and an article by Paul Freedman, 'Restaurants' in Paul Freedman, Joyce E. Chaplin, and Ken Albala (eds), *Food in Time and Place*, University of California Press, Oakland, 2014, pp 254-275.
2. Lindsay Wilson, op. cit., p. 640; also see Whitney Walton, op. cit., p. 36.
3. Lindsay Wilson, op. cit., p. 640.
4. Ibid.
5. Spang cited in Sydney Watts, op. cit., p. 146.
6. Paul Freedman, op. cit., p. 254.
7. Ibid., p. 259.

8. Frank F. Canlon, 'Dining Out in Bombay', in Carol A. Breckenridge (ed.), *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis/London, 1995, pp. 9-127.
9. Yiannis Gabriel, *Working Lives in Catering*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1988, cited in Alan Beardworth and Teresa Keil, *Sociology on the Menu: An Invitation to the Study of Food And Society*, Routledge, London and New York, 1997, p. 100; In a very interesting article on "eating out", Peter Scholliers traces the history of 'eating out' in London: See Peter Scholliers, "eating out" in Martin Bruegel (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Age of Empire*, Berg, London, 2012.
10. Alan Beardworth and Teresa Keil, *Sociology On The Menu*, op. cit., p. 100.
11. Paul Freedman, op. cit., p. 254.
12. Ibid., p. 256.
13. Ibid.
14. Peter Scholliers, "eating out" in Martin Bruegel (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Age of Empire*, op. cit., p. 109 cited in Paul Freedman, op. cit., p. 254.
15. Frank F. Canlon, 'Dining Out in Bombay', op. cit., pp. 9-127.
16. Ibid., p. 92.
17. Ibid., p. 92, Frank F. Conlon has cited various scholars to illustrate his argument: Pandurang V. Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, 2nd ed, vol. 2, Part 2, Bhandarkar Orient Research Institute, Poona, 1972, 757-800; R.P. Kangle, *The Kautily Arthasastra*, Part III, A Study, University of Bombay, 1965.
18. Frank F. Canlon, op. cit., Foot note no. 14, p. 120. He has cited from A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That was India*, Grove, New York, 1954, p. 204.
19. K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, 24th edition, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1970, p. 220, quoted by Frank F. Conlon, op. cit., p. 93.
20. Ibid.
21. I was requested by my informants not to reveal their names.
22. He also requested me not to mention his name.
23. He was a well educated person and is teaching in one of the colleges in Lunglei town.
24. Alan Beardworth and Teresa Keil, *Sociology On The Menu*, op. cit., p. 101.

25. Paul Freedman, op. cit., p. 262.
26. See the list of restaurants which were visited by me and some ethnographic work was conducted, appendix.
27. Eric Hobsbawm, op. cit.
28. Interview with the owner of David's kitchen in January 2017.
29. Karen Hellesvig-Gaskel, 'Definition of Fast Foods', <https://www.livestrong.com/article/513055-what-happens-to-your-body-when-you-quit-eating-fast-food/>, accessed on 16/5/18.
30. Interview with Vamlalhmuthra, a Mizo residing in Saiha dated 21/10/2014.
31. Interview with Dr. Rohmingmawi, a faculty member of the Department of History, Pachhunga University College (Mizoram University).
32. One of my respondents informed me that he can't afford to go outside Mizoram because of some 'constraints' therefore, he wanted to feel its 'taste'.
33. For the concept 'McDonaldization of Society' see G. Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, 2012 (7th Edition).
34. Frank F. Canlon, 'Dining Out in Bombay', op. cit., p. 91.
35. Arjun Appadurai and Carol A. Breckenridge, 'Introduction', Carol A. Breckenridge, (ed) *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture in a South Asian World*, op. cit.
36. He did not indicate whether it is brand 'Subway'.
37. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique Judgement of Taste*, Routledge, 1982, pp. 168-225.
38. <http://routeledgesoc.com/category/profile-tags/cultural-capital>.
39. I have been highly influenced here by Frank F. Canlon, 'Dining Out in Bombay', op. cit., pp. 90-127.

CHAPTER 8

Consumption of Milk in Mizoram: A Brief History

Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine how the 'Mizos' who were 'lactose impersistent' became 'lactose persistent'¹? Why were the missionaries interested in creating the taste of milk among 'Mizos'? Why is milk projected as elixir of life to people whose guts don't have the bacilli to digest it?

The Lactose Intolerance/Impersistence

The 'Mizo' used to rear various animals: Mithuns (a breed of buffaloes), goats, etc. but their milk was not used for human consumption. T.H. Lewin argues:

Two animals domesticized among the Lhoosai strike one immediately on entering a village; they are the gyal² and the hill goat. Nearly every house has its gyal tethered near the door; they are not fed in the village, but simply receive salt, of which they are immoderately fond, at their owner's hand. Early at the first dim break of dawn, they troop out of the village to pasture, untended by any cattle herd, returning again at night of their own accord. The Kookies do not milk them³; they are used only for slaughter at big feasts or sacrifices. In appearance they are magnificent beasts, resembling nothing so much as the Chilling worth wild cattle magnified.⁴

Lakhers (now known as Maras) also disliked the drinking of animal milk. It was noticed by the first Lakher pioneer Missionary

R.A. Lorrain, “The Lakhers consider the drinking of milk as a pernicious habit.”⁵

J.A. Lorrain, the early missionary making entries on ‘Lushai delicacies’ in his *Log Book* remarks, “Milk however they consider unfit for human consumption.”⁶

Why there was no tradition of taking milk among the ‘Mizo’ and Lakhers? Why this contempt for consumption of non-human milk? Were there environmental, biological or cultural factors for this? How do the food scholars view this issue in connection with other cultures?

Marvin Harris classified human societies into the “lactophiles” and “lactophobes.”⁷ The former who being milk lovers and the later milk haters.⁸ The taste for milk or aversion to it was for Harris a marker of ‘cultural distinction.’⁹ For those societies who prized the milk viewed it as “nature’s perfect food”.¹⁰ Marvin Harris writes:

The Chinese and other eastern and Southeast Asian peoples do not merely have an aversion to the use of milk, they loathe it intensely, reacting to the prospect of gulping a nice, cold glass of the stuff such as Westerners might react to the prospect of a nice, cold glass of cow saliva. Like most of my generation I grew up believing that milk is an elixir, a beautiful white liquid manna endowed with the capacity to put hair on manly chests and peaches and cream on women’s faces. What a shock to find others regarding it as an ugly-looking, foul-smelling glandular secretion that no self-respecting adult would want to swallow.¹¹

Why there are diverse viewpoint related to use of milk in different cultures? Andrea S. Wilesy argues:

Population differences in use and perceptions of milk are related to milk’s unique sugar, lactose. Lactose is a double sugar (a disaccharide), made up of glucose and galactose, and cannot be absorbed in the small intestine directly. Instead it must be cleaved into these single sugars, which can then be absorbed, enter the body’s circulatory system, and used for energy or converted into fat for storage. This initial process requires a specialized enzyme called lactase, which is found along the cells that line the upper small intestine. In general, infant mammals produce lactase in order to break down the lactose they ingest their mother’s milk. However, lactase production diminishes over time and eventually stops altogether, usually around the time of weaning. Importantly, mammals living in the wild

never consume milk again after they are weaned; since the sole function of lactase appears to be its ability to cleave lactose, it would be wasteful of scarce energy and nutrients to continue to produce a useless enzyme... Some Sub-Saharan African, European, Middle Eastern, and South Asian populations have shown high frequencies of mutations that function to keep lactase activity throughout life, while all other humans have the ancient mammalian DNA sequence, which results in lactase being turned off around the time of weaning... Individuals who continue to produce lactase in adulthood are said to be lactase persistent, while those whose lactase activity diminishes in childhood are lactase impersistent.¹²

