

STUDY OF INDIAN TRIBAL LITERATURE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORKS OF LALTLUANGLIANA

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ABSTRACT:- Tribal literature is the creative energy generated at the national level post 1991 to protect the Tribal identity and existence in the face of intensified exploitation due to economic liberalization. The development of literature and of different art forms in Tribal communities predated the emergence of literature and arts in the so-called mainstream society. But the Tribal literary tradition was mainly oral. Even after being pushed into the jungles, the Tribal communities continued their creative literary exploits. However, as this literature was in unsophisticated folk languages and because the Tribals were far from the centers of power, their literature, like they themselves, was largely ignored. Even today, Tribal literature is being produced in hundreds of indigenous languages but we know little about it. The word „tribes“ refers to a culture heritage and historical identity concept. It is used for the tribe as a separate group of persons having their own identity, and cultural traits. This society lives in isolated areas and their social life style is different from the main stream society. Its culture, customs, rituals and traditions are in heritage from the earlier generations and moves to the next generation. Latluangliana Khiangte is a Mizo academic, playwright and poet of Mizo literature. He was the principal of the Serampore College and a former professor at Pachhunga University College and the North Eastern Hill University. He is presently serving as the senior most professors at the Department of Mizo at Mizoram University. He is a recipient of the Pu Buanga Award, the highest literary award of the Mizo Academy of Letters. The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest civilian honour of the Padma Shri, in 2006, for his contributions to Indian literature.

KEYWORDS: - Tribal, Mizo literature, Latluangliana Khiangte.

INTRODUCTION:-

India is rich with a diversity of religions, arts, customs, races, traditions, and languages. While the government of India recognizes twenty-two official languages, there are over 880 languages spoken in the country. Until recently, the tribal literature created in non-mainstream languages has not been very recognized or available for an Indian or global audience. One of the primary reasons for this is that tribal discourse, including folktales and songs, is mainly oral in nature. In addition, the communities who produce it tend to be far from developed metropolitan cities, and so their creative works have been largely overlooked. However, the Indian government and prominent personalities, including social activists and politicians, have stepped forward to encourage the conservation and translation of these unheard voices and to share their literary gems with the world. The foremost objective of this research is to analyse the tribes identity issue in literature as a discourse in societal, customs, traditional. Historical and material factors led to the emergence of the contemporary Tribal literary movement. About two decades ago, the central government adopted the policy of economic liberalization, thus throwing open the doors to market economy. In the name of free trade and free market, a no-holds-barred race for earning more and more profits commenced. And this translated into wanton loot of water, forests and land – the prime resources of the Tribal – even to the point of putting their lives at risk. Figures speak for themselves: Over the last one decade at least 10 lakh Tribal have been displaced from the Jharkhand state alone. Most of them are working as domestic servants or daily-wage labourers in metros like Delhi. Ironically, the government then argues that as there is no Tribal community native to the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi, there is no provision for reservations for the Tribals in educational institutions and government jobs

in the region. Where should these people, displaced from the land of their ancestors in the name of development, go? It is said that when the United Nations decided to observe the year 1993 as the "International Year of Indigenous Peoples", the Government of India's official reaction was that "The Indian Tribals or STs are not indigenous peoples as defined by the UN" and that "all Indians are indigenous people". It also asserted that the "Tribal's or STs in India are not being subjected to any political, social or economic discrimination".

Tribal literature is the literature of a search for identity, of exposing the past and present forms of exploitation by outsiders, and of threats to tribal identity and existence, and resistance. This is a pro-change, constructive intervention, which is dead opposed to any sort of discrimination against the descendants of the original inhabitants of India. It supports their right to protect their water resources, forests and land and their right to self-determination. As Tribal literature draws its energy from the tradition of tribal uprisings, the language and geography of those uprisings also assume significance. The original writings of the Tribal authors are in their languages.

The Governmental definition, finally, is that which provides a list of 427 groups which have been recognized as "Scheduled Tribes". According to Abbi (2004a) languages spoken by these scheduled communities are considered 'tribal languages'. There is no linguistic definition of tribal languages. Such definitions are not very useful because when the situation of tribes is examined carefully not only do we find a lot of variations in their life styles but also many of these features are show by the caste people. This raises the problem as to how distinguish them from castes. Bailey (1960) has suggested that the only solution to the problem of tribes in India is to conceive of a continuum of which at one end are tribes and at the other are castes. The tribes have seminary, egalitarian system and are not mutually inter-dependent as are castes in a system of organic solidarity. They have direct access. to land and no intermediary is involved between them and land. Sinha (1982:4) too thinks of tribe and caste in terms of a continuum. For him, the tribe is ideally defined in terms of its isolation from the networks of social relations and cultural communications of the

