

Colonialism in Northeast India: An Environmental History of Forest Conflict in the Frontier of Lushai Hills 1850-1900

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ABSTRACT: *The present study would deal with the interaction between the colonialist and the Mizos in the frontier areas of Lushai Hills. At a larger context, historical enquiry in this study is largely divided into two parts viz., pre-colonial Mizo society and the intervention of colonial power. As anthropological studies show, there is an interesting connection between belief systems of the traditional societies and their knowledge of and attitude to the environment. In this sense, the proposed study would attempt to understand how the belief system of Mizo society shaped their attitude to the environment. An attempt will be made to understand the various knowledge systems of Mizo society before the intrusion of 'colonial modernity' in the region. On the other hand, the study also tries to understand how the 'traditional knowledge' of Mizo society had been structured by colonialism. Accordingly, the present study would try to substantiate how the colonial knowledge system, based on modern scientific rationality, perceived and transformed the traditional knowledge system and practices. Thus, it is an attempt to unpack the interaction between the two groups by studying forest conflict in the frontier which cover the period roughly from 1850 to 1900.*

KEYWORDS: *colonialism, frontier, forest, land, traditional, conflict, relation, intervention, community.*

I. INTRODUCTION:

Colonialism and the subsequent emergence of Imperial power in the Indian subcontinent have been interpreted by using diverse theoretical standpoints. Though the political economy of colonialism have been understood differently, the transformation of 'cultural identities' and the structuring of indigenous consciousness to 'modern and scientific' in the context of Northeast India has not been focused on. The traditional consciousness (with all theoretical problems of the term) in the North East region of India underwent massive transformation after the advance of colonial capitalism in the region. Traditional patterns of life have been changed, but many cultural and ideological aspects continued. The colonial economy did change the 'traditional' patterns of cultural life disrupting the values, belief system, leadership patterns, and institutional mechanisms. In addition, the pattern of resource usage practices changed. This transformation was difficult for the indigenous people that they were forced to struggle to acclimatize to the new order. Cultures that were once predominantly subsistence-based were forced to move towards a cash oriented economy.

The word 'Lusei' (referred to also as 'Lushai') is the name of one of the clans now largely known as 'Mizo' in the present Mizoram. Amongst the Mizos, the Lusei clan was dominant and subjugated other clans by the end of the nineteenth century. The Lusei people were given various nomenclatures by the non-Mizos in the earlier period; they were called 'Kukis' by the people of Tripura (present Tripura), the Surma valley of north Cachar in Assam, Manipur and the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh). In Burma they were known as 'Chins,' and they were 'Lushai' to the British and other foreigners. After 1871, the term 'Kuki' came to be outdated and the term 'Lushai' had been superseded by the generic term 'Mizo' since 1954. The present study would be using the term 'Lushai' or 'Mizo' interchangeably as the period of study deals with partly pre-colonial and early colonial periods, but it should be noted that they both have the same meaning.

II. PRE-COLONIAL MIZO SOCIETY:

Mizoram or the so called Lushai Hills remained a non-state hilly space and was largely a 'people without history' or in Jan Vansina's term 'oral civilization' until the coming of the European power in the 19th century. The economic sustainability of the Mizo communities was based on these main basic resources of forest, agriculture and hunting. The forest products were bamboos, wood, fruits and medicinal plants. Hunting of animals supplemented the nutritious value of their food. Agriculture was based on shifting or *jhum* cultivation. Thus, the early subsistence economy was simple but practical. Forest lands were cleared for *jhum* cultivation, a method by which crops were raised by using the ashes of burnt vegetation as fertilizers.