“In most hunting cultures,” says Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, “people are not just indifferent to dairy products: they actively dislike them and in many cases the metabolism rejects them.”¹³ Continuing his discussion on this aspect he states:

Lactose intolerance is a condition of many cultures. Indeed the ability to digest animal milk is a physical peculiarity of Europeans, North Americans, Indians and peoples of Central Asia and the Middle East. Most people elsewhere in the world do not naturally produce lactose—the substance which makes milk digestible—after infancy. In many parts of the world where livestock has been herded and farmed for centuries and even millennia, it is still normal for most people to respond to dairy products with distaste or even intolerance. Dairy products do not feature in Chinese cuisine: milk, butter, cream and even such preparations as yoghurt and buttermilk, which are digestible without the aid of lactose, are despised barbarian flavours. Japanese reject them and one of the distasteful features of early European visitors to Japan was that in local nostrils they ‘stank of butter’.¹⁴

In 1962, when 88 million pounds of powdered milk arrived in Brazil as American food aid, it made people feel ill. Marvin Harris, who was there at the time, found that American officials responded with resentment and blamed locals for ‘eating the powder raw by the fistful’ or ‘mixing it with polluted water’. Really, they were just unused to it.¹⁵

Since the Lushai Hills group of tribes/Mizos are said to have migrated from Yunan and subsequently from South-east Asia (Myanmar), and are imagined/supposed to have settled in the contemporary region in the 18th century¹⁶, the generalization

provided by Marvin Harris, Andrea S. Wiley and Adel P. Den Hatog about Southeast Asian Peoples related to their aversion to milk is applicable to the 'Lushais' as well. That may be one of the reasons for 'lactose impersistence' among the Mizo and cognate group of tribes.

Milk in Mizoram

Our sources divulge to us that it was the Gorkhas who seemed to have introduced cow's milk (fresh) in the Lushai hills. The Gorkhas is the name of the community and "it also has its synonyms, e.g. Gorkhali and Nepali."¹⁷

Gorkhas in Mizoram

The history of Gorkhas in Mizoram began with the 'punitive expeditions' led by the British Indian army against the 'Lushais' who were believed to attack and plunder the neighbouring villages in the plains and tea gardens owned by the Europeans.¹⁸ The British encouraged the Gorkhas to settle down in the hills with their families with the purpose of establishing buffer villages. Thus T.H. Lewin in his book *A Fly on the Wheel* writes:

I had formed a high opinion of the little Ghurkhas who under Col. Macpherson had done the fighting of the expedition and I obtained permission to send to Nepal and get immigrants from there to colonise my frontier waste.¹⁹

The Gurkhas started to settle down in Mizoram with the encouragement from the British and soon they built forts in the hills and took over the territory²⁰. However, there were soldiers belonging to other parts of India as well. By 1910, there were 777 Army personnel in Mizoram: 663 common soldiers, 15 trumpeters, 82 havildars, 9 jamadars and 8 subadars²¹. The majority of these soldiers were Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. The link language in the army was Hindi. There were large number of Gurkhas among these soldiers²². Joy Pachuau and Willem Van Scendel have put the pictures depicting the celebration of Durga Puja of 1896.²³ The

celebration of Durga Puja at Lunglei also reveals to us the presence of Gorkhas in Mizoram.²⁴ In fact, the Gorkhas were allowed to stay in Mizoram despite the British policy of 'inner line' "barring outsiders from entering Mizoram without a permit."²⁵

As per the survey done during 1985-86 by the team appointed by the Anthropological Survey of India the Gorkha population in and around Aizawl town during the British period

was in majority. Most of the village names were in Gorkhali, but after formation of Mizoram as an union territory, these village names were gradually changed to Mizo names e.g. Survey tilla is now Dinthar, Gairi Gaon is now known as Tuikual 'D', Khakria is now Rangvamual, Patharkhana is now Hunthar Veng, Shrimantilla is now Zotlang, Kashi Bhanjyang is Vaivakawn, Tansil is now Tanhril, Zemapunji is now Zemabawk and Bhaisigoth is now Lawipu and Khatla line is now Khatla... There are other villages having Gorkhali names, inhabited by the Gorkha people throughout Mizoram and these villages have been gradually renamed by the Mizo people in their Mizo language. At present, Gorkhas live in all the three districts of Mizoram...According to the 1981 Census of India, in Mizoram there were 1295 Gorkha households which account for total population of 5,983. Out of this Aizawl district itself had 1049 households with a population of 4,723. Lunglei district had 160 households with 843 people and Chhimtuipui district had 86 households with 417 people. It is seen that the Mizo concentration is more in Aizawl district than Lunglei and Chhimtuipui districts.²⁶

Sangeeta Rai who has done ethnographic study of support networks in Gorkha settlements in Aizawl has traced the history of various localities where the Gorkhas are located. These are: Maubawk, Zotlang, Bawngkawn, Thuampui, Zemabawk, Durtlang, Tanhril, Dinthar, Bazar, and Khatla.²⁷

Gorkhas and Dairy Farming in North-East India

Monimala Devi in an article "Economic History of Nepali Migration and Settlement in Assam" argues that the immigration of Nepalis in North-East India

began in early 19th century, 1817 to be exact, when their first direct contact with the region took place with the deployment of the Gurkhas

in the Sylhet Operation, as part of the Cuttack Legion [Shakespear 1977]. The Cuttack Legion came to be known as the “Assam Light Infantry” after its permanent location in Assam and consisted mainly of Hindustanis and Gurkhas. These Nepali sepoys continued to constitute a floating population following their respective customs, usages and traditions. The recruitment of Nepali people to the British army dates back to the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814, followed by the Treaty of Seagaul in 1816 that opened the borders between the two countries. The treaty also facilitated free recruitment of Gurkhas in a big way as the British found them loyal, hardworking, best fitted for hilly terrains and comparatively cheaper than the Hindustani soldiers.²⁸

Large number of Gurkhas were recruited in Assam Rifles throughout the 19th century.²⁹ After retirement from the Army, they were also allowed to “colonize the vast wastelands and jungle plains and function as dairy herders and graziers” in Assam.³⁰ The Nepalis also played a significant role in the dairy farming business in other parts of North-East India: Manipur,³¹ Meghalaya,³² Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.³³ The Nepalis not only supplied milk and milk products but also sold draught animals for the plough and the cart.³⁴

Gorkhas and Dairy Farming in Mizoram

As discussed above that there was a good presence of non-Mizos from other parts of India: as soldiers, traders, shopkeepers, officials on the lower echelon of bureaucracy and majority of these had the tradition of consumption of cow's or water buffaloes' milk. Therefore, some retired Gorkha soldiers who had been allowed to have permanent residence in Aizawl and other places in Mizoram started dairy farming since they found that it had good market. They were also encouraged by the British officials and Christian missionaries. Thus, Dorothy F. Glover a missionary writes:

Cow's milk was now obtainable. After the punitive expeditions some members of the Gurkha regiments, who had come with the British troops, liked the Hills and decided to remain there, some of them marrying Lushai women. They understood cow-keeping and took it up as an industry, supplying the missionaries and British posts with milk³⁵.

J.A. Lorrain, the early missionary writes in his *Log Book*:

We begin to get cows milk after 2 years without it. Our lushai boy runs for it every morning early. Some we have with porridge, part made into butter, the rest for tea. Butter milk is used for making pudding.³⁶

Missionaries and Promotion of Milk in Mizoram

The colonial officials as well as the missionaries needed the milk and the cheese because they were accustomed to them. However, the missionaries also wanted the 'natives' of Mizoram also to imbibe this practice. For example, Reginald A.Lorrain along with his wife had given medicine to a sick chief of a Lakher village. He was very advanced in age. They persuaded him to take milk since his condition was deteriorating day by day and he had become very weak:

Day by day we tended that Chief in his dingy, sooty hut, and as the Lakhers consider the drinking of milk as a pernicious habit, they will on no consideration drink it if they know it to be such, but we could see that there was no doubt that this poor Chief was starving to death through want of proper food as well as suffering from other ills. Day by day my wife would give him milk to drink, but he had to take it under the name of medicine without any knowledge that it ever belonged to cow, and oftentimes we found it was necessary to place a small crystal of permanganate into it to give it a slightly different colour so that it should not be recognized as milk; each time medicine was administered a blessing was asked of God.³⁷

Why did Lorrain projected milk as elixir of life to a Lakher chief whose guts don't have the bacilli to digest it? Various possible motives may be imputed.

