

Mizo Fiction Through the Years: 1936-2017

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Abstract

Based on available records, fictional writing did not exist in Mizoram before Christianity arrived. Christian missionaries who came to Mizoram introduced literacy by teaching the Mizo people to read and write. This education marked the beginning and development of Mizo literature. The Mizos are an indigenous Tibeto-Burman ethnic community living mainly in Mizoram, a state in Northeast India known as the “Land of the Mizos” in India. The aim of this study is to portray the growth and development of Mizo fiction from the years 1936-2017.

Keywords: Mizo, Fiction, Christianity, Literature, Development, Contribution.

1. Introduction of Mizo Fiction

The emergence of Mizo fiction dates back to 1936, forty two years after the Mizo alphabet was introduced. Since then, a number of printing presses have been established and this has paved the way for the publication of Mizo literature including fictional works.

2. Meaning of Fiction

Fiction plays an important role in literature as well as human beings because it touches the reality of human beings. Abrams and Geoffrey say, “Fiction in an inclusive sense is any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that actually happened. In a narrower sense, however, fiction denotes only narratives that are written in prose (the novel and short story) and sometimes is used simply as a synonym for the novel” (130-31). Cuddon writes, “Fiction is now used in general of the novel, the short story, the novella and related genres” (279). Therefore, fiction exists as a separate category from poetry and drama. Classified under prose, it incorporates features like characters, plot, diction, and setting.

3. Development of Mizo Fiction

Mizo fiction began in 1936 with L. Biakliana’s *Hawilopari*, a historical novel on love and friendship set in pre-Christian Mizoram. His 1937 fiction *Lali* examined Mizo women’s status and Christianity’s impact. Kaphleia’s *Chhingpuii* (1939) was a romantic tragedy and Mizo history. Lalzuithanga, the third fiction writer, introduced the first Mizo detective novel with *Thlahrang* (1940-41). C. Thuamluaia brought Utopian literature in 1945, while C. Khuma pioneered fictional autobiographies with *Maymyo Sanapui* (1946), the first Mizo fiction published in Burma (now Myanmar) in 1950.

Key writers after the 1950s included K.C. Lalvunga, who focused on morality and nationalism, and James Dokhuma, known for war fictions and love stories. Lalengmawia Ralte wrote 40 moral fictions from 1980, and C. Laizawna wrote 24 fictions, especially romance, with Hmangaihzuali(1990) and Anita(1998) winning Book of the Year from Mizo Academy of Letters(MAL). Padma Bhusan awardee Capt. L.Z. Sailo depicted traditional society and Mizo women, with Runlum Nuthai winning Book of the Year in 2002.

Other notable authors: Lalhmingliana Saiawi wrote candid social critiques from 1993; H. Lallungmuana, the first PhD in Mizo fiction, won Book of the Year in 1995; Lalhriata won in 2005 and 2008; and C. Remtluanga used his 15 novels for legal awareness.

4. Thematic Shifts

Before 1976, fiction stressed traditional values like integrity, respect for elders, and honesty that persisted after Christianity. The 1981-1990 period saw rapid growth, blending traditional life with post-conversion Christianity themes. From 1991-2000, fiction advanced significantly with new styles, a social reform focus, and over 111 published fictions. Four won Book of the Year.

After 2000, genres like fantasy, detective, and revenge fictions gained popularity, with 142 fictions published from 2001-2010. MAL's continued Book of the Year awards from 2011-2017 confirm fiction's major role in Mizo literature.

Several women fiction writers have also made notable contributions to Mizo literature. From the year 1946, Khawlkungi started writing fiction and she wrote 28 fictions. Lalngurliani also wrote eleven fictions. Three women novelist Lalsangzuali Sailo's Tlawm Velo Lalnu Ropuiliani (1999), H. Lalngurliani's Zorinpari (2004) and Romuanpuii Zadeng's Sihlipui (2012) bagged Book of the Year.

However, the contributions of these authors established the foundation for the development and growth of Mizo fiction and their works additionally reflected how work, education and politics transformed Mizo society.

5. Conclusion

However, it is clear that Mizo fiction has a promising future. Most people are becoming interested in literature and fiction writing because the scope of fiction is very broad and diverse. Notably, Mizo fiction addresses all important aspects of human life.

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