This practice of *jhum* cultivation required the shifting to a new location every year and the fallow period ordinarily varies from 5-20 years, depending on the availability and fertility of the land and forest. Traditionally, the Mizo villages were ruled by the chiefs who enjoyed wider support from and sovereignty over the people, which allowed them control over resources and land. The pattern of production remained largely primitive, a combination of agriculture along with hunting and herding. As time passed by, the chiefs emerged as the sole powerful authority of the land and its products. The early colonialist considered the Mizo chiefs as *de facto* owners of the land and responsible for distribution of *jhum* land for his subject. Further, the role of the chief in the affairs of villages was raised to such an extent that he became the leader of the society in social as well as economic activities. Besides, the chief was also responsible for distributing plots for cultivation to his subject, and in settling criminal as well as civil disputes among the villagers. Captain T.H Lewin, one of the earliest Britishers who came in contact with the Mizos, described the Mizo chief and his administration as;

‘Among the hill tribes we find an actual existing system in practical working, which might well be classes among the vision of Utopian philosophy. Their mode of government may be described as a democracy tempered by disposition. The right of rule is hereditary, that is, only men descended from a certain family can be chief. It does not, however, follow that all member of this ruling race should be chiefs; on the contrary, it is only those who are special gifted and endowed with the capacity of drawing men to them who become so. A chief’s power is measure by the number of his fellows, and as the people who follow him are perfect free agents.’

Inter-clan rivalry was an important aspect of the tribal life which characterized and influenced the Mizo society. Over the time, the *Sailo* clan, a combination of seven clans emerged as the most powerful section. Since the emergence of the *Sailo* chiefs, there was a practice of common clan loyalty which was manifested in the inter-village co-operation in times of distress, such as famine and drought. As the owner or controller of all the resources in his own village, the chief received rent on their use and was entitled to get certain privileges in return. Each household in the village paid a tribute called *Fathang*, normally one to three baskets of paddy harvested from *jhum* cultivation once a year. Some of the tribute includes; *Sa chhiah*; meat tax, a portion of every animal hunted, *Khuai chhiah*; a share of honey and edible bee larvae, *Chi chhiah*; a share of salt collected from the salt mines etc.

To advise and assist him in governance, the chief appointed elders or *Upa*. The chiefs and his elders were the proper custodians of the village land. Each year, a committee was constituted which discussed the methods of distribution of the *jhum* land for the coming years. The decision of the committee was the final judgment in term of land allotment and none was permitted to clear the forest for cultivation. Furthermore, all disputes and controversies were settled in accordance with the customary law, which controlled the social interaction and behaviour. Despite this, *Zalen*, consisting of either the brothers or close relatives of the chief, headed a group of men belonging to the privileged class in selecting the lands for cultivation. The *Zalen* had the responsibility of assisting the chief in terms of agriculture and other social affairs. Therefore, as a reward for their service, *Zalen* had been exempted from the tax on paddy known as *Fathang*. In addition to this, the chief appointed officials with special responsibilities for public service known as *Ramhual*, who were agriculture experts. Every year *Ramhual* advised the chief in the selection of land for cultivation. Besides these privileged class, there were village officials in the village administration, appointed for specific functions by the chief. Every village had a village crier known as *Tlangau* and a blacksmith known as *Thirdeng*. For their services, they were entitled to get one basket of paddy from each household once a year. In addition, the *Thirdeng* used to get a fixed share of every animal hunted by the villagers. To perform village ceremonies, there was to be a village priest, known as *Puithiam* and *Sadawt*, who was also provided with one basket of paddy from the villagers for every year. Theoretically, the above mentioned different categories can be considered as the traditional elite, whereas the rest are the traditional masses.

In the pre-colonial Mizo society, the *Thangchhuahpa* (one who had fulfilled all the sacrifices and feasts for the community, who distinguished themselves from ordinary people in his lifetime in terms of economic, social and political, and entitled to go to paradise or *Pialral*) was one of the most privileged and respected person in the social structure, next to the chief. The said village elder or *Upa* was mostly chosen by the chiefs from the one who attained the position of this *Thangchhuah* status. *Thangchhuah* was a title bestowed to those persons who have carried out and accomplished certain specified number of prescribed ceremonies to the communities. There are two ways to attain the status of *Thangchhuah*; *Inlama Thangchhuah* and *Ramlama Thangchhuah*. *Inlama Thangchhuah* means a person who possesses prescribe number of adequate and sufficient

material wealth to render a series of community feasts and performed significant ceremonies known as *Khuangchawi*. On the other hand, *Ramlama Thangchhuah* indicates those people who hunted and killed a prescribed number of animals according to the traditional custom and practices could also celebrate a ceremony of *Khuangchawi*, to become *Thangchhuahpa*. One of the first Christian missionaries JH Lorrain, translated *Thangchhuahpa* as