According to Hannah Velten, milk has been seen as a medical remedy for invalids since ancient times.³⁸ Pliny writes of fifty-four medicinal uses of milk, ranging from it being used as an anti-venom and to smother external itchings, to being used as an eye ointment.³⁹ "Today there are still promoters of the 'Milk Diet', which relies on drinking (preferably) raw milk for at least three weeks, with or without strict bed rest"⁴⁰.

Lorrain, the missionary, was perhaps impelled by what Andrea S. Wiley terms as 'ethno-biocentrism'. She defines this category as:

the interpretation of other people's bodies as well as behavior only in relation to those of one's own body and culture, generally with the view that one's own is "better" than the other, or that one's own is "normal" and others are somehow "abnormal."⁴¹

As discussed in earlier chapter on creating new cultural tastes the missionaries by introducing new food practices had been exercising their cultural hegemony and western lifestyle formed an important aspect of this hegemony. "Milk" says Deborah Valenze, "becomes a marker of the emergence of a peculiarly Western food culture and its path into the modern age"⁴². This generalization is equally valid in the context of Mizoram.

The missionaries encouraged the Mizos also to take to milk and tea instead of *zu* (the local rice-beer). Initially, they resisted but gradually some converts started taking the milk.⁴³

Post-Colonial Mizoram and Milk Consumption

After India gained its independence in 1947, the concern for food security was a priority of the new government.⁴⁴ Milk formed an important aspect of this food security. In this regard Colleen Taylor Sen writes:

Starting around 1950, a 'white revolution' was launched in dairy farming, called "Operation Flood". A network of village milk producers' cooperatives made modern technology and management techniques available to its members with a view to increasing milk production, enhancing rural income by eliminating middlemen, and ensuring fair prices for consumers. Today India is the world's largest milk producer (having surpassed the United States in 1998). More than 10 million farmers produce more than 20 million litres (42 million pints) of milk a day.⁴⁵

Therefore, the Central government had directed the various state governments to promote milk both for its presumed nutrition as well as encourage the milk market.

Famine of 1959 and Demand for Milk

The famine of 1959 had affected the economy of large number of families in Mizoram and people had been looking for alternative means of livelihood. The opening of a tea-stall was an option for some. Pramod Bhatnagar, a civil servant posted in Mizoram during that period represents, in his fictional narrative *Zoramthangi*, one such family whose members debate over whether opening of tea-stall would provide them an alternative means of livelihood. It is worthwhile to discuss this here:

When Sangzuala and his wife Lalpari face the Mautam of 1959, he is repenting why did invest his retirement benefits into purchase of land while his brother Thangliana had advised for investing in a tea shop.

He remembered regretfully that he had always had doubts that perhaps Lalpari's judgement about the land had also been wrong. Lalpari had been in favour of the land while his brother Thangliana had argued for the tea shop. Lalpari had said:

"To own your field and to grow your rice is much more respectable!"

Thangliana replied: "Kapi! Owning a tea shop is equally respectable. And if you can get the right place near some Government office, where everybody has to go, it can be very profitable!"

"It is not so certain. And profit is not everything. What will we all do? Clean up cups and glasses, make tea and hear all kind of idiotic gossip. What's so respectable about all this?"

"But you can't forget the money that's there?"

"Yes, mostly on credit. You give tea and eggs and biscuits and they will pay you when they can! You lose a lot of money like that! I am absolutely against setting up a tea shop."

That clinched the issue.

He bought a piece of land two miles out of the town but on the main road".⁴⁶

In fact, by the time of 'insurgency' (1966-1986) the tea stalls had become popular in major towns of Mizoram, specifically in Aizawl. Thus, in *Zoramthangi* the police intelligence is in search of an 'insurgent' who is believed to be hiding in a tea stall:

The next day was Christmas. It was in the evening that Thanglura's security agents received word that Laimana was sitting at a tea shop in Bungkawn Bazar.⁴⁷

The popularity of tea signifies the availability of milk since milk tea was popular during that time.

'Insurgency' in Mizoram(1966-1986) and Grouping of Villages

The food crisis resulting from the famine of 1959 is believed to have created a base for 'insurgency' in Mizoram led by Mizo National Army later rechristened as Mizo National Front. The Indian State introduced emergency conditions and army was deployed as a counter-insurgency measure. The army cops needed milk for tea as well as for their daily consumption. Though powdered condensed milk was brought by the army stores still there was a demand for fresh milk for consumption. Therefore, a number of Gorkhalis had good business during this time.⁴⁸

In order to contain insurgency, the Indian Army introduced a scheme known as 'Grouping of villages' wherein a number of villages consisting of different clans were forced to migrate to the new grouping centres located on the borders of national high way. These centres were barricaded and well guarded by soldiers. Some Mizos opened tea stalls to supply tea to the soldiers⁴⁹.

Therefore, a demand for fresh milk was increasing. The grouping also led to urbanization process. It also led to introduction of new food and therefore induced a change in the tastes of the society. Milk was one of these aspects of change. However, only the well-to-do among the Mizo could afford to buy milk⁵⁰.

The Central government adopted two strategies for containing the insurgency: a. Coercion and b. Development. In the second category the Mizo hills were given the status of a Union Territory in 1972 and therefore funds started flowing for developments activities. It also meant expansion of civil service sector and an attempt to create a entrepreneurial class in the society and therefore demand for milk got intensified.

Animals Husbandry

As discussed in earlier section of this chapter that a tradition of

domesticating animals had existed in Lushai Hills and the colonial officials had made some efforts to promote Animal Husbandry and for this Veterinary Doctor had been appointed as early as 1917.⁵¹ When Mizoram became a Union Territory on 21 January 1972 further efforts were made by the government to strengthen this department.⁵²

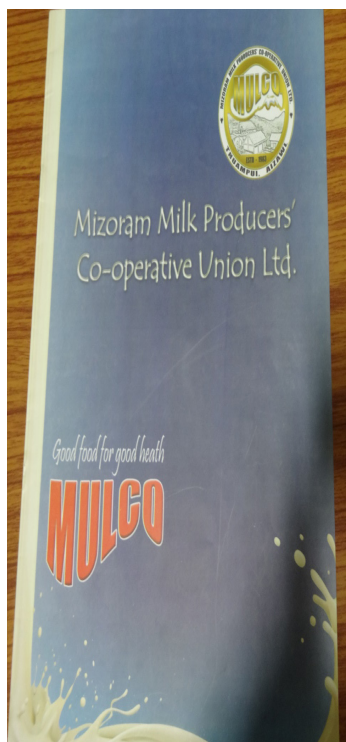


Picture 88

***Mizoram Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd.
(MULCO)***

The cooperative movement in Mizoram created conditions for production of milk and its products with the organized dairy farming. The establishment of Mizoram Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd. (MULCO) on 5 January 1983 was an attempt in this direction.⁵³ Following the "pattern of Gujarat's Anand Milk Union Limited (AMUL.) its main task was to provide milk in and around Aizawl and to help in the formation of Primary Co-operative Societies"⁵⁴.

After 1995 "concerted efforts were made towards the production and marketing of pasteurized milk and milk products like *rosgulla*, *rasmalai*, *gulabjamun*, *paneer*, *lassi*, *dahi*, *ghee* and ice cream"⁵⁵. The



Picture 90: Cover page photograph of the booklet

main objective of the MULCO is to carry out activities conducive to economic and socio-economic development of Milk Producers Co-operatives by organizing effectively production, procurement, and processing and marketing of commodities.⁵⁶ In addition to this, the Union has also undertaken procurement and distribution works of cattle feeds like wheat bran, oil cake and medicines to its member societies at reasonable prices⁵⁷.

