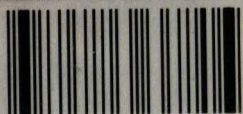


*Representation
of Women
in Khasi Literature*

DAKAMON MAWROH



14537

2008



Representation of Women in Khasi Literature

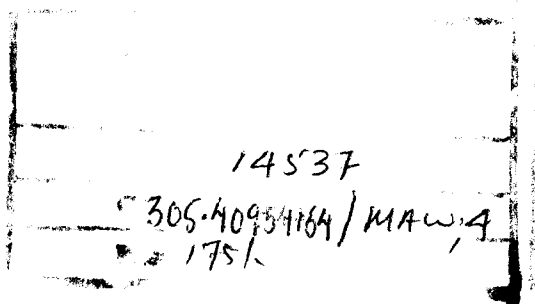
Dakamon Mawroh

SHILLONG COLLEGE LIBRARY	
Acc. No-	974 /0261
Call No.	974/MAW;4
Date	175/- T W 8/6/09

2008

First Impression - 2008

© Author & Published by Mrs. Dianghun Mawroh



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without permission in writing from the copyright holder.

Computer typing : Pil Marbaniang

Text layout, cover concept and design by Shongdor Diengdoh

Printed by R.M.K, Shillong [9436307409]

Rs. 175/-

DEDICATION

*In loving memory of my late parents
Mr. K. Kharjana and Mrs. S. Mawroh*

PREFACE

THIS work is based on my doctoral thesis 1990 by the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. In this work I have examined changing images of women as depicted by the major Khasi Novelists and Dramatists spanning half a Century from 1939 to 1989.

I wish to express my gratitude to my Supervisor and Guide (Late) Prof R. S. Lyngdoh. I am also grateful to Prof. N. Hasan for editing the work. My special thanks to Prof. S. Dkhar for her unstinted and generous support over all these years.

Sd/-

Dakamon Mawroh

FOREWORD

When Dr. (Mrs) Dakamon Mawroh requested me to write a few lines on her work "Representation of Women in Khasi Literature", I accepted with a sense of pride because my teacher is bringing out an important work in English, a global language. This work is more ways than one is a contribution to Khasi literature and a proper understanding of a Khasi woman. It will also offer immense knowledge to readers who do not understand Khasi to see and read how a Khasi woman is treated in Khasi literature. First of all, Dr. Mawroh offers to the readers an understanding of a Khasi woman basing on the Khasi traditions. Today, many readers and writers who are not in touch with Khasi traditions try to see and study a Khasi woman perhaps, from a global perspective. Many are voicing their concerns and are calling for a change from within the structure of the Khasi traditions. I believe, this work will offer answers to some of the question on a Khasi woman. The author tried her best to bring out the essence of a Khasi woman by choosing to base on written Khasi literature and not merely on oral traditions. By bringing out the portrayal of a Khasi woman in the works of different Khasi authors. Dr. Mawroh has in fact, recorded not merely the fiction part but to a certain extent the life and experiences of a Khasi woman. As a student and teacher of Khasi literature, Dr. Mawroh used all the technical terms suitable in a proper study of literature. She used all the available materials particularly, on Khasi drama and Khasi fiction; and I found that the materials she had used are still relevant even today. Teachers, researchers, students and lovers of literature will find this work useful in their quest to understand the valuable works of S.J. Duncan's "Ki Mad'ia ka Shillong", K. K. Kharlukhi's Ka Melody, Ka Melody, Peace Roy Pariat's Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang, L.D. Pde's U Moo'iong,

Donbok T. Laloo's Ka Jyrsieh Longbriew and other important works in Khasi. Dr. (Mrs) Dakamon Mawroh, with this important contribution in the study of a Khasi woman as seen in Khasi literature, has bridged the gap and took Khasi closer to readers who wait to quench their thirst with the knowledge of Khasi literature. We congratulate her for this important contribution and we hope to see more study on other aspects of Khasi literature from her.

Khublei! Nang Kiew

Lamare
08/07/08
(Sylvanus Lamare)
08 July 2008

CONTENTS

Preface	-----	v
Foreword	-----	vii
CHAPTER – I		
<i>Khasi Concept Of Womanhood</i>	-----	1
CHAPTER – II		
<i>Khasi Womanhood In The Idyllic World</i>	-----	11
CHAPTER – III		
<i>The Age Of Social Transformation</i>	-----	38
CHAPTER –IV		
<i>Characterisation</i>	-----	97
CHAPTER – V		
<i>Conclusion</i>	-----	139

CHAPTER – I

KHASI CONCEPT OF WOMANHOOD

Since the dawn of human civilization, women have been taken merely as the property of man and not as equal partners. Even a great philosopher like Plato in his book, *The Republic* considers women as inferior to men that the Philosopher-King can have a whole harem without being obliged to fulfill the duties of a father towards the offspring of his contact with innumerable women. This male attitudes continued for many centuries. Even a great reformer like Napoleon Bonaparte did not consider women equal to men. All the social, cultural and political rights were the monopoly of men.

It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that the intellectuals of the Western world began to reconsider this state of affair. The discovery of radium by Madam Curie and her husband opened up the minds of the educated women of the Western World. It must be recalled that both wife and husband got the Nobel Prize for this great discovery.

Today the Feminist movement has over-stepped itself with some American women scientist complaining a woman should not suffer for nine months from the date that a child is conceived till the date that the child is born. Hence medical scientists have tried to experiment how a baby can conceived in test tubes and no longer in a woman's womb. But this idea is rather to far-fetched.

In contrast, a Khasi thinks that no such feminist movement is

applicable to the Khasi society. According to Khasi religious belief, everything that the human mind can conceive was created by God through *Ka Hukum*. That the beginning of the Khasi belief that the role of the mother is more important than that of the father in the upbringing and determining the future's personality of her child. She is considered to be the upholder of man's destiny as well as the destiny of the land. In fact, throughout the world man takes pride in calling his own language his mother-tongue, and everywhere one's country is called one's mother-land. Although all nations take pride in this idea yet they do not practice it in full measure. Perhaps the Khasis are the only race which consider the mother as the soul of life, the soul of inspiration, the keeper of hearth and home, the preserver of all traditions, usages and conventions, the guardian of all unfortunate members of the clan, the guardian of all ancestral properties and above all the keeper of the clan's religious rites and ceremonies. This is the reason why David Roy Phanwar writes; "Man is the defender of the woman, and the woman the keeper of his trust." David Roy further says; "From the mother springs the kind, the species, it is the father who gives the person his stature."

The best illustration of this social thought can be seen in the enclosure of any thanks giving dance. Men of varied ages with the swords in their right hands and the whisks in their left hands, the shields, the bows and arrows at their back indicate that they are the defender of the clan, the community and the land. The turbans on their heads with the crest of feathers on the back-side of their turbans indicate that they are the rulers, the law-makers and the administrators. But young maidens would dance inside the enclosure surrounded by male dancers. All of them are bedecked in costly gold and silver jewellery and ornaments which indicate that they are the custodians of the ancestral properties. But on top of all this a crown of gold or silver adorns a Khasi woman's head which symbolizes that she should

maintain dignity, honestly, virginity and courtesy in all her dealings in the society.

Let me now discuss the belief of the Khasis about the role played by the first mother of each clan and the succeeding mothers. Dr. Homiwell Lyngdoh Nonglait explains “that in ancient times, the word “Kur” means a group of people, both men and women who spring up from the mother’s side from one generation to another right from the first mother of the clan known as “Ka lawbei Tynrai”. The word “Jait” denotes a group of people, both men and women who spring up from the old mother who may be the daughter or grand daughter of lawbei Tynrai and is known as the “lawbei Tymmen”. Ka jait is only a sub-division of ka Kur, and each jait may have many kpoh that spring up from it. However, all *Ki Kpoh* or *ki jait* or any part thereof are inter-related. All *ki iing* that spring up from the same jait, though they have their own kmie tymmen known as ka “lawbei Khynraw” are in-terrelated” and they are called blood relations.

The explanations of Dr. H. Lyngdoh Nonglait about the kur System among the Khasi can be traced back to the beginning when ka Hukum found that it was necessary that the creatures under the surface of the earth and in the ocean and in the air and in the whole universe should have a ruler. Therefore out of the sixteen huts or khadhynriew trep which God had made in heaven, the seven huts should be sent down to be the rulers and that is the reason why they are known till today as the seven families or seven huts which literally means the seven crowns. This was done with the consent of all creations in heaven and earth in the first heavenly assembly known as Ka Dorbar Blei Banyngkong. It is not necessary here to discuss the other heavenly assemblies that were summoned by *ka hukum* because it is not related with the present dissertation. To summarise, each another of the seven families was the first mother of the of-

one generation to another, nonetheless it must be strictly adhered to by all Khasis. However, such relationships appear to be complicated to any outsider. The interclan relationship is founded right from the time of a proposal for a marriage and it is sanctified at the religious ceremony known as “Ka Phur Ka Siang”. At the time when any clan decides to collect all the bones and ashes of the dead members of the family, the maternal uncles of that clan would inform all the members of the clan from the father’s side and also all children and grand children of the dead members of that clan. On the appointed day, the maternal uncles of the clan would ask through the Hukum by different methods of divination the reasons of the Premature death of the members of the clan. For those who died of old age there is no necessity for such a method because a Khasi believes that “Ngi wan longbriew sha pyrthei kat kum ka Hukum bad ngi leit phai pat sha ling u Blei ynda la dkut u sai Hukum”. In literal English it means that “we have come to the world as ordained by God through ka Hukum and we go back to the door of God as predestined by Him”. That is why for those who die prematurely through illness, accident, warfare and the like the bones have to undergo the process of purgation by driving away the evil influences which might have caused their premature deaths by cleaning the bones in a sacred pool of water known as ka *Umkoi Umsham*. But the Rngiew and soul of those who have met their death in distant places and whose bones cannot be collected are called back to join in the common abodes of the clan. Then the bones of all the dead members are collected and brought to the religious house of the clan, the custodian of which is the youngest female member of the clan to join again with the living. A Khasi believe also that no man and woman should remain single while alive. Hence on the next day the clan members make two effigies, one standing for a man known as a Tyingshop and the other for a woman known as ka Puron. This ceremony is known as *Ka Pyngrei*. That common male effigy will marry these

dead female members of the clan and the female effigy will marry all unmarried male dead members of the clan. Thereafter, at night time they perform ceremonies known as “Ka Beh Tympem” which means chasing away all evil spirits which might disturb the dead members of the clan in their journey to the common Mawbah and thus ensure that the souls are not prevented from reaching the door of God.