'Thangchhuahpa is the title given to a man who distinguish himself by killing a certain numbers of different animals in the chase, or by giving a certain number of public feasts. The wife of such a man also shares his title and their children were also allowed to wear the *Thangchhuah Puan* (a specific Shawl) the procession of this title is regarded by the Lusei Clan as passport to *Pialral* or Paradise.'

As it stated, the most prestigious status in Mizo society could have been earned with their agricultural wealth at one level or their hunting skills and bravery at another level. From childhood days, parents wished the male child to be active as *Pasaltha* (quality of being brave and valiant person) and they uttered the words *sa kap thei* which means a brave and good hunting skills. It became a kind of competition since their childhood days to become *Pasaltha*. This created a space for a fair competition in times of hunting, in times of need by the villagers and in times of danger.

As a homogeneous society, customs and traditional practices of Mizo society deals with the everyday life of the community. Those practices were handed over generations through oral tradition. From the colonial times, we witnessed some of the records from colonial ethnographers and anthropologists writing on customs and practices of the Mizos. One of the earliest documentation of customary law was by NE Parry, the then superintendent of Lushai Hills in his book, 'Monograph of Lushai Custom and Tradition' in 1928. In which the customary law basically confines with the relationship between the chiefs and his subjects, pre-marital relationship and sexual ethics, marriages, property, divorce, inheritance, ceremonies, etc. The above mentioned indicates that the use of forest products, hunting, practice of shifting cultivation are absent in the codified customary practices. This implies that there was a lack of conflict on such issues. To quote Daman Singh, she argued 'community that survived solely by hunting, gathering, and *jhuming* in the forests, these features suggested that human activities had minimal impact on the environment.' In other words, in the case of *jhum* cultivation it can be argued that due to the low pressure on land and forests, nature can endow with plenty of resources for their sustenance. On the other hand, it is also an assumption that people may not experience the low productivity and diminishing of resources.

III. COLONIALISM IN NORTHEAST INDIA:

The rise of the British power in India did coincide with the development of capitalism. While mercantile capitalism started out with the desire for securing trading privileges. With the Industrial Revolution in Britain, the prosperity of the British industries demanded the import of raw materials and export of finished goods from Britain. The need for seizing new markets resulted in capturing new areas of lands and this process led to the consolidation of British power in Northeast India. History of Assam, especially the Brahmaputra valley experienced a long history of contact with the mainland India. The fertile land and richness of natural resources attracted the colonial government to set up their commercial activities first in the Brahmaputra valley. Consequently the colonial power had wasted no time in extending their jurisdiction with the Treaty of Yandaboo in 1826. After the treaty was signed, the British captured the plain areas of Assam, and they declared plain areas of Manipur and Tripura as their protected states, which initiated East India Company to set up their tea plantations since 1830s.

To understand the transformation of land management in colonial period, we must situate them in the larger context of colonial state making process in the Northeast India. One major geographical feature of Northeast India is its distinct ecosystems; the 'plain areas' of the three kingdoms of Assam, Manipur and Tripura, and the 'hilly regions' occupied by numerous tribal groups. Till the middle of the nineteenth century, the boundaries of the British provinces of Bengal and Assam stopped at the hill areas inhabited by the independent tribes. Before the British period, the Raja of Chittagong paid tribute to the Mughal Empire, and the port of Chittagong was ceded in 1760 to the East India Company. In 1830, Cachar came under British jurisdiction. Subsequently, in 1854 the hill areas of Cachar were annexed followed by Lakhimpur in 1835 and Sylhet in 1858. Manipur had retained its status as an independent region (princely state), as well as the Khasi Hills, but Jaintia Hills came under the British in 1835.