MULCO also started producing 'tonned milk' from July 2012.⁵⁸



Picture 91

Problems faced by Milk Farmers

It was reported in 2012 by the officials that the milk farmers supplying milk to MULCO had been complaining about the dwindling of the profits. The officials give two factors for this: (a) soaring prices and (b) stiff competition.



Picture 92: Some collection centres

Prices of commodities such as cattle feed and oil cake are comparatively higher in Mizoram than other states. In average, a single cow in Mizoram can produce eight litres of milk per day. After paying for cow feed, oil cake, mineral, medicines and wages of labourers, a dairy farmer virtually has no profit...dairy brands like Amul and Nestle are selling their ultra high temperature (UHT) milk at much cheaper prices in Mizoram due to their lesser production cost....According to Varsi Consultancy, Mission Veng in Aizawl, each family in Aizawl consumes only 36 litres of milk in a month with 3% of it for drinking purpose and the rest for making dahi, paneer, lassi, sweets, ice cream et al. The survey also revealed that Aizawl's requirement of milk on daily basis is 3076 litres worth Rs. 8,20,000. MULCO has been selling out 7000-8000 litres of milk on daily basis. Meanwhile, the just launched 'tonned milk' is priced at Rs. 36/- per litre...other products launched by MULCO in recent times include pasteurized milk (regular), dahi, lasi, paneer, rasmalai.⁵⁹

Despite these problems the production of milk by MULCO and its demand has been increasing.

Globalization and Introduction of Liberal Economy in India

“Globalization is one of the major current influence of a changing landscape with regard to consumption of milk, as well as attitudes towards and meanings of milk”⁶⁰.

Globalization has given rise to liberal economy in India and in the context of Mizoram it opened the gates of huge number of Mizo students migrating for studies and jobs to different parts of India, specifically Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, etc. It definitely led to change in their food habits and on return to Mizoram they continued with the new habits along with the old. There was phenomenal growth in trading activities and also establishment of a number of centrally sponsored schemes and also institutions. A number of suppliers, teachers, academicians, etc. Started visiting this area and therefore, bringing new foodways into Mizoram. The demand for milk has been increasing.

Oral Narratives Related to the Practice of Taking Milk

I conducted fieldwork related to milk and other issues related to food practices in November 2015 to January 2016, January 2017 to February 2017 and finally during January and February 2018. I conducted interviews of large number of persons across gender and age. Some of these are narrated below in brief.

Kim Kima, a driver and a young man of 24 years, and Biolechouguwaya, a labourer aged about 22 years, were sitting on the platform outside the main gate of Millennium centre. It is a place where young boys and girls spend their leisure time since there is sufficient space and cemented platform, thoroughly cleaned. Even people fix appointments with friends and others to meet at this place. I chose this place because one can find a number of young girls and boys relaxing, smoking there. They told me that they like the milk but cannot afford since their

income is not sufficient. However, they prefer milk tea with sugar which generally their masters provide and also they purchase at various tea-stalls. The driver follows united Pentecoastal Church. Generally, I observed the poor mainly visit this church and that too mainly the migrants from the Chin state of Myanmar who perform the jobs of domestic servants, labourers and also drivers, etc.

Joseph V.L. Rimawia, aged 35 years and working as an office clerk at Mizoram University and his wife Laltveni informed me that they take the milk and its products: *chesse*, *dahi*, *rasgulla*, regularly. Rozuala, who has been working in the security department of MULCO since 1997, informed me that he is provided with 1 litre of milk by MULCO everyday and takes milk regularly. His children also like taking milk for nutrition supplement.

Dr. A. Lalramliana has been working as Veterinary Doctor since April 2017 in the MULCO states:

that milk consumption is as popular as compared to its widespread popularity in mainland India. But the consumption is good for tea but also nowadays the children, sick people and old people are also taking since its nutritional quality is very good. For daily supplement people are taking, since it contains a lot of vitamins and nutrients. They are also interested in quality also (that is the people) and we are trying our level best to produce the quality milk, that is, pasteurized milk. It is good for marketing also because people are aware of the danger of taking raw material and that is why there is a good demand for our milk. Of course, as compared to other states, consumption per capita is less. We procure from the farmers. We have our society 30 to 40 and the each society procures from the registered suppliers, that is, the farmers. This one is no profit organization, the farmers are Mizo, 90 per cent Mizo farmers in our society. There are Nepali farmers also but they supply to the individual houses and restaurants and hotels etc⁶¹.

Continuing the conversation, Dr. A. Lalramliana informed me that Fodder is collected from the forest by the farmers. When I asked him if the Mizo keep Nepalis as farmers and labourers to get fodder from the forest, he denied and said that only Mizo farmers themselves bring the fodder from the forests. But I myself have observed and asked many Nepalis and found out that large number

of Mizo keep Neapolis as labourers for bringing the fodder and also mulching the cows since Neapolis are experts in this. He continued:

We also provide fodder-the concentrated fodder: feeds-these days in our society we provide concentrate feed-it is a composition of wheat bran with oil cake and some vitamins, minerals, salt etc. we get from Silchar through our Mizo agents. Oil cakes also we are buying from them. Oil cake is made from mustard and some from coconut also. It is mixed with wheat bran. It is expensive and in Aizawl market, it is Rs 29 per kg. We provide subsidy for feed. We don't have any laboratory test system. We check mainly the adulteration, quality, etc. for our society production is increasing. Last December, it increased. We sell about 80 per cent in Aizawl and the rest in adjoining areas and also in other districts. In fact sometimes production is more than the demand but most of the time demand is less than the production. Nestle and Amul Taza don't have their plant here but people prefer these milk, that is Amul taza for preparation of tea and that is the problem for us⁶².

Pi Lalmunliani, the Deputy Manager, MULCO, narrated as follows:

The Mizos earlier were not taking milk. It was started by those missionaries. We don't give advertisement now since the demand is more than the production. Earlier 5 years back we used to advertise but not now-a-days. The demand is more than the supply. Since last month we produce surplus and sometimes we go for distress sale otherwise we put more into milk products: *dahi*, *lassi*, *paneer*, *rasgulla*, *rasmalai*, cheese, even *ghee*. But not all families take *ghee*, but many are taking. This younger generation is very fond of dairy products. Dahi we sell in bulk and also cups. We also send *dahi* in bulk in milk parlours, we have ten parlours but agents purchase plenty more than 200. Sometime dairy products go to other parts of Mizoram but mainly Mamit, Serchip and surrounding areas but not remote villages. Amul Taza is a tetra milk because it can last for longer time. It has a longer shelf life. Even if Mulco products cannot reach to the remote but these can (Amul, etc) can be transported to far flung areas. But we keep it in insulated boxes for supply to Mamit, etc. the milk which MULCO is selling is only cow milk⁶³.