On the following day all the bones are carried to an appointed sanctified place where stone slabs are placed in front of standing monoliths. The tallest at the middle is known as *UMawknii* meaning the first maternal uncle, the others on the right and left are known as *Mawpyrsa* meaning standing for the maternal nephews and grand nephews of the first uncle. The stone slabs in front stand for the *lawbei Tynrai*. The bones are placed on the stone slabs where the successor lawbei sits. First of all she will receive the contribution from members of a clan, then the children of the maternal uncles, uncles, brothers etc. who come to pay their homage so that the lawbei Tynrai of that clan would shower blessing from generation to generation on all female members of the clan. It is here that a Khasi woman is the custodian not only of the whole clan but also the sole controller of the inter-clan relationship. It is here also that we find that a Khasi man stands as a link between the members of his kur and the members of other clans through whom he has children and grandchildren. Therefore, there is no necessity for women liberation movement or men liberation movement among the Khasis, if we sincerely follow these practices ingrained in our gene.

The second World War brought in its wake numerous social changes all over the World. These changes had their impact on the Khasi Society as well, especially in urban areas. For a time, it appears as if all the ancient tenets and social values had lost their influences. The main factors responsible for such changes were, to name a few, the economic crisis due to inflation. Inflation was the result of huge

expenditure in war efforts by the first world countries and also due to the introduction of the law of conscription in those countries. As a result of this a new type of law which was prevalent during the middle ages led to the decrease in the production of essential commodities because of the fact that all able-bodied men were engaged in Warfare. The Second World War was the first in human history where nuclear physical science and bio-physical science played a major role. Hence a sense of fear prevailed in the minds of the people all over the world. Even intellectuals in the field of social sciences and literature lost their interest. Virginia Woolfe in her book *The Learning Tower* published in 1941, described the period as a period of Steady Tower. In her characteristic allegorical way she characterized the minds of the Victorian period as belonging to that Steady Tower period because of the fact that “the poets, dramatists and novelists of that age were not disturbed by any sense of fear”. But according to her, after the first World War the writer’s mind was no longer steady because they had to suppress their thoughts and imagination and thus the literary output of the age became lop-sided.

The advance of the Japanese Army and Air Force from the South-East to Burma, and their entry into Kohima forced the British authorities to make Shillong the Eastern Command of the British Army to combat the Axis power on the Eastern Front. The Khasi people for the first time had to come face to face with soldiers belonging to all nationalities who came from different parts of the British Empire. This was followed by shortage of food supply and the soaring prices of essential commodities. The economic crisis combined with the confrontation with the social forces due to the intrusion of military and para-military forces and also with traders coming from outside, brought about a mixed feeling in different sections of the Khasi Society. Due to the availability of new avenues for quick money. Some women were lured by the temptations of the time and willing to sacrifice their own honour and self-respect

for the sake of quick income without thinking about their future some were inclined to take to certain types of business through which they could have quick income through black market dealings. But the intellectuals of the day looked askance at what was happening. Therefore, they tried to revive the old tenets of the Khasis to maintain the honour, prestige and dignity of Khasi womanhood. The changed attitude did not only affect the Khasi women, but it affected the character and outlook of Khasi men. But since my thesis deals only with Khasi women, I will not go into the social change which affected the Khasi man.

The end of the Second World War was also the end of the British empire in India, because the force of Post-War Circumstances. India got its independence on the 15th August, 1947. But the Khasi people found that their position under the Indian Constitution was not in line with the aspirations of the hill men. Hence they started a proto-nationalist movement to get a Hill State for the Hill people of the North-East India, which eventually led to the formation of Meghalaya on 2nd April, 1970 as an Autonomous State, and on 21st January, 1972 as a full fledged State within the Union of India.

Against the backdrop of these historical, social economic and constitutional changes, it is appropriate to divide my thesis into the following parts. The first part will contain discussion of the ideal Khasi womanhood as depicted by the writers after 1940. The second part will contain discussion of the Khasi women after that date and the third portion will contain discussion of the role of Khasi women in the Khasi Society against the backdrop of the social changes that were taking place all over the country and the world. The next chapter therefore will begin with a discussion on the ideal Khasi womanhood as depicted by P.E. Swer and S.J. Duncan Hoojon.

References:

1. David Roy Phanwar, *Principles of Khasi Culture*, London Anthropological Society Publication, 1938
2. David Roy Phanwar, “ Ka Jaka U Khasi Ha Pyrthei “ *Syngkhong Jingt看*, Vol. IV, 1937.
3. H.Lyngdoh Nonglait, *Ka Niam Khasi* “Ka Longkur Longjait” Lynnong X, S.P.works, Shillong. Pp. 132-133.
4. Woolfe Virginia, “*The Leaning Tower*, Macmillan & Co. 1941.

CHAPTER – II

KHASI WOMANHOOD IN THE IDYLIC WORLD

SECTION 'A' The Good old World of P.E. Swer and S.J. Duncan Hoojon.

In the previous chapter we have discussed the concept of Khasi womanhood right from childhood to girlhood till she reaches marriageable age upto the time she plays the role of a mother. Let us now proceed with the discussion on the ideal Khasi womanhood as depicted by some major Khasi authors with special reference to “*Ka Samla Rilum*” “Khasi hill maiden” of P.E. Swer, the play and short shory of Simon Jenkin Duncan Hoojon, and *Ka Lasubon* of Donbok T. Laloo. Let us first of all examine the dream old world of P.E. Swer as depicted in his novelette *Ka Samla Rilum*.

P.E. Swer popularly known as Bah Lik was born at Swer village and he grew up as a child and as a lad in the Swer-Sohra area. It appears that right from his boyhood he had an impressionistic mind which he retained throughout his life. Later he came to Shillong for higher studies after graduation he joined government service. After retirement from government service as Municipal Commissioner in Shillong. Surprisingly the environment of the town life or the monotony of official work did not appear to have affected him at all. The series of poems and novelettes published by *Ka Syngkhong*

Jingtíp during the 1960s reveal that P.E. Swer cannot forget the rural setting which shaped his mind and thoughts. Therefore in all his work he has shown an immense interest in rural society, especially in the concept of the ideal womanhood in the dream old world which can be traced in the rural areas even today. Let us now discuss the gist of the novelette *Ka Samla Rilum*. The story is about a typical Khasi maiden by the name of Lakhimai, the only daughter of Men Byllien and Borsing Swer residing at Laitkroh village. She is a symbol of virginity, purity and modesty. As a village girl who belongs to a traditional khasi family, she enjoys her acquaintance with nature and its surroundings. She grows up as the most beautiful girl in the village and is admired by all. Being a respectable girl she dares not accept Mangkara's proposal. At last with her parents' consent she is engaged to him and eventually marries him.

Ka Lakhimai is depicted as a good example of the Khasi rural society. She is hard-working, obedient, simple-hearted and humble. She has great respect for her parents and elders. For her matrimonial alliance she asks for their consent. Thus with the consent of her parents she gets married with Mangkara, the son of Korbar Sing Swer and Menrupa.

The author through the story wants to depict the Khasi ideology. According to the Khasi belief one cannot enter into marriage without prior information and knowledge about their relationship and kinship. The law of consanguinity plays a very important role in Khasi marriage. Neither Lakhamai nor Mangkara dare break the law and therefore they turn to their parents for help and guidance.

Lakhimai is a very beautiful girl. Her beauty is described by the author thus:

“Her face is cute and well-shaped, enhanced by a gentle voice. She has a fair complexion combined with her good behaviour”.

Her beauty is heightened by her well-behaved and modest character explained by the author thus :

She never answers back to her parents nor speaks rudely to her friends and neighbours. She has a high sense of sound judgment and knows how to differentiate between the right and the wrong. She talks softly and her words of kindness and friendliness pour out of her mouth to captivate children, friends and neighbours.

She is very religious minded and God-fearing. This noted in her regular thanks-giving to God thus :

O Lord: Thou knowest: Thou who is able:
guide me from above so that I will be able to
perform my duties properly.

She prays twice a day, early in the morning and before going to bed at night. At night her prayer runs thus:

“Thou, who is able: Protect me from the
darkness of the night, from the thunders’ deadly
weapons, from the wicked and the enemy, O God be
with me.”

She subscribes to the traditional Khasi religion and has a great love for culture and tradition. This is symbolized by her purity and virginity as a young girl. She gets everything ready for the occasion without any hesitation. She performs her dances so well that all the viewers appreciate her good performance and her beauty.

She inherits the love for culture from her father who also takes immense interest and active part in the dance-performance during festivals. Every year during the festival both of them get ready for

the occasion and Lakhimai dances in the enclosure continuously for three days.

Like all the village girls, Lakhimai finds nature and its ambience very attractive. She is fond of cultivation. She is an expert in burning the sods in the fields. She knows what kind of crop is suitable for a particular soil and so on. She also enjoys going to the river for fishing. She finds great solace whenever she comes into contact with nature. She works cheerfully in the fields and often sings with gaiety and the author explains her cheerfulness thus :

Her voice softens people's heart and fills the with good thoughts and inspiration so that they often cast away evils thoughts from their minds.