Now, the real challenge to the authority of the Crown came from the Nagas, the Garos and the Lushais, all of whom persistently carried out raids and kept the British force perpetually engaged in clashes. The Naga Hills was finally annexed as a district in 1866, followed by the Garo Hills in 1869. At this point, the problem that remained was that of the Lushai Hills. Eventually, Lushai Hills became one of the last victims of the colonial penetration among the hill areas of Northeast India. The earliest report of the Mizos (in the name of Kookies) was by Captain T.H Lewin, the officer in-charge of Chittagong Division. In 1777, Ramoo Khan, probably a Chakma chief, called for the assistance of the colonial government, described the Mizos as 'large body of Kookies men, who live in the interior parts of the hills, who have not the use of fire-arms, and whose bodies unclothed.' However, the presence of the Mizo was not known until 1826, when a party of Sylhet woodcutters was massacred by the name of Kookies under the chief Buangtheua. And, in 1849 Lallianvunga son of Vanpuilala attacked Thado Kooki village of Palsang, ten miles south of Cachar, and killed twenty-nine people and took forty-two men as captive. As a result, the colonial government sent a punitive expedition in 1850. The period from 1850-1890 witnessed a number of violent acts, committed by the Mizo's against the British. The colonial government sent a number of expeditions to subdue the Mizo's because of their raids and atrocities within the region controlled by the British company. In the meantime, there were a number of compromises and agreements signed by the Mizo chiefs and the colonial officials, but peace never lasted long. The Mizo's continued their raids and atrocities. This led the colonial government to change its approach from the 'policy of conciliation' to a 'forward policy,' and the last expedition known as 'Chin-Lushai Expedition' of 1889-1890 finally led to the colonial permanent occupation of Lushai Hills.

IV. COLONIAL FORESTS AND LAND USE POLICY:

Realizing the diminishing resources due to forest exploitation first in Western Ghats, West Bengal, sub-Himalayan region etc the government initiated policy of conservation and protection of forest's produce. To maintain strategic and commercial interests for colonial expansion, effective measures were necessary to maintain unrestricted access of forest produce by the forest based community. Imperial Forest Department of British India was created in 1864 to enforce State domination over forest resources and to attain proper and systematic economic returns. The Department followed a general policy of establishing jurisdiction over the forests which were divided into three classes. Those forest areas of immediate worth were declared as reserved, and others were designated as protected forests, and the un-classed forest. In order to have easy movement to extract resources from India, the colonial government introduced railways across the Indian Peninsula. This strategic innovation severely affected the Indian masses in general and forest and natural resources in particular.

The plains areas of Assam experienced colonial jurisdiction along with the above mentioned division of forests but the hill areas experienced different conditions in terms of imperial control. There can be various reasons as to why colonial forest policy in the hill areas was different from the mainland forest policy. One of the most important factors was the political status of these areas. Another important reason may be the geographical barren areas of Northeast hill areas, where the construction of road and railways was very difficult. In 1899, there was no road with the exception of the road from Demagiri (situated at the international border between India and Bangladesh) to Lunglei. Therefore, the only means of commercial extraction in Lushai Hills was through the riverine route via Bangladesh through Chittagong port.

V. MAPPING AND SURVEYING THE FRONTIER:

As mentioned above, before the formal establishment of colonial rule in Lushai Hills, there was a long history of contact between colonial government and the Lushais especially in the frontier areas. As we have seen, to protect the imperial commercial interest in the plains the colonial government sent a number of expeditions in the hills. Those troops who proceeded to the Lushai Hills not only reported the political and defense line for the imperial government; they even surveyed the topography, flora and fauna, geology etc. The colonial reports on the eastern boundary adjacent to Trippera and the Chin Hills contained marvelous records on forest resources. The former was compiled with the name Foreign and Political Department Report 1874 on Eastern Boundary of Hill Tippera, and the latter was the Foreign Department Report on Chin Lushai Hills, September 1892.