Stephe B. Chhuanwma is Bachelor of Theology (still a student) of Aizawl Theological College remarked that "we like Amul Taza, etc. for taking milk tea but for drinking milk we prefer MULCO

since it is good and tasty also and moreover, it is cow's fresh milk in a way. We also like MULCO products: *dahi*, *rasgulla*, *lassi*, *rasmalai* and *paneer*. Milk has nutrition supplements which our growing children do need. We also do take milk but more in tea than as a drink but I, of course, do take it only occasionally."⁶⁴

A senior citizen (female)⁶⁵ and highly educated residing at Aizawl narrated:

We used to domesticate milch animals like gayal, Mithun, goats etc. but I am not sure whether our ancestors used to take non-human milk. However, during my childhood we often used to take milk. We used to give milk (those who could afford) if any relative or neighbour was sick and it was considered that we do care for her/him. Even, nowadays, if someone falls sick, we do carry milk for the person to take since it is considered healthy to give milk to a sick person. Yes, just like you, we used to boil milk for consumption and raw milk was not taken. However, we used raw milk for making tea. We believe that our ancestors used to domesticate animals, I think they would be taking milk also.⁶⁶

I noticed one thing from her body language: when I asked her whether they take raw milk or boiled one, she got irritated and asked me counter-question: How do you take? Raw or boiled? When I informed her that we do take it after boiling. Her response was: We also take like you only and just like other Indian. How do I understand this irritation, gesture, that revealed hostility? Why did she say in a hostile gesture (body language) that we, too, boil milk before consumption just like you people? It is possible that she wanted to tell me that you people consider yourself as civilized and we equally are a civilized people. Many outsiders have represented the Mizo as 'barbarian', 'uncivilized', etc. at times she says Mizo are more superior as compared to 'Indians'. Therefore, the category 'Mizo' is used in contrast to the 'Indians' to reveal that we are different from you. And food becomes a site of this 'difference'.

I noticed that some take milk regularly and give milk to growing children after weening stage. Several other respondents argued that only occasionally they take milk but they make their children to take milk everyday after the weening stage. Almost everyone reported to me that milk is good for their health. When

asked which milk they prefer, a large number of them said that they like milk supplied by MULCO since it is tasty and moreover it is produced in Mizoram. But they like Nestle, Amul Taza, etc. for making tea because according to their perception the tea becomes tasty with Nestle and Amul Taza milk. In their view, these brands are good for making curd (*dahi*) and later is very popular in Mizoram. One may get curd/yogurt in all the tea stalls and restaurants. I had been visiting the main post-office in Aizawl on Saturdays since 2002 and I have often observed a Nepali woman serving cups of hot milk between 11-12 a.m. I enquired the post-office Mizo employees why do they take milk during this time? I was told that they take a cup of hot milk as a substitute to tea. I have observed even in other offices also I have observed this a number of times the Mizos taking milk.

I surveyed all the bazaars (markets) of Aizawl during my fieldwork in January 2018 and found that at few places the Nestle had put a big picture off advertisement of milk but only very few advertisement pictures of MULCO.

However, despite Nestle, Amul Taza and Mulco, it is the Nepalis who constitute the large chunk of dairy farmers throughout Mizoram. During my period of stay in Aizawl: government complex, Chhawlmun and then on Mizoram University campus, I used to see the Gorkha/Nepali women and young girls walking in the streets with milk cans in their hands and delivering the milk in different houses. I also used to buy cow's milk from a Gorkha woman who used to reside with her family and cow-shed near



Picture 93: Taken during fieldwork.



Picture 94: Taken during fieldwork.



Picture 95: Taken during fieldwork.



Picture 96: Taken during fieldwork.



Picture 97



Picture 98: The above two pictures were taken by me in 2015 before my retirement from the university. I used to stay on the first floor of faculty quarters on Mizoram University Campus. The scene is just below my house.

my house in Chhawlmun. on the Mizoram University Campus, Gorkhas were the only source of supplying the milk to the residents of the campus in the initial stages.

It is only recently that an agent of MULCO has started selling milk, *dahi* (curd), *rasgullas*, etc. in *gumti*⁶⁷ provided by the University administration. But since the demand is much more than the supply, the residents either have to depend upon the cow's milk supplied by the Gurkhas and Amul Taza in a co-operative.⁶⁸ During my walk from residence to the department, I used to come across students of Mizoram University (Mizo as well as non-Mizos) buying *dahi*, *rasgulla*, cheese and ice cream from the Mulco *gumti*.

What were the objective conditions for the growth in production and consumption of milk? As discussed above, globalization was a major fillip to the production and consumption of milk in Mizoram. In the last section of the chapter on bread a number of factors for consumption of bread were discussed. These are equally true in the case of demand and consumption of milk. Besides, the progressive development of bakeries and the restaurants have also created demand for milk.

Conclusion

To conclude: twin forces of colonialism and Christianity created a taste for milk among Mizos specifically those who had embraced Christianity and gradually in the process of time Mizos had 'lactose impersistent' become 'lactose persistent'. However, it is after 1980s that the consumption of milk becomes widespread and milk products have become part and parcel of Mizo society.

NOTES

1. Andrea Willey has used these two categories: 'Lactase impersistence' and 'Lactase persistence' for 'Lactose intolerance' and 'Lactose tolerance' respectively, Andrea Willey, *Re-Imagining Milk*, Routledge, New York and London, 2011, p. 21.
2. Gyal is known as Mithun among the Tani tribes of Arunachal Pradesh.

3. Emphasis added
4. T.H. Lewin, *The Hill Tracts of Chittagong and the Dwellers Therein: With Comparative Vocabulary Of The Hill Dialects*, Bengal Printing Company, Limited, Calcutta, 1869, Reprinted by Tribal Research Institute, Department of Art & Culture, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, Mizoram, 2004, pp. 145-146. Emphasis added by me. T.H. Lewin used Lhoosai and Kookies as overlapping categories: "The Luhoosai, commonly called the Kookies are a powerful and independent people, who touch upon the borders of the Chittagong Hill Tracts". (T.H. Lewin, *Wild Races of South-Eastern India*, W.H. Allen & Co., London, 1870, Reprinted by Firma Klm Private Limited, Calcutta, On behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, Mizoram, 1978, p. 130).
5. Reginald A. Lorrain, *Five Years in Unknown Jungles*, For God And Empire, Spectrum Publications On Behalf Of Tribal Research Institute, Mizoram, Aizawl, 1988. (First published in the United Kingdom by the Lakher Pioneer Mission, London in 1912), p. 206.
6. J.H. Lorrain, *Log Book*, 1889-1936, DT. 26 March 1895, op. cit., p. 46.
7. Marvin Harris, *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1985, cited in Andrea S.Wiley, *Cultures of Milk: The Biology and Meaning of Dairy Products in the United States and India*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2014, p. 7.
8. Adel P. Den Hartog, 'Acceptance of Milk Products in Southeast Asia: The Case of Indonesia as a Traditional Non-Dairying Region', in Katarzyna Cwiertka with Boudewijn Walraven (ed.) *Asian Food: The Global and the Local*, Curzon Press, Richmond, Surrey, 2002, p. 34.
9. Marvin Harris cited in Andrea S. Wiley, *Cultures of Milk*, op. cit., p. 8.
10. Andrea S.Wiley, *Cultures of Milk*, op. cit., p. 8.
11. Marvin Harris, *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*, Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1985, pp. 130-131, Quoted in Andrea S.Wiley, *Cultures of Milk*, op. cit., p. 8.
12. Andrea S.Wiley, *Cultures of Milk*, op. cit., p. 9.
13. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Food: A History*, Pan Macmillan Ltd, London, 2002, p. 80.
14. Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Food: A History*, op. cit., p. 81.
15. M. Harris, *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture* (London, 1986, pp 131-32) cited in Felipe Fernandez-Armesto, *Food: A History*, Pan Macmillan Ltd, London, 2002, p. 81.