She possesses all the good qualities as a character; she is dedicated to her household work, cultivation and so on. She has great respect towards her elders. Whenever any visitor comes to visit her place. She receives them warmly and never allows them to leave without having food. Before they leave she fills their *iarong* with kwai and tymmpew for them to chew on their way back home. She is a philanthropist throughout and cannot bear to see people in distress and misery.

She is typically addressed as 'Chakoina' meaning a young maiden of pure heart and courteous manner who is expected to live according to the traditional concept of what a Khasi women should be, she is to play her role in the society throughout her life. To this end she achieves success to the full expectation of her parents, her kith and kin and her dear and near ones.

The next author who we will be discussing is Simon Jenkin Duncan Hoojon, whom every Khasi literary critic considers one of the greatest luminaries of Khasi literature of the 20th century. He is an eminent poet, a playwright and one of the best short story writers.

He was born at Laban, one of the localities of Shillong but his ancestors belonged to Mairang area. His imagination is coloured by both rural and urban surroundings. He had a brilliant academic career and served as an officer of the government throughout his service career. But his love for his own race, his own birthplace and his own home is immense. As a result of this, all his writings reflect the highest idealism of the ancient forebears and the painful experience been brought about by rapid urbanization. The ideal Khasi womanhood is found not only in his play *Ka Tiewlarun* but also in a many of his short stories. We has also apprised his readers of the evil impact of modernity which has tarnished the ideal image of womanhood in an urban setting; yet under the stress and strain of the city the author still depicts some characters who symbolise the kind of idealism expected of a young maiden and a good mother.

Let us now discuss the more important characters created by S.J. Duncan Hoojon to embody such ideal womanhood. His play entitled *Ka Tiewlarun* published in 1968, depicts such a woman. The plot revolves round the sudden plague that accured in Nongkyrdan village, which falls under the Madur Syiemship. The sole survivors are u Het Rende and his sister ka Shatai Rande. They continued their stay in the village even during the dreadful period in order to revive the clan.

Ka Shatai Rande is only 15 years' old. Being the only girl who survives the scourge she is responsible for her clan's lineage. She is too young to understand the realities of life and yet circumstances compels her to be mature. Her innocence and simplicity are revealed in her conversation with her brother about the sudden death of their parents ad relatives. Her brother assures her of future happiness together. However, ka Shatai cannot help feeling sorry for their fate. She says:

How come, brother, all of a sudden we lost our mother and

aunts? And now we are the sole survivors of the clan.

Besides being simple and innocent she is very obedient too. She never goes against her brother's wish. She obeys his elders and never raises a question. She adores her brother so much. He is as dear to her as she is to him. U Kyrben, Het's closest friend talks about their relationship thus :

“... My heart aches to think about the sudden death of aunts and uncles but by God's grace you are in good health now. Though left an orphan yet you hardly feel the loneliness in the company of your sister.”

Her loyalty towards her brother is beyond unquestioned. Therefore when he instructs her to be hardworking and forget the past calamity she just obeys him and says; “I understand brother, you have been saying that for the whole week.”

Ka Shatai is humble in nature. She shows no pride in wealth and riches, though she belongs to a well-to-do family. When her brother asks her to put on all the ornaments she replies:

I do not want to put on all the ornaments brother.
I can feel the weight when I put them on. I will
Therefore put on only my mother's necklace and
earrings. As for the rest, I will keep them properly.

Ka Satai is very co-operative. Though very young in age, she is ready to help her brother in his work. She asks her brother to let her tend the cows in his place. She is not allowed to do so because the place is lonely and secluded. She has great respect for her elders. This is shown in the respect she shows towards her brother's friend, u Kyrben. She addresses him as her brother by calling him “Bah Dit”. When he pays a visit to their place, ka Shatai receives him with

great hospitality, offers him a good meal and makes him feel at home.

Ka Shatai is beautiful in her own natural way. She is described as 'the most beautiful girl whose beauty cannot be expressed in words'. U Syiem goes on further to say that "She is so beautiful that one compare her beauty with *Ka Tiewlarun* only."

U Syiem Madur, her lover and husband, is struck by her beauty. He is drawn towards her as soon as hears the report of her exquisite beauty from his two men u Shin and u Syllon. He confesses his love for her and addresses her beauty "incomparable to any other including Ka Tiewlarun, the most beautiful flower." He further goes on to say that "even sorrow cannot darken her beauty, the fog cannot discolour the flower's beauty..."

The dramatist explains her youthfulness in the words of her brother, u Het, thus:

".. I will try with all my might to protect
My sister on whom God took so much pity so as to
Save her from the visitation of the great plague
I will take a firm stand as a man till I am able
to rebuild my family once again. For she is too
young now..."

Shatai possesses a special character not present in any other. She is mature beyond expectations. This is remarked by a character called u Kyrben thus:

"By looking at her face one can tell that
she looks young, for face is the index of the
mind. The way she works and thinks is similar
to that of a grown up woman."

She has a great love for poetry. It seems that poetry pours

from her mouth every time she talks. This is noted when she talks to herself thus:

“How I long to put on a bird’s feather to fly wherever I wish”. Further she says “I do not pine for an eagle’s wing to go and disappear beyond the sky when you suddenly reach up, the brain boils in your skull, they say. I will fly to the market. You will know that only when I return from there with the goods I buy.

She compares herself with a *mynah*, a bird in a cage that views the world and its surroundings and yet its world is its cage. She hardly goes out. Being the only girl, she is always tied up with her household works.

Like all the village girls she quotes line after line of poetry to express her feeling. Even in time of crisis words of poetry flow within her thus:

Though thoughts make me uneasy and sleepless,
Yet it matters not, I do not mind, for my mind is strong
Though my own people deceive me, who I trust so much
Yet it matters not, I do not mind, for my heart is big.

Further she sings:

Though only rice and salt I take,
Yet it matters not, I am not ashamed, for I have peace
at heart,
Though I dress shabbily and poverty prevails,
Yet it does not matter, I am not ashamed for my mind
is rich.

Ka Shatai’s greatness as a woman is heightened by her other qualities too. She has a wordswothian love for nature. This is noted in her talk to her brother thus:

“I feel so hot brother. I went in search of Jamyrdoh, Tiewtyrkhang and tiewdohmaw when all of a sudden I felt so thirsty. I have been searching for water everywhere but to no avail.”

Once Ka Shatai reaches the woods, she forgets everything about herself. She is so attached to nature and its surroundings that she feels happy roaming about in the woods. She is however, naïve. Like all teenagers she day-dreams about her love and pines for it. Yet when u Syiem Madur proposes to her she hesitates to accept his proposal. She waits for her brother's consent and approval. At last with her brother's consent she gets married to U Syiem Madur.

“*Ka Akor Kaba Tam*” is a short story, written by S.J. Duncan Hoojon. The theme of the story is the reward one's good behaviour and conduct. The title of the story itself signifies the importance of behaviour in the day to day life of man. Kpa u Bor, the protagonist, tries his level best to get his jeep sold out at a reasonable rate. He does not succeed because his customers outwit and cheat him. The first customer Haripod while taking the jeep for a test drive steals the back tyres and replace them with old ones. The second customer Holira asks Kpa u Bor for a test drive, Kpa u Bor gives permission and take the trouble of going for a drive. Holira too cheats him by keeping him waiting at the motor station while he himself gets into a Gauhati bus and leaves Shillong for good. The third customer. Bhakhwandew offers only eight hundred rupees for the jeep saying that it is no longer in a good condition. Kpa u Bor feels so outraged by this insult that he chases him away. The fourth and last customer is Mr, Horshon, a Khasi gentleman. Kpa u Bor who has been cheated and insulted by three customers already is least interested with this gentleman. He asks him point blank whether he is really interested in buying the jeep. Horshon is upset by his unpleasant

behaviour. Kpa u Bor's wife saves him from losing a good customer and thus the jeep is sold out.

Kmie u Bor, the wife of Kpa u Bor, is the only female character in the story. She often instructs her husband to be polite in his dealings with customers and friends in order to win their hearts. She herself is well-behaved and polite by nature. She is greatly dismayed to see her husband's tactlessness in dealing with his customers. She feels pity for his desperate struggle to sell out the jeep. She wants to help him in the matter and therefore instructs him to call her whenever customers come:-

“Kpa u Bor, whenever customers come for the jeep do call me for the purpose.”

Kmie u Bor is a very considerate and understanding woman. She never wants to trouble others. She has seen her husband's desperate struggle to sell out the jeep. She realizes how difficult it is. She, therefore, wants to share his burden. She succeeds in the scheme because of her tactics in business dealings. Her tactful and polite character charms the customer into buying the jeep without a second thought.

She is humorous and jolly by nature. Even in times of stress and anxiety she pours out words full of fun in order to lighten the burden surrounding her little world. In order to cheer him up. She turns her husband's inability to sell the jeep into a joke she utters.

“Kpa u Bor, you will not sell out the jeep till it gives birth to a child.”

The Khasis are by nature hospitable, humorous and jolly and kmie u Bor is no exception to this. She can be regarded as an exemplar of ideal Khasi womanhood.

SECTION 'B': Realistic Portrayal of the Khasi Women

Let us now look at my discussion the woman character depicted by Donbok T. Laloo. As a novelist he sees the two sides of life. In *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew* and *Kam-Miet* he diagnoses all the social maladies which he discovers in the present day society. In *Ka Lasubon*, the plot revolves round the superstition of the Khasis against the legendary background of the eternal struggle between good and evil. The superstitious belief in the existence of the mythological 'Thlen' is the focal point in shaping all major characters of the novel. He is an optimistic author. Kynsai the hero of *Kam Miet*, returns to "Ka Kynhun Sohpetbneng" at the end of the novel, which is a sign of the novelist's optimism.

Donbok T. Laloo has proved himself not only as a successful researcher into the Khasi heritage and as a rebel against the evil influence of false pride in modernism, but he has become successful as one of the distinguished novelists of the present era.