In other parts of the hill areas of Assam, forest resource's survey was carried out earlier than Lushai Hills. In Lushai Hills, the survey was conducted with the instruction made by AT Gage, a Scottish botanist, who had a deep knowledge and experienced of the Burma forest. Gage the then Director of Botanical Survey of India, documented 'A Botanical Tour in the South Lushai Hills' in 1901, where he listed 317 species of trees including 26 species of cryptogram. He stated that 'The general features of the flora are practically those of the

adjacent Burmese hills. Epiphytic orchids abound, chiefly species of *Dendrobium* and form conspicuous masses of color on the trees. Scetamineous plants and aroids are very common, and the trailing strings of *Dioscorea* fruits were very frequent. Amongst the corner trees in addition to the *Dipterocarps* were *Saurauja punduana* Wall., *Schima Wallichii* Choisy, *Duabanga sonneratiodes* Ham, *Gmelina arborea* Roxb.’

VI. CONFLICT IN THE FRONTIER:

The early period of colonial and Lushai relations was brutal and violent history. The intention here is not to analyze every detail account of the colonial penetration. Rather, it is an attempt to reconstruct the Anglo-Lushai relations, by analyzing the intervention of the colonial government with their intentions to generate imperial revenue that led to conflict over forests and exploitation of resources in the frontier. To re-construct the development of human civilization and its reciprocal relationship with nature and environment, an understanding of the traditional practices and religious beliefs etc are important. Thus, conventional sources like myth and oral tradition play an important role for our historical enquiry. In traditional Mizo society, the belief in life after death was instrumental in moulding the cultural norms and values. As stated earlier, there were two types of paradises or *Mithi khua*; one was the ordinary *Mithi khua* and another one was *Pialral* (Paradise). Literarily, *Pialral* meant only for those who distinguished themselves during their life in economic wealth by giving a number of prescribed ceremonies and feasts of prestige to the villagers. On the other hand, the *Pialral* could also attain the position by showing bravery and hunting skills by killing the prescribed number of animals to attain salvation or *Thangchhuahpa* during his lifetime. Thus, the most prestigious position attainable in Mizo society was intrinsically connected with the agricultural wealth as well as killing of animals. One of the report’s from Colonel Lister in 1853 stated that Lushai used to come down to Cachar area particularly after the death of a chief and their main motive was to have a human head to bury with the chief (as the chief would have a servant in paradise called *Pialral*). This report clearly indicates the importance of traditional beliefs in the Mizo society and the notion of belief in life after death

The traditional practice of shifting cultivation which required migration from one place to another contributed important aspects of Mizo society. The practice of shifting cultivation required the exploration of new cultivable land, which seems to have resulted in Mizo migration from Chin Hills to the present state of Mizoram, the Cachar, Tripura, Chittagong, Manipur and many other areas. In the meantime, the colonial government established their commercial centre, like tea plantations in the plain areas in Cachar valley, Chittagong, Sylhet and Surma valley. By the mid-eighteenth century, the migratory habits of the Lushai thus come to an end due to the East India Company tea plantations. In due course, colonial expanded their commercial activities to the foothill areas, the areas claimed by the Mizo chiefs as their territories. The Mizo chiefs showed their strong hostility against the British subject on the ground that a large tract of forests that supported their hunting ground was destroyed. Consequently, Mizo warriors frequently plundered the British subjects and took heads as trophies of war. The British on the other hand, had a good reason to retaliate against the ‘head hunting savages’ who were responsible for so much terror in the British territory. Protecting commercial tea gardens eventually became the prime agenda of the colonial government. A violent military expedition was organized against the Mizo chiefs in 1850, followed by another military expedition in 1871-72.