16. Most of the scholars who have done research on Mizo-Chin-Kuki group of tribes argue that their ancestors migrated from Yunan Province of China.
17. N.N. Kundu, 'Gorkha' in B.B. Goswami, C. Nunthra, N.N. Sengupta (eds.) *Mizoram*, Volume XXXIII, K.S. Singh, General Editor, *People Of India*, Anthropological Survey Of India, Seagull Books, Calcutta, 1995, pp. 54-64 (the volume on Mizoram is the result of field investigation conducted during 1985-86).
18. We have discussed the question of raids in earlier chapter of this book.
19. Cited in N.N. Kundu, 'Gorkha' in B.B. Goswami, C. Nunthra, N.N. Sengupta (eds.) *Mizoram*, Volume XXXIII, K.S. Singh, General Editor, *People Of India*, op. cit., p. 54; also see 'Gorkha History of Northeast India' <https://www.facebook.com/bharatiyagorkha/posts/5999364873419097>, July 11, 2003, accessed on 12/3/18
20. N.N. Kundu, 'Gorkha' in B.B. Goswami, C. Nunthra, N.N. Sengupta (eds.) *Mizoram*, Volume XXXIII, K.S. Singh, General Editor, *People of India*, op. cit., p. 54.
21. Makthanga 'Mizo ram thu nawi.' 1910. Mizo leh Vai (January): 15, in Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem Van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India*, op. cit., pp. 138-139.
22. Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem Van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness*, op. cit., p. 139.
23. Ibid., p. 139.
24. For a description of Durga Puja in Lunglei in 1905, see Makthanga 1905. 'Lungleh Durgapuja.' Mizo leh Vai (November): 6-7. See also Sunar et al. 2000. [Sunar, Pradeep, Jeevan Kawar, and I.K. Subha. 2000. *The Gorkhas of Mizoram-Vol.1*. Aizawl: Mizoram Students' Gorkha Union. cited in Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem Van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness: A Social History of Mizoram, Northeast India*, Cambridge University Press, Delhi, 2015, Foot note no. 52, p. 144.
25. Lalrinmawia. 1995. *Mizoram: History and Cultural Identity*. Guwhati: Spectrum Publications, Guwhati, pp. 75-82; P. Chakraborty. 1995. *The Inner-Line Regulation of the Northeast India*. Titagarh: Linkman Publications; Ranju Bezbaruah. 2010. *The Pursuit of Colonial Interests in India's Northeast*. Guwahati: EBH Publishers; all cited in Joy L.K. Pachuau and Willem Van Schendel, *The Camera As Witness*, op. cit., p. 139.
26. N.N. Kundu, "Gorkha", op. cit., p. 54.

27. Sangeeta Rai, "Community and Well-Being Role of Social Support Networks In Gorkha Settlements In Aizawl", unpublished M.Phil dissertation, Department of Social Work, Mizoram University, 2013, pp. 40-51.
28. Monimala Devi, "Economic History of Nepali Migration and Settlement in Assam", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 21 July 2007, p. 3005; also see Amaendu Guha, *Planter-Raj to Swaraj Freedom Struggle and Electoral Politics in Assam 1826-1947*, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1977.
29. See Lopita Nath, "Migration, Insecurity and Identity: The Nepali Dairymen in India's Northeast" *Asian Ethnicity*, Volume 7, Number 2, June 2006, pp. 129-148.
30. Lopita Nath, "Migration, Insecurity and Identity: The Nepali Dairymen in India's Northeast", *Asian Ethnicity*, Volume 7, Number 2, June 2006, p. 140.
31. See T.Gurung, "Human movement and the Colonial State: The Nepalis of North-East India under the British Empire", in A.C. Sinha and T.B. Subba (eds) *The Nepalis in North-East India: A Community in Search of Indian Identity*, Indus, New Delhi, 2003, pp. 172-184.
32. A.N. Passah, 'Nepali Christians in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills of Meghalaya', in A.C. Sinha and T.B. Subba (eds) *The Nepalis in North-East India: A Community in Search of Indian Identity*, op. cit., pp. 277-294.
33. Lopita Nath, "Migration, Insecurity and Identity: The Nepali Dairymen in India's Northeast" op. cit., p. 141.
34. Ibid., p. 140.
35. Dorothy F.Glover, *Set On A Hill*, The record of fifty years in the Lushai country, Edinburg Press, London, p. 13 (year of Publication not mentioned), ATC Archives and Library, Aizawl, Mizoram.
36. J.H. Lorrain, *Log Book*, 1889-1936, dt. 7th Jan, 1896, op. cit., p. 52.
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39. Bostock and Riley, trans., Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, Book XXVIII: 33, cited in Hannah Velten, *Milk: A Global History*, op. cit., p. 47.
40. Hannah Velten, *Milk*, op. cit., p. 51.

41. Andrea S.Wiley, *Re-Imagining Milk*, op. cit., p. viii (Preface).
42. Deborah Valenze, *MILK: A Local and Global History*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 2011, p. 5.
43. See the chapter on 'creating new cultural tastes'.
44. See colleen Taylor Sen, *Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India*, Reaktion Books, London, 2015, p. 273.
45. Ibid.
46. Praod Bhatnagar, 'Mizoram (introduction?)', *Zoramthangi: Daughter of The Hills*, (a fiction in English), A Vikrant Press Publication, Delhi, 1980, p. 20.
47. *Zoramthangi*, p. 48.
48. Based on oral narratives.
49. Based on oral sources
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51. A Profile of the Department of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary, Government of Mizoram, <https://ahvety.mizoram.gov.in> accessed on 24/3/15 from google.com.
52. Ibid.
53. *Mizoram Milk Producers' Co-operative Union Ltd.*, a booklet issued by Mizoram Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd, Thuapuii, Aizawl-796014, p. 1.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. <http://mizonugget.blogspot.in/2010/07/first-indigenous-tonned-milk-coming-up.html>, Aizawl/July 12, accessed on 5/1/18.
59. Ibid.
60. Sudha Raj. Review of Wiley, Andrea S., *Cultures of Milk: The Biology and Meaning of Dairy Products in the United States and India*. H-Asia, H-Net Reviews. May 2015.
URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=42213>.
61. Interview with Dr. A. Lalramliana, MULCO office, Aizawl, January 2018.
62. Ibid.
63. Pi Lalhmunliani, the Deputy Manager, MULCO. The interview was conducted in her office in January 2018.
64. Stephe B.Chhuanwma, interview conducted in January 2018.
65. Name withheld on her request.
66. Ibid.

67. A *gumti* is any small shed where the small shopkeepers sell their products.
68. Though it is a cooperative but is outsourced to a Mizo from Aizawl and that too has only very recently been started.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusion

The Mizos sources for food production revolved around agricultural practices, hunting, fishing and garden practices. Their agricultural practices revolved around *jhumming* which was a dynamic and sustainable practice. The technology used was a simple one. The production of food was buttressed by social system based on chieftainship. Though it was a subsistence economy but trade also formed an important aspect of this economy. As a result of certain technological developments, certain chiefs had become powerful in the 19th century and had been subjugating the small ones. They needed to produce more for expanding their areas and for this more labour power was required. 'Raids' on the neighbouring areas was one of the means to get the labour supply. This created a conflict with the expanding British power leading ultimately to the annexation of this region to the British Indian government. The colonial officials introduced new land revenue system and introduced Permanent wet rice cultivation in certain areas. The power of the existing chiefs was reduced and also the number of chiefs were increased to create a social base for the imperial power. The officials demanded porters in large number for various construction activities as well as for carrying the baggage of the officials. Some chiefs resisted but ultimately had to succumb to the might of the empire. There was introduction of new crops and also import of new species of animals. The coming of the Christian missionaries and spread of gospel message provided a cultural base for the imperial power. These twin forces of colonialism and Christianity created conditions for major social changes. This process of social change continued in the

post-colonial Mizoram. The new government also continued the colonial discourse of 'improvement' the material progress of the society and attack on shifting cultivation was an important aspect of this discourse. Therefore, in order to dissuade the farmers from shifting cultivation 'New Land Use Policy' was introduced under which the alternative sources for livelihood were provided. New cash crops were introduced. Some of the consequences of the New Land Use Policy were: privatization of land and gradual erosion of village community, landlessness, food insecurity, migration of rural population to urban centers. However, new modes of livelihood had been emerging with increase in population and one of these is related to women farmers who made selling of vegetables as a source of livelihood.