centers of civilization. In their isolations the tribal societies are sustained by relatively primitive subsistence technology such as shifting cultivation and hunting and gathering and maintain an egalitarian segmentary social system guided entirely by non-literate ethnic tradition. According to Mandelbaum (1970) one difference between tribal and Jati society is in the equality of interpersonal relating. In tribal life the principal links for the whole society is based on kinship. Individual equality as Kinsman is assumed, dependency and subordination among men are minimized, on the other hand Jati members believe they must have non-kinship relations with others in their society and that these relations must be arranged in an order of domination and defense. He further argues that Jati and tribe are similar units in that each is considered by its member to be an endogamous entity composed of ritual equals. Emeneau (1997) opines that tribes are outside the jati system: they are not jatis. Bhushan and Sachdeva (1958) list three differences between caste and tribe as follows.

- i) Tribe is a territorial group whereas caste is a social group
- ii) Tribe is a political organization, whereas caste is never a political organization
- iii) Caste originated for the basis of division of labour, tribe came about because of the evolution of community feeling in a group inhabiting a definite geographical area.

As Walter (1993: 23) states, "In India hardly any of the tribe exists as a separate society and that they have all been absorbed in varying degree into the wider society of India. The on-going process of absorption is not recent but dates back to the most ancient times." This suggests that since the development of Indian civilization and culture there has been a co-existence of the tribal s and non-tribal in India Ethnographers and anthropologists have used the term "tribe" for certain communities having common a cestory and specific genetic characteristics. Prior to their subjugation the tribes were either unconscious of their eth no-tribal identities or merely called themselves a "people vis-a-vis others". One important characteristic of the tribal communities in India is heir heterogeneity. All tribal communities in India may not be minorities. This is true of some tribal communities in the North East, if the state is taken as the unit for defining a minority. In these states

such as Nagaland where tribal population is 85% of the total state population, the tribal language may be dominant language being the language of administration and education along with English. On the basis of Ecology, it is possible to group tribal population into five distinct regions.

The tribal population of the country, as per 2011 census, is 10.43 crore, constituting 8.6% of the total population. 89.97% of them live in rural areas and 10.03% in urban areas. The decadal population growth of the tribal's from Census 2001 to 2011 has been 23.66% against the 17.69% of the entire population. The sex ratio for the overall population is 940 females per 1000 males and that of Scheduled Tribes 990 females per thousand males. Broadly the STs inhabit two distinct geographical area – the Central India and the North- Eastern Area. More than half of the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in Central India, i.e., Madhya Pradesh (14.69%), Chhattisgarh (7.5%), Jharkhand (8.29%), Andhra Pradesh (5.7%), Maharashtra (10.08%), Orissa (9.2%), Gujarat (8.55%) and Rajasthan (8.86%). The other distinct area is the North East (Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh). More than two-third of the ST population is concentrated only in the seven States of the country, viz. Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. There is no ST population in 3 States (Delhi NCR, Punjab and Haryana) and 2 UTs (Pondicherry and Chandigarh), as no Scheduled Tribe is notified. This was just an indicative list as there are many more languages prevalent. With this, the first part of Introduction comes to close. In Part II of this four part series, I will cover The Importance of Tribal Languages.

The current understanding of tribes as a concept in independent India continues to be adopted from the original term as used by the European Colonialism and racist ideology. The term tribes reflects the vocabulary of the colonial power which overloaded with the so called "White Men Burden", describes it in several disparaging and contemptuous ways. Even after independence, India has not been able to wholly expose the completely political nature of the term. Thus, the limited definition continues to be used in order to

manage the current unequal national/international system.

The tribal should be allowed as much control as possible over their own economic organization and social economic development which could lead to conflict resolution in multi- cultural societies. Many sociologists called this strategy ethno-development/self-development, wherein the ethnic groups/tribe's retains control over its own land.

According to Oxford Dictionary "A tribe is a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development acknowledging the authority of a chief and usually regarding themselves as having a common ancestor. D.N Majumdar defines tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes or castes. Lucy Mair defines tribe as an independent political division of a population with a common culture.

According to Ralph Linton tribe is a group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories and having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in a culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests. A common definition for a tribe is a group of people that all have common ancestry, or a common ancestor, a common culture, and live in their own enclosed society. Other names for a tribe are a clan, which is used in some European countries, and family. The idea of a tribe goes back to ancient times when Rome would create divisions within society due to class, family, and money. These divisions were tribes. This term has evolved while the people it describes may not have. Many tribes and tribal communities are in areas that lack industry.