As it has been stated, the practice of hunting also laid a strain on the economic relationship between the colonialists and Mizo chiefs who settled in the border areas of the British control. In Cachar, *Kheda* (elephant chaser or catcher) was established under the Military Department after 1875. The year 1875 also marked the introduction of Inner Line Regulation in Cachar, bordering the Lushai Hills (to be discussed later). As there was no proper boundary distinguishing Cachar and Mizoram, the colonial Zamindar from a newly created commercial tea plantation in Cachar and Sylhet used to cut timber in the foothills and the *Kheda* people sometimes crossed the boundary line. They were the most targeted and failing to recognize the territory of the Mizo chiefs was regarded a serious offence. Due to this reason some Lushai chiefs imposed a tax on them. Doubtlessly they refused. The Lushai used to exterminate the *Khedas*, which led to a strained relationship between the two groups. Moreover, elephants are considered the most valuable wild animals of the Mizos, as T.H.Lewin says, ‘they make a large hunting party, and their favorite games are the wild elephants.’ Thus, the establishment and the extension of the colonial power were considered by the Mizos as an encroachment upon their legitimate hunting ground. Presumably, the main intention of the Mizos may not be to attack the colonial power, but to preserve their territory as Mackenzie stated, ‘In 1862, they sent to say that, though they had no intention to attacking Europeans, they considered they had a right to cut up other tribes.’ On the other hand, inter-tribal feuds were common phenomena. The alliances were usually formed based on clan and region wise. Colonel Lister’s report to the authorities in Calcutta shows that the Lushai would not be prevailed upon to stop their constant inter-tribal feuds.

He assumed that the semi-nomadic nature of the tribes, the practice of shifting cultivation, hunting and quarreling between the chiefs or between the two villages were considered responsible for the feuds. Owing to this point, many of the *Sailo* chiefs agreed to maintain peace and security under the colonial government by paying tribute in return for their protection, especially from the atrocities of *Pawi* clan. In addition to this situation, the bamboo famine was a natural phenomenon in Mizo history. The bamboo flowering of 1881-1882, which corresponded with the occurrence of famine every fifty years, had a severe impact on the Mizo society. The result of bamboo flowering was the destruction of crops by the rodents that forced the entire population to starve. Many of the Lushai chiefs by this time sought relief from the British government. The authorities of Bengal (Chittagong) and Assam (Cachar) rendered relief measures to the famine stricken Lushai Hills. Rice was provided on a loan basis and in return all the able bodied Lushai had to work in the construction of roads. The quantity of rice and paddy exported to the Lushai Hills was about 1,800 mounds and 2,000 mounds respectively; on the other hand nearly 1,000 mounds of rubber and 4,25,000 bamboos were brought down from the Lushai Hills.

VII. INNER LINE REGULATION:

One of the first legal policies implemented by the colonial government in Northeast India was the introduction of Inner Line Regulation. The hill tribes continued to carry out their raids and looted, and plundered the colonial commercial centre of the plain areas. This situation compelled the colonial government to initiate a number of expeditions to subdue the hill tribes, but these did not last long. With an aim to secure peaceful relationships with the tribes to protect their commercial activities the colonial government enacted the 'Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation I of 1873.' The regulation drew an imaginary line popularly known as the 'Inner Line' to serve as a unilateral boundary with the frontier tribes. Initially, it included the eastern frontier areas of Bengal (at that time Assam was part of Bengal province), boundary line between the hills and the plain areas of Assam. The Regulation prohibited all British subjects from going beyond the line without permission or what is going to be known as Inner Line Pass. As Assam was carved out from Bengal in 1874, the Inner Line Regulation continued not only in those districts of Assam province, but extended to other districts under the Scheduled Districts Act, 1878.

In the case of Mizoram, the Inner Line Regulation was applied to its Cachar boundary in 1875 in order to check the Lushai atrocities. By 1895, the administration issued a relaxation of entry into the Lushai Hills, but the Mizos still needed passes to cross the border areas of Cachar. Within a few decades, movements from the plains to the hills became an alarming factor as the tribal economy as well as their cultures and traditions were threatened. Since its amendment in 1925, it regulates any possession of book, diary, manuscript, picture, photograph, etc beyond the Inner Line. This amendment in 1925 allowed extending this Regulation to Lushai Hills, and a fresh Inner Line was introduced in 1930 to the northern boundary of Cachar District, which eventually extended the entire boundary of Cachar District in 1933. According to the Government Notification in the Bengal Gazette,

'prohibit all the British subject, or any class of British subject, or any person, sending in or passing through, such district, from going beyond such line without a pass under the hand and seal of the executive officers to such district of such officers as he may authorize grant such pass; and Local Government may from time to time cancel or vary such prohibition.'