The production of foodgrains had been getting impeded temporarily in the history of Mizoram as a result of recurrent appearance of an ecological phenomenon arising out of the two species of bamboo flowering. There are two distinct groups: 'The mautam group' and 'the ting-tam group'. The former flowers and sprouts its seeds in a cycle of every 50 years and the later every 30 years. Once bamboos start flowering, the rats' population increases alarmingly and starts attacking the crops and then granaries leading thereby to food crisis. The Mizo also had developed various mechanisms to cope up with this crisis. They adopted 'famine foods' during critical periods of shortage since the need for survival became paramount. Wild plants were among the most 'significant famine foods' exploited extensively by Mizos as an alternative source of nutrients besides animals. Besides, social capital also played a significant role in alleviating their suffering. During the 'Mautam' of 1911-12, the missionaries and the colonial officials did provide 'food for work' but the high prices of imported rice had made the lives of the people miserable.

The consequences of the 'Mautam' and 'Thingtam' of 1862, 1882, 1911-12 and 1959: migration, economic dislocation, epidemics, new religious movement, political conflict, and ecological implications.

Another hindrance to food production was man-nature conflicts from time to time. The nature of conflict in the pre-colonial 19th

century Mizoram was over control and use of natural resources for food. The conflict between the chiefs over 'resource use' and the colonial state culminated into the full-scale war between the two forces leading thereby to the victory of the British Indian army and annexation of the Lushai hills by the British in 1890. However, conflict continued to persist because of disarmament, house-tax, forced labour and the chiefs resisted: some through symbolic form and others through armed confrontation. However, it was quelled by the colonial state. The 'Mautam' of 1959 leading to food crisis generated a situation wherein the group which wanted separation from India on the eve of its Independence and remained dormant for some time became active and revived its demand for separation from the Indian nation-state.

This group 'Mizoram National Army' (Mizoram National Front) under the leadership of Lal Denga started armed struggle against the Indian nation-state in 1966. The resultant violence on the part of MNA and counter-violence by the Indian Army affected the peoples' everyday life related to the agricultural activities. The grouping of villages undertaken by Indian army displaced the rural population and destabilized their food production chores. It caused tremendous suffering to the people. The displacement generated number of folk songs which represent this anguish. This period of Mizo history commenced the erosion of self-sufficiency of the Mizo communities in food production.

All over the world, transforming indigenous cultures had been an agenda central to colonial domination. In 'civilizing' the tribes of North-East India the agendas of both the colonialists as well the Christian missionaries synchronized. Taste had been an important site of exercising cultural hegemony over the Mizo tribes. The food, feeding and eating is an important aspect of taste. However, in the context of colonial Mizoram the issues related to cuisine, hygiene and sanitation are intertwined and these became the site of exercising cultural hegemony for the missionaries in Mizoram. It is manifested in the mode they represented these issues in their writings. These were replete with the metaphors of filth, disorder and disease. Crusade against *zu* (Rice-beer) which represented Mizos' whole way of life, formed an important aspect of the

missionaries' agenda of transforming the indigenous culture. Instead drinking of tea was promoted which gradually became a part and parcel of the Mizo culture. However, the local chiefs resisted against the missionaries with the symbolic weapons of which food, drink and dancing accompanied by singing. However, it lasted till the food crisis of 1911-12 and subsequently processes of indigenization of Christianity, educational, medical activities and Mizo Bible women reinforced the church hegemony. However, the new foodways, table manners etc. also spread through observation. The missionaries' task of 'civilizing' the table manners, cuisines and practices related to eating was taken up the civil society organizations like Young Mizo Association etc. and it continued in the post-colonial Mizoram and also in the absence of white missionaries. However, the civil society organizations also led a movement for forging cultural identity and food was an important aspect of this agenda. It did not mean all the traditional practices were 'revived'. It was a very selective process. Therefore, the result was reformulation or 're-invention' of traditions. 'Hybridity' also was one such aspect of this development. The cook books, social media were one of the means to broaden this process. Though the Mizo migrants to different metropolitan cities of India also did help in this process of 'hybridization' but simultaneously there was also a desire to produce a similar place in their places/spaces of new residence. In this space they 'reconstructed' their memories cooking and sharing their 'traditional' food.

In fact, these different ways through which the Mizo developed their own versions of modernity. One version of this was the development of bakeries and its products in Mizoram. Though the White missionaries had introduced the bakery products but it became very widespread only since the last two decades of twentieth century. Various possible explanations may be provided: increase of population, development of Christianity, liberal economy since nineties, massive expansion of entrepreneurial activities, globalization and media specially the social media. The development of bakery café system also contributed to this process.

The modern restaurants were the other sites of extending 'hybridity' in Aizawl. Their development specifically in Aizawl, the

capital city can be seen since the last decade of twentieth century. One of the features of these restaurants is the introduction of menu in a printed form. The other characteristic of these restaurants is catering to the needs of not only different sections of the Mizo society but also to the persons coming from other parts of India and therefore, the food that is served is an 'hybrid' one. There has been in recent times the emergence of fast food restaurants and most important among these is the establishment of KFC. However, it draws consumers from upper strata of the society and educated middle class only. For this social group, it is the space for creating cultural capital for them. The modern restaurants have generated a culture of 'Eating Out' in Aizawl. However, it is confined only to the affluent social group. Therefore, the modern restaurants have created to some extent a public culture.

Though it was the Nepalis who introduced milk in Mizoram but it were the White missionaries initiated the process of converting the 'lactose intolerance' Mizo society to 'lactose persistence' during colonial period. It formed a part of their agenda of exercising cultural hegemony. They also promoted milk tea so as to persuade them to abstain from *Zu*, that is local rice-beer. However, the production and demand for milk got boosted mainly since the last two decades of 20th century and the popularity of milk and its products has been progressively mounting since then. The reasons attributed to this phenomena are the same as in the case of popularity of bakery products. However, in addition to this the mush growth in the later commodity as well as the popularity of restaurants also are contributory factors for increase in the demand for milk.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Table 1. The Progress of Literacy in Mizoram (1901-2011)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Percentage to Total Population</i>
1901	82,434	0.93
1911	91,204	3.98
1921	98,406	6.28
1931	1,24,404	10.71
1941	1,53,786	19.48
1951	1,96,202	31.13
1961	2,26,063	44.00
1971	3,32,390	53.79
1981	4,93,757	59.88
1991	6,98,756	82.27
2001	888,573	88.80
2011	1,097,206	91.01

Source: Records of Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram

Government of India, Census of India, 1991, Mizoram, (Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram).

Government of India. Census of India, 2001, Mizoram, (Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram).

Districts at a Glance, Mizoram, 2013, Directorate of Economics and statistics, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, pp. 12, 14.

Table 2. Expansion of Service Sector
The Trend and Indices of Mizoram Government Employees

Sr. No	As on 31st March	No. of Employees	Growth over Previous Census		Index of Employment Base 1981=100
			Change in No.	% Change	
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	1985	27,104	6,510	31.6	144
2	1987	29644	2540	937	157
3	1994	40,420	10,776	36.35	215
4	1996	42,609	2,189	5.41	226
5	1998	46,674	4,065	9.54	248
6	2000	49,892	3,218	6.89	265
7	2002	50,721	829	1.66	269
8	2008	56,239	5,518	10.87	299
9	2009	53,653	-2586	-4.59	285
10	2012	55,465	1,812	3.37	295

Source: Districts at a Glance, Mizoram, 2013, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, p. 162.

Sr. No.	As on 31st March	% of male employees	% of female employees	No. of females per 1000 male employees
1	1985	82.84	17.16	207
2	1987	80.98	19.02	235
3	1994	78.95	21.05	267
4	1996	77.99	22.01	282
5	1998	79.28	20.72	261
6	2000	78.01	22.00	282
7	2002	78.00	22.00	282
8	2008	75.05	22.93	319
9	2009	74.96	25.03	329
10	2012	74.64	25.36	340

Source: Districts at a Glance, Mizoram, 2013, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram, Aizawl, p. 163.