His novel entitled *Ka Lasubon* has already got two awards — The Annual Apphira literary award and The Meghalaya Government Literary State Award. This novel is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the legend of the coming of an evil spirit to misguide and destroy human beings. The plot is built around the second part of the book which is a depiction of the eternal struggle between traditional beliefs and the modern way of life. It is in this part that the novel started with an eligible young man struggling for degree examination. He falls in love with a young teenaged girl, Lasubon who is still in high school. That is the beginning of the novel. In between, the author creates some complications, that his class friend is fond of him and always takes him to his house for a mid day meal, during the class break hours in order to acquaint Shemphang with

his elder sister, Ka Pherlibon. But the middle of the novel is concerned with the fall of Pherlibon because she is enticed by Prem simply because Shemphang is too shy. The story comes to a head when Prem elopes with Pherlibon to the caves of Sunapani falls. Soon Shemphang and Pherlibon's brother discover that both Prem and Pherlibon have taken poison. But Pherlibon is saved because the bottle drops down before she has consumed the poison, but Prem has already raped her. In the third chapter of the novel, we find Lasubon working at the State Central Library and Shemphang posted in the Co-operative Department. in Shillong. Shemphang frequents the library without realising that he had already met Lasubon in her teenage days. Lasubon tries to remind him tacitly of their earlier relationship and at last Shemphang then recover their old time intimacy at Mawkhar. They come closer when Shemphang meets her at a wedding ceremony at Lummawbah. That is the beginning of their love affair. That Shemphang has to drop Lasubon to the house known as "Ing Tin Saw" indicates the Khasi superstition that the family is the keeper of "U Thlen", the mysterious creature who drinks only human blood. Finally, the story ends in such a manner that Shemphang has to find out the supernatural power to free Lasubon from the belief of her family in the guardianship of "U Thlen". In fact, Lasubon does not know that her mother inherits that supernatural inheritance from her grandmother and she does not know what Shemphang is doing.

Shemphang is trying to solve Lasubon's problem without her knowledge and he goes to his old teacher to know more about the concept of u Thlen. At last he is advised by his old teacher to meet the Lyngdoh of Myllem so that the evil of u Thlen should not influence Lasubon. This is found in Part IV of the novel. In a miraculous manner he does not meet the Lyngdoh, but instead he meets the Lyngdoh's maternal uncle who is dead and gone, and he tells Shemphang to go

quickly to the house of Lasubon or else it would be too late. But events takes their own turn, so that when Shemphang arrives he sees the Iingtin saw is blaze and Lasubon, her mother and Prem are already dead. This tragedy takes place when Prem invades Lasubon's mother's house. Incidentally the kerosene oil that Prem has brought catches fire through firewood which Lasubon's mother has thrown across the windows. But the author tells the reader that poetic justice will prevail in his next novel known as *Ki Matti Ki Blei*.

In this novel we find one round character and three flat characters. Ka Lasubon is the main character, ka Pherlibon is a round character, Lasubon's grand mother and mother are flat characters, and Sunita is an indeterminate character. Right from the beginning Lasubon appears to be an innocent girl always playing around Mawkhar-Mission compound and always admired by Shemphang. Her memory of her respect for Shemphang appears to remain over the years and this can be proved from the fact that she is not prepared to get married till she meets Shemphang. Her love for Shemphang is sincere and spring from her respect and love at first sight. It is here that modesty plays a more important role than beauty in the eyes of a well-established young man. She conquers him on that day. Shemphang is captivated not only by her beautiful dress, well combed hair and cosmetics but by her modesty. Shemphang dates Lasubon in a courteous manner. He invites her to go to the Co-operative Store where he works. But Lasubon says that she can accompany him only if Sunita accompanies her. She is afraid of scandal if she goes alone with him. This rendezvous at the Co-operative Store continues. Prem has married Pherlibon whom he has sold to u thlen and has remarried Sunita. He is jealous of Shem because at the back of his mind he want nobody but ka Lasubon. Close intimacy leads to temptation and the result is that both Shem and Lasubon have to sacrifice their virginity at the alter of love. In fact neither of them has the wish for such transgression

but human nature being what it is, makes them promise to live together in life and death. Lasubon, in her sincerity confides her mother and the mother accepts Shem as her son-in-law. Later she suffer due to the evil influence of **U Thlen** but she does not know the reason till Shem discloses it. With sincere love she promise that if there is a way to cure her she will accepted. She does not believe in **U Thlen**. It is only on the last night before the tragic end that she realizes it. It is then that Prem comes to the house and locks all the doors, makes a demand that he wants Lasubon that she can realises that Prem has sold his first wife Pherlibon to the Thlen of her mother. She then cries out that the divine power shall release her from the grip of such a murderer. Through the conversation of her mother and Prem it becomes clear as day light that her grandmother and her mother are the keeper of the Thlen in the central room where there is no light. But the sad end is the tragedy when the whole house is burnt and the three dead bodies are handed over to the police for investigation. Whatever we say about ka lingtinsaw, Lasubon is born as a pure girl, grows up as a young innocent lady with sincerity and modesty, loves a man with modesty and sincerity and dies as a martyr for the sins of her parents and grand parents.

In this novel we find another character called Pherlibon who lives somewhere at Umsohsun. In literary parlance she may be described as a round character. This is because of the fact that she is connected with the three male characters from the beginning of the novel till the end. The first time Shemphang is attracted to her because her attention to her household duties, her respect for her brother and his friend. The way she serves tea and snacks appears to be courteous and her words and conversation are of the type of any modest Khasi girl. But she has two defects in her attitude to life. She is dull in her studies. Then again she appears to be very attractive and easily infatuated as any late teenage girl. She has been enticed by Prem but she avoid him because Prem is not a pure Khasi and

acts like a modern Don Juan lover. She knows that Prem has enticed many young girls but to her innocent mind she sincerely believes that among all the young girls Prem loves her most. The introduction of Shemphang to the house makes her think that Shem is the right man for her. Shem is hard-working and brilliant in his studies. At the same time she is attracted by his manners and demeanour. But does not want to get himself entangled because he is yet preparing for the school final examination. Pherlibon misunderstands this and thinks that Shem does not want to make friends with her, not to talk of full blown love. Holidays set in and Shem shifts to Mawkhar under the care of his maternal uncle. It is during that period that Pherlibon makes her fatal mistake by consenting to leave the house and follow Prem. During the same time Lasubon in her early teenage years, develops her liking for Shemphang because he is very meticulous in his studies. Prem succeeded in eloping with Pherlibon and leaves a letter in the house that both of them will commit suicide. Next day Pherlibon's brother meets Shem at Mawkhar main road and discloses the disappearance of the two love birds. Many go in search of them and eventually Shem sees Pherli in a cave on top of Sunapani falls. In great haste, he rushes to the place only to discover that Prem has forcibly seduced Pherli and both of them are rescued. In the middle of the story we know that the great grandmother of Lasubon passes away and her mother inherits everything that belongs to her. It is at this point that Prem offers himself to work for Lasubon's mother by seeking human blood to feed the thlen at Iingtinsaw. When all his attempts fail he murders his own wife, Pherli and offers her blood at the alter of **U Thlen** at Ka Iingtinsaw. But the events that have shaped the destiny of Pherli compel her brother to leave his home and to serve as a schoolmaster at Umshing. Shemphang becomes desolate and never wants the company of girls even when he travels in other parts of India and nor even when he is posted at Shillong. He does not notice Lasubon even when he goes to the

State Central Library to borrow some books. In fact it is only later on that he gets attracted to her at one wedding reception at Lummawbah. That time he is attracted towards her and begins to forget Pherli. But Pherli's brother has to devote himself to school teaching and decide to remain a bachelor throughout his life because he cannot forget the tragedy in Pherli's life and the evil deeds of Prem.

There are some other female characters like Lasubon's mother and Sunita whom we can describe as mere flat characters. Lasubon's mother does not play an important role in shaping the destiny of any of the main characters. She is known only to have inherited her grandmother's property along with **U Thlen**. She is very secretive and never discloses the real hard facts of life to Lasubon till the end. She accepts Shem as her son-in-law and as a real mother protects her daughter from the grip of Prem when he attempts to forcibly rape her. Although her role is that of real mother yet she is superstitious. She wants to get rich easily and does not care for other people's lives, except her daughter's. She does not even spare Shem, her son-in-law, and wields some magical power to make him know that he will be the father of the family which is the keeper of *u thlen*. But through sheer accident, instead of drinking the magical water, Shem washes his hands with it and is saved from the influence of supernatural power.

The novelist does not disclose the family background of Sunita. He does not even disclose what happens to her after Prem has ill-treated her in order to get himself fully involved in *Ka Iinginsaw*. The only role that she plays is to accompany Lasubon whenever Lasubon requests her to go and buy something from the Co-operative Store. She is the only one who knows about the relationship between Shem and Lasubon. Perhaps this intimacy between the two has irritated Prem all the more since his main aim is to get Lasubon into his arms. Nevertheless, the role played by Sunita is important

because she is the connecting link between Shemphang and Lasubon.

Another author is Dewi Sing Khongdup. He was born and brought up at Mawshun village. He was educated at the Welsh Mission M.E. School. He passed his Matriculation from Calcutta in 1943, standing fourth in the university and got four medals. He passed his I.S.C. in 1945 and B.A. in 1947 from St. Edmunds College. Thereafter he joined Government High School, Shillong as a teacher. He then joined Assam Civil Service Grade I in 1952. He served under the government of Assam throughout till he was allotted to Meghalaya Legislative Assembly in 1981.

Devi Sing Khongdup started composing poems since his school days. The song “Sierlapalang” which he orchestrated during the war time has become the most popular Khasi song. He has written innumerable number of books. They are *Ha Ki Sngi U Syiem*, *U Donputit Part I and II*, *U Baieit Donskhor*, *Ki Kam Phylla U Donputit*, *Ki Kam Khyllah u Donputit*, *U Donputit bad U Khlieh Ka Khnap Masi*, *Artylli Ki Ple*, *Hadien U Syiem*. I will now examine the play *U Baieit Donskhor*.