Accordingly, the new regulation initiated physical isolation from the plains, and clearly indicates the system of segregation practiced by the colonial government and depiction of the Mizo from the Eurocentric point of view as 'savages' and 'predatory tribes,' who disturbed their commercial and economic interest in the plain areas of Assam. Thus, 'Inner Line' had been drawn between 'civilized space' and 'primitive bounded space' of the hills tribes and people in the plains. Sanjib Baruah argued the policy was 'designed partly to keep 'primitives' bound to their 'natural' space in the hills, the Inner Line defined the limits of the 'civilizational' space beyond which colonial state would not provide security of property.' Contrary to this statement, one of the objectives of this regulation includes preventing the holding of lands and assimilation of their culture and tradition beyond this inner line by 'strangers.' Thus, this regulation protected the Lushai Hills from commercial exploitation of land and forest resources from intruders like Bengali traders, Assamese, Chakma, Tripuri etc.

Under this regulation, huge tracts of about 500 square miles on the bordering areas of Cachar are declared as Inner Line Reserve forests. However, this regulation materialized only after the territory was transferred from the Cachar district to the Lushai Hills district in 1904, but it continued to be managed under the Cachar Forest Division till 1974. With the colonial intention of commercialization, forests on navigable rivers provided the only scope for revenue generation. Therefore, a few villages located within and on the boundary of these were subject to being restricted for habitation, cultivation, hunting, fishing etc. The Inner Line Reserve includes the border of villages of Saipum, Mauchar, Tenghmun, Sakawrdai, Vairengte, Palsang, Khawdungsei, Zohmun, Khawruhlian, Vaitin, Khawpuar, and Bairabi. The residents were not allowed to cut forest for *jhumming* and had to obtain permission to clear jungle for cultivation, and also to obtain permits for collection of forest produce.*

VIII. CONCLUSION:

In an attempt to unpack the relation between the colonial government and the Mizos, the study revealed that initially the location of Lushai Hills did not attract the colonial officials to make it permanent occupation as it had no financial gain for them. The geographical barren land and hill rugged, where there was no transportation to gain Imperial revenue was a serious constrain. The struggle for survival as well as protection of both the group interest in the frontier areas kept the relations alive. The study also revealed that after frequent raids, looted and atrocities committed by the Mizo which eventually changed the nature of the colonial policy from conciliation to forward policy finally led to permanent occupation of Lushai Hills in 1891. The main policy of the British government from the beginning was to defend the border line and not to interfere with the trans-border tribesmen. Therefore, the policy adopted by the British was to subdue the hills tribes, with only a minimal expenditure to govern over them. To quote T.H Lewin, 'Let us not govern these hills for ourselves, but administer the country for the well being and happiness of the people dwelling therein,' since then, the internal administration and local affairs was entirely left to the Lushai chief and his ministers.

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B.B Dutt and M.N Karna, *Land Relations in North East India*, New Delhi, People Publishing House, 1997, p.186. Based on the line drawn by the Inner Line Regulation as unilateral boundary which divided the territory from the plain and the hill or 'civilize' and 'primitive,' colonial government utilized for further political measures. The Government of India Act 1919 declared a number of territories, including the territories of the border tribes, as 'Backward Tracts' which nullified any legislative power and vested in the hands of Governor-General with special powers. Along with other Inner Line regulated frontier hills, Lushai Hills also fall under this Backward Tract. Along this line, the Government of India Act 1935 made provisions for the 'Excluded Area' and the 'Partially Excluded Area.' The areas where excluded or partly excluded to be imposed, were forbidden from any provincial and federal legislation. No act of the federal legislature or provincial legislature was applicable to such areas unless the Governor directed it. Thus, the people of excluded areas could neither participate in their government nor elect representatives to the Legislature, whereas in the partially excluded areas, the people could vote for members of the legislature. In 1936, the government declared district like Lushai Hills, Naga Hills, the North Cachar Sub-division, and the Frontier Tracts as Excluded Areas. However, Garo Hills District, Khasi and Jaintia Hills District and the Mikir Hills are declared as 'Partially Excluded Areas.'

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