Table 3. Growth of Christianity in Mizoram (1901-2000)

<i>Years</i>	<i>Population in Mizoram</i>	<i>Christian Community</i>	<i>Percentage to Total Population</i>
1901	82,434	55	0.45
1911	91,204	2,461	2.77
1921	98,406	27,720	28.17
1931	1,24,404	59,123	47.52
1941	1,52,786	98,108	64.21
1951	1,96,202	1,57,575	80.31
1961	2,66,063	2,30,509	86.64
1971	3,32,390	2,86,141	86.09
1981	4,93,757	4,13,840	83.81
1991	6,89,756	5,91,328	85.73
2001	8,88,573	7,72,809	87.00

Source: Government of India. Census of India, 1991, Mizoram, (Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram), p. 92.

Government of India. Census of India, 2001, Mizoram, (Directorate of Census Operation, Mizoram), p. 12.

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEWS

A Note on Interviews

I have been taking recourse to the tools of oral history; therefore, have been conducting intensive fieldwork. It involved interviews of large number of 'indigenous' persons as well 'non-indigneous' to get an emic as well as attic view. However, I realized during my investigations that no useful purpose would be served by conducting systematic interviews in the tradition of social survey, because many of my respondents were people who are advanced in age, and they had to depend heavily on their memory to answer some of the questions. Some *upas* (senior) Often considered it below their dignity to respond to questions on questionnaire schedule. Very often, they narrated a tradition and fable to explain a particular point. I made use of tape recorder but the interviews were not structured but unstructured ones. I used to engage my informants in conversations; of course, these conversations were guided by a set of questions that I had previously framed. But quite often, the conversation itself used to unleash a process whereby the interview could transgress the earlier frameworks. Thus, gradually I could make a rapport with the informants and get immense wealth of information. But it does not mean the schedules were not used. In many cases, I had to compute data based on schedule.

I have to take the signature of respondents for seeking permission to use their 'real' names. Though large number of persons across age and gender were conducted in different districts of Mizoram but only a few names have been given as listed below:

List Names of the persons whose interviews were conducted

- a. Kolasib (Diakawn bazaar)

Interviews of a number of women vegetables were conducted

in this bazaar and my interpreter was Miss J. Lalventluangi who was a student of class 9 (ninth standard) in St. Johns Higher secondary School, Kolasib Venglai. She could converse both in English as well as in Hindi. Since I did not note the names of all the women, the ideas have already been discussed in the main text.

b. Venglai bazaar, Kolasib.

In this bazaar I visited a number of tea stalls, selling tea along with some snacks.

c. Interviews conducted in different towns of Mizoram: Aizawl, Lunglei, Lawngtlai, Saiha, Kolasib, Champhai, Mamit & Serchip towns.

Since I have also been interacting with a large number of students from various departments of Mizoram University, it was not possible to provide the names of each and every one. However, my discussions with them have been reflected in the various chapters of this monograph. Besides I had conducted interviews of large number of persons across class, age and gender during my fieldwork in various towns of Mizoram but only a few names have been listed below.

Sr.No.	Name	Gender: M for Male and F for Female
1	Evelyn Zadeng	F
2	Anne Lalnunpuii	F
3	Laldinliana	M
4	Lalfakawma	M
5	C. Lalramchhana (Mapuia)	M
6	H. Zothaulahuva	M
7	Kimkima	M
8	Joseph Vlrinawia	M
9	Laltveni	F
10	Rozuala	M
11	A. Lalramliana	M
12	Lalhmunliani	F
13	Stephen B. Chhuanvawna	M
14	Prof. Margaret Zama	M

15	Dr. Lalmkzuala	M
16	Dr. R. Kapthuama	M
17	H. Vanlalhruaia	M
18	Dr. Malsawmliana	M
19	Nancy Lalrinmawii Rokhum	F
20	Lalhruaimawii	F
21	Saipingpuii Sailo	F
22	C. lalrinngheti	F
23	Zarzoliana	M
24	Bill Lalmuakhuma	M
25	Lalramnghaka	M
26	Angela Vanlalpeki	F
27	Rebecca Hmingthansangi	F
28	Vanramthangi	F
29	Zodinpuia	M
30	Gospel Rohmingthangi	F
31	Ruthi Lalruatjeli	F
32	S. Lalnghinglona	M
33	K. Lalremruata	M
34	Dr. Eliyas	M
35	Dr. M. Aruna Juliet	F
36	Vam Lalhmuthra	M
37	Abdul Mutlib	M
38	J.B. Chozah	M
39	K. Beingiachhie	F
40	Vabeikhaiamo Solo	M
41	K. Pari	F
42	LS. Apaw	M
43	Prof. Ringtia	M
44	K. Kuna	M
45	Frederick Vanlalngaihsaka	M
46	C. Zothansanga	M
47	TH. Lalruatsanga	M
48	Lalrmthari	F
49	C. Lalruatkimi	F
50	T. Ngurthangfau	F
51	Vanlalrinchhaini	F
52	Beichkitha	M

53	Lalhnpuui	F
54	Hmingthangsiami	F
55	Lalchhuansangi	F
56	Lalramchhana Chingzah	M
57	Dr. Jhokechom Budha Singh	M
58	J. Lalventluangi	F
59	V. Remkunga	M
60	Sangpuui	F

d. Ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Bakeries

Aizawl City

1. R.C. Baking and Cooking Institute
2. Zote Bakery
3. Hmingliani Bakery
4. Holy Cross Bakery
5. Glenaries

Lunglei town

1. M.S. Bakery (Mami Masiame)
2. Tepuia Bakery
3. K.T. Bakery
4. R.L. Bakery (Ralte Lalngura)

Kolasib town

1. C.T. Bakery
2. L.R. Bakery

Saiha town

1. B.S.A. Bakery
2. H. Pobey Bakery

Ethnographic field work conducted in restaurants in Aizawl

1. KFC
2. Red Pepper
3. David Kitchen
4. Curry Pot
5. Aizawl Masala

6. Eureka Restaurant
7. Hangout Restaurant
8. Hot Pot Restaurant
9. Jay Jay Food
10. Kan Choka
11. Pemarkin

Glossary

Alu Dum (Hindi word)	a vegetable made of potato
Alu Tikki (Hindi word)	a snack made with potato
buai	trouble
bawi	slave
Chanchin	story/newspaper
Chulah (Hindi word)	hearth/management of cooking
Degchi	pot
Dhokla	a Gujarati snack
Fathang	paddy tax
Ghajar Ka Halwa(Hindi)	a sweet made of carrot, milk and sugar
Harhna	revival
hawilopar	the name of a mythical flower
hrik	lice
<i>Impuichhung</i>	a category of slave
Jeledi (Hindi word)	a sort of sweet
Jutthhan (Hindi word)	leftover
Jhuming	slash and burn cultivation
<i>Khokhom</i>	grouping/driving someone here and there
Khuai chhiah	The Honey tax
Ladoo(Hindi word)	a sort of sweet (in a shape of ball)
Mautam	famine
Mizo leh vai	Mizo and non-Mizo
pi	madam
pu	mister
Puithiam	village Priest
Puma zai	the song in praise of Puma

Raj Kachuri (Hindi word)	a snack
rak zu	a variety of rice beer
Ramhual	adviser of the chief who was expert in matters related to the cultivation of the land.
Sachhiah	a portion of hunted or killed animal
Silaimu Ngaihawm	The Beloved Bullet
Thangnang	a sort of insect
Theipui	a sort of fruit
thela-gari	hand driven cart
Thirden	the blacksmith
Thlangra	a large bamboo tray for sifting and winnowing grains
Tlangau	the village crier
Tlanglam Zi	The Communal Dance
Tlawmngaihna	an ethical code that existing and exists among the Mizo which broadly means self-less service/heroic action undertaken for helping the community as well as others/philanthropy
upa	elder
vai	non-Mizo
Zawlbuk	bachelors' dormitory
Zai	song
zu	rice beer
zu pui	a variety of rice beer
zu fang	a variety of rice beer

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