U Baieit Donskhor : is a play written by D.S. Khongdup published in 1968. The story of the play is based on a Khasi fable “U Bieit bad ka khun u Patsha” written by Rabon Singh Kharsuka and a poem “Ka Biria U Bieit” written by Soso Tham. The theme is about u Baieit Donskor, the only son of a poor family. He lives with his old mother. Their lives together are full of hardship and poverty. U Baieid is fed up with his daily routine life and tries ways and means to escape from it. At last an idea strikes him. In order to implement it he asks for his mother’s co-operation. His mother is shocked to hear his mysterious plan; yet on seeing her son’s decisive firmness gives in. The plan is to take Baieid to the Syiem’s palace and thereby to beg for a job for him by pretending that he is dumb yet he is skillful in his work as a cowherd. The plan works out smoothly

and the Syiem has no suspicions. Baieid is employed as a cowherd and soon his loyalty wins the Syiem's heart so that he further promotes him to the job of a watchman in his eldest daughter's place. In the meantime Shitala Koina, the syiem's eldest daughter has a secret love affair with Sliang Mawpun, a cloth-merchant. The two lovers decide to elope from the palace and to go and live in a far-off place away from the parents. Baieid happens to overhear their secret plan. He goes to Sliang Mawpun's mother and pours out the whole secret to her. Sliang's mother is shocked to hear the news and wants to stop her son from doing this, she finds an opportunity to lock him while he is taking out some gold coins from the box inside. Baieid realising that the matter is being taken care of returns to the palace happily. Next morning, Baieid pretending to be Sliang, comes out for the secret mission. Shitala, ignorant of Baieid's tricky plan, follows him from behind taking for granted that he is her lover, Sliang Mawpun. At last when she is tired of following him, she relaxes for sometime and discovers that it is not Sliang, her loves and fiancée but Baieid Donskhor her servant. She gets furious. However, she dares not return to her palace any longer to face shame and dishonour. She, therefore, decides to follow Baieid in order to survive and threatens to kill him when she gets a chance of doing so. Baieid through sheer good luck wins the gamble against Syiem Kharai. The whole Hima of the Syiem becomes his. He then soon becomes the Syiem and Shitala becomes his wife.

Shitala Koina is the heroine of the drama. She appears in Act. I, scene I. She is the eldest daughter of Syiem Symphup and Maibon Rani. Being the eldest in the family she is very much pampered by her parents. Her father loves her very much and regarded her as the only soul who can share his burden in life. He expresses his true feelings towards her when he utters these words:

You are my first child, my happiness and my sorrow, my heart's

burden and enlightenment, my pride and dignity, so also your mother. I recall those anxious moments before you came born into this world. I prayed to God to grant me a baby boy, but God ignored my wish and I have no alternative but to accept His will. Yet your mother's cries before giving birth to you makes me love and adore you more than the baby boy whom I will not see anymore. You are my flesh and blood. When you suffer, I suffer too, when you are happy, I feel happy too. You should not therefore hide any secret from me, your father ...

Syiem Sympa is much aggrieved to see his daughter in distress. Despite several requests on his part, he fails to get an appropriate reply from his daughter. Shitala Koina admires and respects her father very much, yet she does not dare disclose her secret of having fallen in love with Sliang Mawpun, a cloth-merchant. Her father who is greatly concerned about her health and welfare cannot help agreeing with his wife when she tells him how depressed sickly Shitala Koina is now. His words express his deep concern about Koina's present condition when he says:

“Yes, bloodlessly white like a withered flower;
standing like a diseased fowl, for its roots are waterless
It will bloom again,
And it will spread its fragrance
Wherever the wind takes it, when it gets
a chance to suck the water that it is panting for each
time-
Have you noticed, O mother of my children,
how the way she walks, the way she sits,
What words she produces
Through her ripened lips?”

Shitala Koina is depicted as a pretty-looking girl in her ripened

youth. Syiem Sympa Singh regards his three daughters as the most beautiful youth in the world when he utters these words to his beloved wife. “You are the mother of my three most beautiful daughters in the world...”

Sliang Mawpun, her lover and fiancé, regards her as his “Lasubon”. He compares her beauty so that of a beautiful flower by the name of Lasubon.

Baieit Donskhor, her watchman and servant finds her exquisitely beautiful. He expresses her beauty in these words :

“Shitala Koina is beautiful, kind hearted, merciful, has pity for others, and has sympathy for my dumbness...”

As a lover, Shitala Koina is loyal and surrenders herself completely to her lover. Her love affair with Sliang Mawpun is full of obstacles. She is aware from the very beginning that her father will oppose her relationship with Sliang Mawpun since he is only a cloth-merchant with no social status. Yet she has full confidence in her love for him. She discloses to her lover that she is pining for his love day and night and can hardly sleep or eat. Her words reveal the secret feelings of love. She says thus :

I do not want to recall the words that I promised, for when I am beside you I forget the world: Yet I cannot recall how I came here, I am in the midst of a number of colourful flowers, I touch them with my own hands. Yet I do not know what range of colour they have : Can you see this rose in my hand? When I look at it, and I think of you at the sametime, I cannot say what colour it puts on. Because your lovely face is always in my eyes? When I look up into the sky, I can see strange illusions invisible to one’s eye, so also when you are together with me, I feel I am in a land of dream.

She feels content and happy to be by her lover’s side. She is full of depression when she thinks about her lover and their future

together. She always likes to be alone and spends her time thinking about love. She is often seen sitting in the garden lost in thoughts. She, therefore, gives her word to her lover that she is ready to do anything for him. She promises him that she will follow him anywhere he takes her so long as she is with him. She keeps her word by running away from her places at the appointed day and time only to find that she is cheated and finds Baieid her servant instead.

Shitala loves and respects her parents too. She knows that her father will oppose her relationship with Sliang Mawpun and does not want to displease him at all. Her father notices her depression, yet when he asks her to disclose her problems to him, she dares not do so, she herself confides her love towards her parents when she utters these words to her lover and fiancée Sliang Mawpun:

The stars in the sky witness my love for my parent, they too love me whole-heartedly, just as they have poured their love on me, so also they shall bless the man to whom I surrender my love. You shall be proud to possess a woman like me...

She realizes that she is going to lose her parents once she follows her lover. She regrets having promised her lover, yet she cannot help it now.

Shitala has a great love for poetry. Words of poetry pour out from her mouth whenever she speaks. She expresses her hidden secret love for Sliang Mawpun through poetry thus:

“O! you refreshing breeze of the four seasons,
Come to me! That the sweet voice you produce
Shall give joy to my weak soul How
I thirst for the sweet scent you scatter around,
My injured heart lives in disaster-
It sees no flowers and hears no sweet
songs of the birds, or the sweet echo

of the clear streamlet gently flowing,
It lives in dreams forgetful of the world
It sits and works anxiously all alone!
O! you refreshing air of the noon come and blow
You can show me once again
The beautiful colour of the creation,
Tiewlyngskaw blooming alone
Shows its satisfying face to me
If only it has a tongue to tell me
the hidden words of happiness in the paradise
O! you clouds of the sky decorated by
the brightest, golden colour I have even seen,
Teach me to be respectful like you
So that I will put on a satisfying and
happy face.”

Shitala, being the eldest, loves her two sisters Kortimai and Syntiewbon very much. She spends most of her time playing and joking with them. However, despite her love for them she dares not confide her love-affair with Sliang Mawpun to them. Her sisters too love and admire her very much. They like and enjoy her company.

The servants and maid-servants too admire her, they often talk about her among themselves. They praise her beauty and dignified personality. She, too, in turn loves them and feels pity for Baieid Donskhor because he is dumb.

Unlike other young girls or the locality, Shitala is rich, beautiful and possesses a dignified personality. She feels very uncomfortable about herself for she is not free to mix up with the youths of the locality. She is very much depressed and often wonders how to break herself free from such a place. Her father too often reminds her and her sisters to think about other youngsters from high-class families like theirs. She cannot tolerate people who cheat on her.

Yet she is ready to forgive others' fault. She is an example of a typical Khasi woman in the society.

Another female character in the drama is Maibon Rani. She appears in Act I, Scene I of the drama. She is the wife of Syiem Sympa Sing and the mother of Shitala Koina. Kortimai and Syntiewbon. She is considerate, understanding, clever, intelligent and often helps her husband in his day to day activities by giving him some ideas on certain problems. She has an intuitive mind for she is the only one who feels that Baieit Donskhor is hiding his true character. Right from her first meeting with Baieit she confides to her husband that Baieit is not what he appears to be. She says.

...he paves his varied and mysterious
Thoughts into himself. I believe and I am
Scared to see clever man pretending
To be fools., No doubt such fool shall
Fill the world with astonishment.

All her prophecies turn out to be true in the end to the shock and astonishment of her husband and the people in the locality.

As a mother she is greatly concerned about her children's welfare. She often discusses her feelings with her husband who in turn tells her not to worry about them. On one occasion while she is expressing her anxiety about her children, her husband interrupts her by bringing another subject relating to his 'hima'. She gets furious with him and leaves him alone.

She is very particular about dignity and status. She is aware of the Syiem's position at home and in the durbar. At home she openly discusses family matters and the children. Once while she is discussing her daughters' problems, her husband by mistake starts talking about ka hima and its problems. Maibon Rani at once reminds him that the place is not a court room where he can discuss the problem concerning his subjects. She says.

...I came to discuss the family problems, not the state's problems. When you sit on the throne in front of your Myntri, you ought to think about the state's security and happiness but here at home, I expect you to concentrate on the children's welfare in life.