Some books on tribal literature are here they appreciate the array of cultural diversity-

1. Mizo Songs & folk Tales, edited by Laltluangliana Khiangte.
2. Black Lilies: Telugu Dalit Poerty in English Translation edited by K. Purushotham.
3. Kocharethi: The Arya Woman by Narayan, Translated by Catherine Thakamma.

4. Painted Words: An Anthology of Tribal Literature, edited by G.N. Devy.
5. Tribal Language, Literature & Folklore: Emerging Approaches in Tribal Studies
6. Tribal Culture: Study of Bastar Region) Hindi Nivedita Verma.
7. Tribal Perspectives in India: Critical Responses.

Works of Lalitluangliana Kiangte :-

Lalitluangliana Kiangte is a well-known playwright-dramatist, poet, scholar-critic, essayist, biographer and folklorist from the state of Mizoram. He has taken life as known to the Mizo tribal society as his subject and fictionalized it, thus instituting a different genre especially in the field of playwriting. He has not only achieved distinction of being recognized as a playwright and poet but is also one of the most prominent writers and folklorists of North East India. He has received many awards for his remarkable contribution to the development and growth of Mizo language and literature. He was born on 28 June 1961 to a Presbyterian church elder Tlanghmingthanga (formerly teacher and Synod Music Instructor) of Kiangte clan and Mrs. Darnengi of Khawlhing clan. Being born and brought up in Christian home and since he had attended Sunday School at the age of 4 till 18 years of age, he became Sunday School teacher in different stages of learning right from 1976 till 2012, and he had undergone the required Biblical training courses for a number of times.

His literary artistry comes to the fore in his writings on varied fields such as literature, culture, folklore, socio-religious studies, sports and social education including journalistic writings with equal ease and perfection. For his remarkable and historical contribution to Mizo language and literature, he has been selected for *Padma Shri* (in Literature and Education) for the year 2006 by the President of India. Prior to this, in addition to other decorations, he was also given two other National Awards viz. *Rashtriya Lok Bhasha Samman-2003* & *Bharat Adivasi Samman-2005* by the Ramnika Foundation and All India Tribal Literary Forum.

A regular choir member since 1975 till 2000 and he had even served as conductor of the choir for some years visiting different places of India as member of the singing group. An active member in Christian youth movement for 27 years, he had served as youth leader for about 20 years in different capacities even in North East and the whole of India. As a former secretary of Presbyterian Youth Fellowship of India and that of North East India Christian Council youth, he had taken an active part in the socio-religious, cultural, moral and educational programmes and he was also the president of NEICC Youth Assembly for three terms. He was convener of Civil Rights Committee under NEICC, former executive member in North East India Christian Council for three terms, and a church elder with important engagements in God's mission in various capacities. As an active Christian youth leader, he had also attended the grand Presbyterian Youth Triennium at Purdue University, US, in 1995 as a special fraternal delegate from India.

His books and other writings had clearly depicted his deeper involvement for ecumenical and inter-denominational zeal as well as his participations in the world-wide evangelization as a member of the community of women and men in mission. And of course, as an editor and writer, while serving as youth leader for a quarter of a century, he had recorded his experiences and other valuable information in the form of educational books for future generations. All his contributions and involvements in socio-cultural and religious activities cannot be mentioned in detail herewith.

His exemplary contribution in the field of playwriting and theatre direction has been recognized with the award of the *Distinguished Playwright Award-2002* and *Rastriya Lok Bhasha Samman-2003*. His contributions towards nurturing nationalistic sentiments in the field of language and literature have been appropriately recognised with the *K.Zawla Award-2007* and *Khuangchera Award-2000*. He has written more than 30 plays (including short plays), out of which 24 have been published.

As a Noted Playwright-dramatist, he was awarded *India Tribal Drama Award-2012* on 16- November 2012. Ten

of his plays and more than ten of his essays and poems have been prescribed as texts for different stages of studies under four Universities of North East India. He has 58 books in English and Mizo, 34 Edited books in English and Mizo, 27 booklets in Mizo & English and about 14 of his books have been translated into Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Khasi, Manipuri, Garo, Bodo etc.

His plays, articles, essays and poems have been translated into Hindi, Bengali, Assamese, Kokborok and his play *Chharmawia* has been serialised for Doordarshan. Three of his long plays and Seven Short plays have been translated into Hindi. He has also been acclaimed as Writer of the year in the years 2002, 2003 and 2004 by the popular opinion poll conducted by *Lette Weekly* in Mizoram. His play – *Pasaltha Khuangchera* was also declared as *the Mizo Book of the Year* in 1997. His contribution in the field of drama and theatre has been recognised by the Sangeet Natak Akademi with its Purushkar-2018 (an Award instituted by the National Academy of Music, Dance & Drama) in the field of playwriting).