Maibon Rani has an acute mind and often tries her level best to explain and make her husband aware of the family affairs and their importance. She believes that it is only a home and family that can mould the lives of the people and that all good things and bad things begin from home. Yet she does not talk much. Baieit Donskhor realizes her being reticent when he says; "Ka Mahadei talks very less in front of the servants..." Sympa Sing, her husband, loves and adores her very much. He often recalls his first meeting with her and how he happens to get married with her and so on is always present in his memory.

Kortimai is another female character in the drama. She appears in Act I, Scene I page 8. She is the youngest sister of Shitala Koina. She is a good and lovable girl, possessing a good character yet she is talkative and talks freely whatever comes to her mind, Baieit Donskhor describe her thus :

"... She talks freely with disrespectful words, If the people hear her talk, no doubt they will Think that she is a chilly-seller at lewthymmai."

Syntiewbon is another female character in the drama. She is the youngest daughter of Maibon Rani and Sympa Sing and the youngest sister of Shitala Koina and Kortimai. She is simple-minded, innocent and very reserved. She too appears in Act I, Scene I. Baieit Donskhor describes her thus: "The youngest is a bit different. It may because she is in her teens. If I am a prophet I will say that she is the one who will get married first."

Meirisan is another female character in the drama. She appears in Act I, Scene I. She is the mother of Baieit Donskhor. She is very poor woman and feels pity for her only son who has to bear all the miseries of life. She cannot help alleviate her poverty and deprivation and therefore tells her son :

O, my most beloved son, I think we are
despised by the whole world. We are poor, we
are nobody – this is our reputation, we live
humbly and quietly – this is our way of life.
This, instead of making the rich feel pity for
us, makes them ignore us.

Her son Baieit Donskhor, after having faced many miseries, disasters and poverty, decides to go to the syiem by pretending that he is dumb yet good in manual work. He therefore insists that his mother goes and begs a job from the syiem and to tell him that her son (Baieit) is dumb yet very good in his work. At first Meirisan dares not accept his suggestion. After much persuasion on his part she decides to go and face the syiem come what may. She so skillfully persuades the syiem that he offers a job to her son. She returns to her village alone leaving behind her son in the lingsyiem. She repents for having done such injustice to the syiem and often broods over her mistakes. She reveals her anxiety and worries in her own words thus : “O Lord! Forgive me for my sins and misdoings that I, as a woman did. Prevent my son from going astray by revealing the truth and spoil my name

She shows her simple and god-fearing qualities in her prayers to God to guide her in the most miserable moments in her life. She recalls her happy days together with her son and regrets having sent him to work in a far off place. She feels very lonely without him and has no one to share her sorrows or happiness with. When her son came to visit her she cannot help telling him that she missed him very

much and what troubles her most is the fact that she is scared lest the syiem finds out the truth some day. On seeing his secured life, she is filled with complete happiness and blesses him to have a happy future life.

Other female characters in the drama are Thain, Risa, Swoin, Jrian and so on. They are the maid-servants working at lingsyiem. They are jolly and lovable women enjoying their stay at linsyiem. They are simple, innocent and lead a very happy life.

References :

1. P.E.Swer, *Ka Synkhong Jingtip*, "Ka Samla Rilum" Vol.III, 1960. p. 45.
2. -Do- p. 45.
3. -Do- p. 46.
4. -Do- p. 47.
5. -Do- p. 49.
6. S.J.Duncan Hoojon, *Ka Tiewlarun*, p. 5
7. -Do- p. 22
8. -Do- p. 6.
9. -Do- p. 15.
10. -Do- p. 74.
11. Ka Tiewlarun is an extremely flower mostly found in the forest.
12. -Do- p. 79.
13. -Do- p. 87.
14. -Do- p. 22.
15. -Do- p. 22

16. -Do- p. 29.
17. -Do- p. 29.
18. -Do- p. 55.
19. -Do- p. 56.
20. -Do- p. 53.
- 21.. S.J.Duncan Hoojon, *Phuit Ka sabuit bad kiwei kiwei ki khana*.
"Ka Akor Kaba Tam", 1968. p. 58.
22. -Do- p. 58.
23. D.S.Khongdup, *U Baieit Donshkor*, pp. 5-6.
24. -Do- Act. I. Sc. I. pp. 9-10.
25. -Do- p. 9.
26. A flower of a certain plant of a yellowish colour resembling that
of a pine-apple, which is used by women to decorate their hair.
27. -Do- p. 42.
28. -Do- p. 44.
29. -Do-
30. -Do- pp. 60-61.
31. -Do- p. 21.
32. -Do- p. 4-5.
33. -Do- p.43
34. -Do- p. 43
35. -Do- p. 43
36. -Do- p.11
37. -Do- p.26

CHAPTER – III

THE AGE OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The coming of the Britishers into the Khasi land and their intrusion into the social and cultural pattern of the Khasis' traditional way of life brought in its wake very many changes which imperiled the very social identity of the Khasi people as distinct from their neighbours. Through their ulterior motive was to dominate the Khasi people, the Britishers were successful in their sinister move to enter into treaties, agreements, engagements and the like with the rulers of the Khasi native states in accordance with the term of their subsidiary alliances initiated by Lord Wellesley. By 1867, all the Khasi princely states had accepted British sovereignty by retaining their position as semi-independent states.

At the initial stage the Britishers were successful in introducing their law-court system in the British areas known as Khasi-Jaintia Hills. Particularly in the Shillong station, but excluding the Khasi States area. The emergence of Shillong as the District Headquarter of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills in 1864 and as a provincial headquarter in 1874 attracted large numbers of outsiders like clerks, officers of the British administration, lawyers and tradesman. The establishment of the law courts in Shillong and Jowai was responsible for the misinterpretation of a variety of customary laws because of the fact that there were no Khasi Muktiars or Lawyers to present any case in its proper perspective. Hence the Sylheti lawyers dominated the scene in the courts of law and it appears that the law courts accepted

their interpretations and the law courts delivered judgements accordingly. In the interpretation of these customary laws, the role of the maternal uncle was set aside. But the role of the youngest female member of the family came into prominence to the disadvantage of their elder sisters.

Again it was during the same period that the Christian missionaries dug their roots firmly in the Khasi land. In this connection we can say that there is nothing wrong with Christianity; but what the missionaries taught during the nineteenth century was against the fundamental beliefs of the Khasis, against the cultural and social patterns of the Khasi society and even against the age-old beliefs in the everlasting tenets of the matrilinealities. These missionaries through their preachings divided the members of the clan in such a manner that those converted to Christianity were not expected to pay reverence to their maternal and paternal uncles but were expected to pay high regards to the missionaries and to the leaders of the church. Hence the fundamental rituals of the Khasis came tumbling down. It is unfortunate that the Khasis who were known for their bravery, sincerity complex and slavery. Many educated Christians would go to the extent of having no courage to use their own clan name, but instead they began to anglicise their clans' surname, and they even went to the extent of adopting western surnames. It will not be wrong to say in conclusion that the Khasi people had to undergo a period of identity crisis till the last decade of the nineteenth century.

It is interesting to note that during the last phase of the nineteenth century there was a revivalism headed by an organization known as Seng Khasi. But before the Khasis could rediscover themselves fully, the first World War took place which led to world wide economic depression and brought in its wake a battalion of miseries, frustration and despair which led the people to look upon

monetary gain as the sole value of human life. Although the Khasis did not know much of such a world-wide depression yet it resulted in inflation and rising prices of essential commodities. This was followed by the gold crisis of the thirties in the British empire which led to further inflation. Last of all the Second World War which lasted from 1939 to 1945 was responsible for bringing about all kinds of social evils as a result of which many countries of the world have fallen into a death-trap. It was during that period that Khasi life in the urban areas began to deteriorate and all kinds of social evils such as gangsterism, Vandalism prostitution, gambling, arson, looting and dacoity began to spread. It is against this historical background that I have to describe Khasi woman as depicted by major Khasi authors from the Second World War period onwards. Let my proceed with the discussion by referring to *Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*, "Snare for men" written by Peace Roy Pariat, *Ki Mad Ia Ka Shillong* a novelette written by S.J. Duncan Hoojon, *Ka Khun Ba La Jah*, *Ka Bih*, *U Raimon Bad Ka Dashisha*, *U Mooiong* the novel written by Leslie Hardinge Pde, Donbok T. Laloo's novels *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew Part-I and II*, *Ka Kammiet Part-I and II*, Pascal Malngiang's novels *Banieid Ka Pynmong and Phi La Kular*, and *Ka Dak Bangla Part-I and II* written by Remy Phankon. Peace Roy Pariat has written an innumerable plays namely, *Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*, *Ka Rhah*, *Na Nongkyndong Sha Sor*, *Bor Ksuid Pyrshah Bor Blei*, etc. Unfortunately there are no written records of his life. He is said to have lived such a cloistered life that even his family members cannot give a clear picture of him. He lived at Wahingdoh, a locality of Shillong. He had no permanent profession, yet he knew all sorts of trades such as carpentry, dry-cleaning etc. As a man who loved stage-plays he had a long stint with Native Club and Seng Khasi which evidently had taught him the art of performances. Thus through practical experiences he gradually started his writing career. As a dramatist he strikes a

balance between two levels of understanding and intelligence. He is a born and talented dramatist who believes that “a play presents the society on the stage”. Further he opines that “the stage is the mirror of human life”.

The play *Shangkhawiah Ki Rang* is divided into five acts. The story is about the social evils and demoralization prevalent in the Khasi society after the Second World War. Madina, the heroine of the play is a call-girl who has left her village long ago and come to Shillong to earn her living. Having no education she finds no job and thus takes up prostitution as her profession. In order to earn quick money with the help of some supernatural element given by Shamarkhan she trapped many rich gentlemen like Suraji, Jan the only son of a rich Zaminder, Spono Suraiji, after having a drink given by Madina, forgets his home. He even goes to the extent of chasing away his young niece, Jani from his house just because she refused to go with him to Madina's place. Luckily Jani meets Thakur who takes her to Spono's place. With Spono's consent Jan is married to Jani and Jani gives birth to a baby boy. Jan goes to Madina's place in search of Suraiji, his father-in-law, only to get himself hooked by Madina's supernatural power. He too forgets his beloved wife and begins loving Madina instead. His father, who has seen his son's misconduct, puts it in writing that all his property shall go to his grandson. Jan is shocked and furious to learn all this. He puts the blame on his wife and threatens to leave her. Jani and her son leave home in search of peace and tranquility. In the meantime Suraji who now realises Madina's cheating wants to take revenge on her. On the way to Madina's place he meet a pilgrim who instructs him how to release Jan from Madina's grip by a water-medicine. Further he instructs him to splash the water-medicine on Madina and Shamarkhan. Thus, both a tragic end, Jan and Suraji return home and thus the family members are reconciled in the end.

Madina is the main heroine of the play. She first appears in Act I Scene I. Through her conversation with Suraji we learn that she has known him for sometime. On seeing Suraji's niece Jani, She pities her since she has lost her parents during childhood. She even invites her to her place with her uncle. This reveals Madina's sly character. Jani dislikes Madina and therefore ignores her invitation. Suraji gets furious with his niece and scolds her for disrespect towards Madina. Jani replies back saying, "Why do you introduce me to that woman Madina? The destroyer: the man's supplier!" According to Jani, Madina a call-girl by profession is only after their rich. She says "She calls only rich people who have money. Do you think she will accept poor people." Madina is ready to do anything in order to earn money. She has no feeling and sympathy for any one. This revealed in her readiness to give up Suraji as soon as she get hold of a necklace made of precious stones. She tells Shamarkhan whom she considers her god-father that she will soon get rid of him. "I have nothing to do with him; as soon as I get a necklace of precious stone, *I will deep my left hand and he will lose his colours.*" Suraji gives the necklae to Madina and she offers him a drink. As soon as he has it he starts hating her and once again he regains his memory. He blames Madina for destroying his life. Madina, however, blames his instead saying "Did I do anything to you? You yourself love me. I did not pull you with my hands. I cannot stop you. Stay or go so as you wish."

Madina is not God-fearing and has no conscientious feelings for others. She feels proud of her supernatural powers and feels great whenever she succeeds in her plans and proudly declares "The world belongs to Madina."

Madina hooks Jan, who comes in search of Suraji, his father-in-law, by giving his a magical drink. She is a woman who has lost her sense and conscience. Does, a gambler who often visits

her place, considers her position inferior to that of the Municipal dustbin.” Noren, Does’ friend too compares her to “a fairy of the rivulet at Umsohsun, that gathers all the dust and dirty drainage water.”

Madina is penitent at the end of the play. We cannot help admiring the good and great qualities in her. She herself realizes her misdeeds and as a woman whose fate has been doomed advises her friends, Does and Noren to repent for their past misdeeds. She tell them “If you believe in what I say, go and be good people, stay away from evils”. This shows her greatness as a woman. She wants to prevent others from evil and therefore we cannot condemn her because she reveals the life she has lived. She is a courageous woman who never hides her true colours.

Another female character in the play is Jani. She is a simple, innocent girl who loves and respects her paternal uncle very much. Suraji, to her is both her father and mother since he is her guardian since her childhood because her parents are dead. She first appears in Act I, Scene. I of the play. She is “good looking”, as described by Kumar a character in the play. Madina in her first encounter with Jani invites her to come and have fun in her place. Jani, however, who has heard about Madina’s antecedents turns down her invitation saying. “Thank you very much, Kong Madina. I have no urge for enjoyment. You can have fun with my uncle...” Her rude answer is an index of her courage and forth rightness as an innocent girl. She cannot stand evil. Suraji tries ways and means to instigate her to accompany hi on his visits to Madina’s places. Jani is firm and pleads with her uncle not to force her to go with him. Her uncle get furious with her and cheases her away from his place empty handed. Yet Jani is not scared for she believes that God is there to guide her to the right path saying “I shall go uncle, I shall beg but it does not matter. God and the world shall know that I am gentle.”

She is God-fearing and believes that God sees through the human heart and nothing is secret or hidden from Him.

Jani inherits her father's character. Suraji, her uncle in his failure to make her go with him to Madina's place remarks about her close resemblance with her late father saying "... She is very much like her father." She possesses a very good character. She is of the opinion that even elders commit mistakes in life. It is, therefore, the duty of the younger ones to point out their mistakes. She does so to her uncle by telling him: "Uncle don't be furious, why do you show your anger? How can we talk then? A father ought to teach his children in a cool way. Children often commit mistakes. But uncle, in present times you will find many children whose father is addicted to drinking, gambling and so on. Therefore the children are forced to chide even their father."

Jani after running away from her uncle's place, has to undergo several hardships in life. Yet she does not lose confidence in herself and God. Luckily she meets Thakur who is on the look-out for a maid-servant and who is given the job of a maid-servant at Sopono's place. Sopono in his very first meeting with her is very much impressed by her good and polite character. He cannot help praising her. "... I have never seen an innocent, holy and simple woman like her..." Suraji her uncle, too, realizes her goodness and regrets what he has done to her saying "... Jani my most holy daughter, where are you? Forgive me..."

As a wife she is dutiful and respects and admires her husband very much. Her affection for her husband prevents her from revealing his misdoing to her father-in-law. She is kind and forgiving. She is ready to reconcile with her husband when he returns to her. She also reconciles with her uncle in the end in spite of all his past misdeeds. The name 'Jani' suits her very much. Suraji tells Medina the true meaning of the name – Jani. This name was given by her

father who said: "The name Jani I shall call, and Jani shall be perfect, beautiful, cool, innocent, delicate like this precious stone. Her life is more precious than the stone itself..."

Simon Jenkin Duncan Hoojon proves himself an able short-story writer. His stories are very amusing and capture the reader's imagination. Readers sometime wonder at the reality of life mentioned by the author.

In a novelette 'Ki Mad Ia Ka Shillong', the writer reveals the factual truth present in each and every individual's mind. The school-master is admired and respected by all, especially by the students, he has certain defects. This is so because he is only human. The school-master, Mr. Rishon, like all the school-teachers encourages his students to do well in their studies in order to go up in life. However, he misleads them by saying that in doing so they will be free from hard-labour like toiling the land, sowing seeds and so on. Thus the students as they progress in studies, neglect all the household chores and no longer help their parents in cultivation which is the only means of livelihood. U Kyrhai and ka Rimai are examples of such students. U Kyrhai is the eldest son of the family and ka Rimai is his youngest sister. Both of them, after finishing their lower primary examination, leave their villages and come to Shillong, the state capital in search of livelihood. When they reach there, they realise that the education they have received is inadequate. Thus they are obliged to grab any job available to them. Being innocent they are misled by the town-people and became involved with dacoity, theft and prostitution.

Duncan has keen understanding of women. He feels that they are vulnerable and on the whole a sadly exploited lot. They succumb to miseries and obstacles. Ka Rimai is an example of such woman who are victims of circumstances. Yet because of her courage, perseverance and truthfulness, she is able to find a way through the hardships of life.

Ka Rimai is the only daughter in the family. Like all the girls in the village, she obedient, simple minded and hard-working. She enjoys nature and its surroundings. Her life suddenly changes when ka Deribon comes to fetch her from the village by promising her parents that she will send her to school in Shillong. However, Deribon does not keep her promises. She tries to tempt Rimai into prostitution instead. Despite several attempts she fails to tempt her. At last Rimai, who has now fully understood her plan, seeks the help of an old lady of a nearby village who at present is residing at Shillong. The old lady takes pity on her innocence and helplessness as a girl. She tells her to return to her village at once, for there is no school admission during that period. Ka Rimai, out of desperation and shame, does not have the courage to go back. She therefore pleads with the good old lady to find her a job of a maid-servant with a good family in Shillong. Thus she goes to stay in the house of Mr. Modring.

Rimai does not stay there for long. During her stay there she comes to know Mr Robin Das, a Bengali man who used to pay frequent visits to Mr. Modring. One day she meets him on her way to the market. He invites her for tea in a restaurant. After much persuasion on his part, she accepts his offer. After tea, he insists to meet her the following day but she refuses. After four days or so, he meets her again, invites her for tea to the same restaurant. This time he asks her to go to a movie the following day. That night ka Rimai tells her master that she will go out the following day to meet her village friends. The master, ignorant of her secret, allows her to go. She goes to meet him at the appointed time and place. She really enjoys her first meeting with him. Further, to win her love and confidence he showers gifts and presents on her. She is therefore hooked by his love. After her third meeting with him, she surrenders herself completely to him. Finally, she decides to stay with him and no longer returns to her work.

A week after her stay with her husband, she sees her father passing by her house. Her father out of excitement, shouts at her. Her conscience gets the better of her that and she does not dare to respond to him. She feels guilty and awkward to have deceived her innocent parents. Her father, ignorant of her misdeeds, keeps on calling her name. Robin calls the police and accuses him of theft. The police take the poor man to the police station and keep him in the lock-up. Rimai on knowing this feels more guilty than ever. She immediately goes to the police station to bail her father out. Her pleadings are in vain, for the police already know her bad reputation as a woman. She does not know what to do. At last she sees Mr. Ken, a man from her village she summons courage to face the truth and tells him everything about her present quandary. She tries to escape from him, but her husband, Robin Das calls the police and thus her father is taken to the police station and charged with theft. At this juncture. Ka Rimai shows her courage to face the truth unflinchingly. It is this quality in her that makes her great and admirable.

Rimai's suffering is not brought about by external forces. It is her guilty conscience that keeps troubling her. Her situation is tragic because she is at war with the society and its strict conventions.