Professor Kiangte has also edited a literary journal called *Thu leh Hla*(Monthly) and other journals including *Hruaitu*(Monthly). His articles have also been published in various journals of India including Sahitya Akademi's *Indian Literature* and Mumbai's *Midday*, Bangladesh's *Bharat Bachitra* etc. in English and in *Yudhrat Aam Admi* in Hindi and several popular journals and edited volumes. Five of his plays had been translated into Hindi for wider readership in India. He is the present Editor-in-Chief of *Mizo Studies*, a quarterly refereed journal with ISSN 2319-6041 published by the Department of Mizo, Mizoram University.

He has been awarded Fellow Membership (FUWAI) by the *United Writers Association of India*; decorated with *Distinguished Leadership Award-1997* ABI, USA; included in the *International Who's Who – 1997* by IBC; included in *Asia / Pacific Who's Who (2000)* Cambridge UK and the Indian National Sahitya Akademi included his bio-data in the latest *Who's Who of Indian Writers*, 1999 edition. He has also been included in the edition of *Directory of Eminent Writers of the North East India* and *Reference Asia: Asia's Who's Who of Men &*

Women of Achievement and also in the *Indigenous Writers of India*.

He has presented more than 320 papers in Seminars, Consultations, Training and Workshops, of which more than 170 are written in English for the International, National, Regional programmes. He has published over 100 research papers and contributed more than 1000 articles / essays / poems in different journals and magazines of the country, published in various Indian languages.

A former member of the General Council of Indian National Sahitya Akademi (2003-2007) and Sangeet Natak Akademi (2004-2008) and Vice-President of All India Tribal Literary Forum, he is also an active Member of Indian Folklore Congress. He also continues to be active in the North East Writer Forum, Tribal Literary Conference of India, Community of women and men in Mission (under Council for World Mission). He has been involved in various capacities in Mizo Literature & Language Teachers Academy, Mizo Academy of Letters, Zoppen Club International, Mizo Writers Association, Mizo History Association, North East India Oral Literature Centre etc.

He is a life member of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage), YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), YMA (Young Mizo Association), Leprosy Mission of India, Mizo Academy of Letters, United Writers Association of India, All India Tribal Literary Forum, Indian Society of Authors, Tribal Literary Forum of India, Gideons International etc. and the chief patron member of the Bible Society of India.

His invaluable contributions to the promotion of tribal language, folklore and literature are deemed a noteworthy addition to Indian literature in Mizo. He taught Mizo language and literature in Aizawl's premier institution of learning, Pachhunga University College, from 1985. He joined the postgraduate department of Mizo as a reader in 1999 under North Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Mizoram Campus, and became a full-fledged professor in 2005. Kiangte obtained his Ph.D. in literature in 1991 and D.Litt. in folklore in 1999 and also D.D. (Doctor of Divinity-honoris causa) in 2012 (March).

A former dean, School of Education & Humanities, and executive council member of Mizoram University, ex-principal and secretary of the Council of Serampore College (University), Khiangte is the senior most professor in the Department of Mizo, MZU. He was an active member of CABE (Central Advisory Board of Education: India) & National Monitoring Committee for Education of SCs, STs and Persons with Disabilities (2012-2015), national member for Continuing Professional Development of Teachers (NEUPA), task force member for North East India (2012–2015) and former chairman of the Board of Studies-Mizo-MZU; chief editor of refereed journal Mizo Studies; active member of the executive board of All India Association for Christian Higher Education and former vice president in North East Writers Forum & TLF, NEICCYA.

Presently serving as professor of Mizo Department in Mizoram University; a member of board of governors in ICFAI University Mizoram; a trained member of Assessors (National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Hqrs. Bangaluru, India) and Mizo Language Committee, Govt. of Mizoram, now actively works on in some projects for the enrichment of Mizo language and literature. He has been elected for the president of Mizo Academy of Letters (2017-2019) that is the State Academy of Mizoram. He is also the president of Tribal Literary Forum of India (TLFI) and vice president of All India Tribal Literary Forum (AITLF).

CONCLUSION -:

We can conclude that in spite of the fast pace of modernization the tribal people are still maintaining their traditional religion, values and culture. Conclusion “gives a brief outline of the culture of Mizoram and the importance given to folk tales. The animal and human characters, the connection between the animal world and the human world all has given beauty to folk tales. Finally, the critic has pointed out that the “Diversity of the collection is wholly dominating”. He brings out the themes and the moral values and the age-old beliefs

represented by the writer in his works. He adds insights and expresses his opinion about the folk tales of Mizoram. This critical work will certainly help the readers to decide whether the collection of folk tales will be interesting to read. He has appreciated the Writer for re-presenting the folk tales to suit the modern world and which proves still interesting even after centuries have passed. This critical book is useful for research scholars.

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