Another female character in the novelette is Deribon. She is from the same village as Rimai. She is one of the youth who leaves her village in search of new livelihood in Shillong. She has left the village a long time back. She is a prostitute who has stayed at Calcutta for more than two years. Her bad reputation as a woman of loose character is known to all. Almost all men know every detail of her personal life.

The author, however, fails to give a detailed account of her life, like the reason that makes her leave the village. Whether she leaves the village out of her own sweet will or because some one

property of Nabon. Nabon's brother appears on the scene and discards her. Having been driven away from there Hunmon faces shame and dishonour. Her child from Juban also dies in hospital. At last she returns to her mother in the village with repentance. There she meets her old friend and lover. Olmand and once again they start their old affair.

Hunmon is the eldest daughter of Krim and Jiedmon. Hunmon is beautiful in her own natural way. Pde describes her beauty saying that her face is so pretty as if she has just been 'peeled'. Her eye-lashes seem as if they are artificially painted, and her lovely eyes seem as if they are dreaming. She has a pointed nose. The novelist dwells on her long, slender legs. The yellowish colour of her legs is similar to that of a ripened plantain.

Almost all the youngsters who happen to see her consider her as the most beautiful girl they have seen. They are attracted to her beauty and want to possess her. Olmand, her lover is struck by her beauty. He is drawn towards her right from the first time that he meets her in school at Pariong village. In the letter proposing to her he expresses his inability to forget her beautiful face. In his first meeting with her he confesses that he love her and says: "There are beauties that one can buy, and some other that can borrowed. But God has given you perfect beauty."

Hunmon's beauty is heightened by her fastidiousness in dress Nabon, her mistress treats her as her own daughter and provides her with beautiful dresses that a young girl of her age craves for. Nabon's friends are struct by her beauty and they often say among themselves: "Where from has Nabon brought such a beauty." She then meet Junom at Shillong and gets involved with him sexually Circumstances and fate plays a cruel role in her life and she loses her natural and good character by losig her virginity.

Hunmon is divided between two worlds “urban ad rural. As one who belongs to the rural society, she is simple, innocent, gentle, loyal and intelligent. She knows nothing of deceit. As soon as she comes to contact with urban life, the good qualities of her character seem to vanish. The town people misguide her and gradually she makes one mistake after another. She forgets about herself, her mother and sister. She never wants to recall her village or her family. This happens to each and every village girl for they are ashamed of their origins.

She wins love and admiration from all her friends, neighbours and maid-servants, especially from her parents and her mistress Nabon. After her six months stay with Nabon, she is entrusted with keys and money as she is considered as the heiress. She is reliable and therefore Nabon never questions her about expenditure. She spends money at her free will, yet she never spends lavishly. She preserves her dignity and is never carried away by pride. It is natural for a young girl like Hunmon to be ambitious. Misguided by her friends, she decides to become the heiress after the sudden death of her mistress Nabon. Her mother on learning of Nabon's death writes a letter to Hunmon instructing her to return to the village at once. She seeks advice from her friends as to how she can own the place and wealth of ther mistress.

Her mother grows impatient at her silence and therefore come to Shillong in search of her. On finding the place, she asks a maid-servant about Hunmon. The servant informs her that Hunmon is Nabon's heir and has no relatives so far Jiedmon (Hunmon's mother) calls out her daughter's name. Hunmon on hearing the shouting, opens the door and to her great shock and disappointment finds that it is her own mother, dressed in shabby clothes. The sight terribly shakes her. Not wanting to reveal her origin in front of her friends, she denies the fact that she is her own mother. She proudly declares

that she knows nothing about her. On hearing this her mother gets furious and with a pang in her heart threatens that henceforth she will not accept her as her daughter. Eventually Hunmon is driven away from Nabon's place by Nabon's brother Burom Manik. She has to face the world alone. At this stage, she suffers greatly. Her mental suffering is so great that she is not able to forgive herself anymore. She falls ill after the birth of her child and returns to her village with full repentance. She asks her mother's forgiveness and realizes that her only friend on earth is her mother in good days or bad.

Hunmon believe hat the world is a materialistic one and that nothing in it is eternal, when she says:

Honour, where are you now? You robbed this poor girl so well. You tempted and pleased the people of this world with artifice and took away everything, leaving nothing to protect one's dignity."

Another female character in the novel is Jiedmon, Hunmon's mother and the wife of Krim. She is a dutiful wife and mother. She wakes up every morning and prepares breakfast for her husband and children. She then follows her husband to the fields and helps him with the cultivation.

She is very religious woman. She talks very little and never argues with anyone. Though fully aware of others' mistakes yet she pretends not to notice them. She always teaches her children to offer thanks to the Almighty every day and she often prays that her children are never spoilt. Her family subscribes to the Christian faith. She never talks against any religion, but she is always strong in her own faith.

She has deep feeling. This is evident from the tears falling from her eyes just before her husband's dead body is brought home by the villagers.

On seeing her husband's dead body she collapse out of shock and disbelief. Se feels that God sends punishment to her for the sins not committed by her.

She never forgets her husband and is full of gratitude and love for him. After losing her husband another obstacle comes in her way. Her 'Kurs' betray her by intending to grab the paddy fields that belong to her. However, she never complains against their deceit. She believes that 'rightousness always prevails at the end'. She leads a very hard life and yet is happy and content.

Jiedmon's health declines with the passage of time, yet she never loses heart. She tries way ad means to educate her children. She loves her children very much and has a great responsibility towards them. Therefore, when her friend Nabon a rich lady from Shillong expresses her intentions of educating her eldest daughter Hunmon, she is pleased with the offer. She wants her daughter to be free from hard labour and therefore accepts the offer.

However, her dream do not come true. Nabon dies suddenly and with her death, Hunmon's life changes completely. Hunmon is no longer simple and innocent as before. She is now full of pride and goes to the extent of denying her own mother. Jiedmon's heart is torn apart. She grows so furious with her daughter that she threatens her that henceforth she will not be accepted as her daughter.

In the last part we find that Hunmon's repentance eases her mother's heart and once again they are reconciled.

Ka Bih is a novelette written by Leslie Harding Pde, published in 1972. The plot is concerned with prostitution. Ka Melina is the daughter of a prostitute. She is only 11 years old at that time. U Donkupar, the hero of the novelette, meets Melina while he is returning home from college. He takes pity on seeing her poor condition. He asks her whether she is going to school or not. On hearing her

negative reply because her mother cannot afford to send her to school, he extends his help to put things right. Thus Melina joins school. However, Don cannot prevent Melina from going astray. He decides to marry her in order to save her from prostitution. But it is too late already. Her mother has forced her into it in his absence. Melina commits suicide at last out of shame and desperation.

Melina is depicted as an innocent and simple young girl who is misled by her own mother a prostitute by profession. The novelist through this character intends to pin-point the social evils of the modern (Khasi) society at large. Women are seen to be the victims of social changes. Because of their helplessness and weakness they are suppressed and victimised.

Melina is beautiful in her own simple way. The novelist describes her beauty thus:

Melina grows older with the passage of time. It is during this time that Donkumar notices a change in her appearance, for she has attained her youthfulness. Her face as it is, is pretty though she cannot be classed as the prettiest. Her legs, her hands and her physique is in accordance with her face and height. In short, if dressed up in dresses called 'mods' she can beat any girl in town. As a poor girl, her beauty is beyond explanation.

Melina is very intelligent and very good in her studies. She gets double promotion in her examination. Donkumar, her friend and helper notices her intelligence through the letters that she writes to him.

As a young girl she is very ambitious. However, her ambition remains unfulfilled because of circumstances.

She cannot retain her good qualities for long. Like all the other young girls of her age, she cannot fight against the temptations that she comes across. Her mother persuades her to accept gifts and presents from those men who pay visits to her. She (mother) further

fools her saying that she will soon get married to one man. Not realizing what is happening to her, she is hooked and thus loses her virginity. With much difficulty she escapes from the man's house, supposed to be her husband. She flees to Donkumar for help and confesses everything to him. She shows her bravery and honesty at this point. Without any hesitation she face truth and reality.

However, Donkumar instead of extending his help to her, sends her back to her mother. He promises to marry her as soon as he comes to her place. He is not able to do so for he falls ill during that period. The letter that he writes to her (explaining his sudden illness) does not reach her. The letter is read by her mother, who keeps the contents and the letter to herself. She (mother) then tries her best to trap her into prostitution. At last, Melina who has lost hope and confidence in her lover, Donkumar and herself takes the initiative and ultimately becomes a prostitute. Don reappears before her and to his dismay finds that she has become a different woman altogether. Melina begs his forgiveness and explains everything to him through her letter. Unable to face the world any longer, she commits suicide at Nanpolok (Ward's lake).

U Raimon bad ka Dashisha is another novel written by L.H. Pde. It was published in 1980 The novel deals with the malpractices present in modern times in the Khasi families with regards to the distribution of wealth. Ka Dashisha is the only daughter of ka Jngen. She has a maternal uncle called Arbor. Arbor and his youngest sister Tngen belong to a very rich family.

Arbor already has his own family and so as his sister. Before his parents died, they divided their wealth between the two. But Jngen being the youngest daughter, (as sanctioned by the Khasi custom) inherits a larger share than her brother. Arbor, being a man of modern times, does not believe in this traditional Khasi custom. His greed and dissatisfaction lead to the conflicts in the novel. Arbor's

wife and children are spend thrift. Therefore, despite the large amount of wealth that he inherits from his parents he becomes bankrupt. The cars that he owns are hypothecated by a bank. Unable to pay the loan taken from the bank, he decide to secretly sell a plot of land at Umran village which belong to his sister. He does this by forging a Patta. On knowing this his sister goes to discuss, the matter with him. She is driven away from his place with a threat. In total disbelief and shock Ingen walks her way back home. Before entering her compound, she is struck by a speeding car and dies. She instructs her daughter, Dashisha to be careful in her dealings with her maternal uncle in future. Dashisha, ignorant of her uncle's intentions in confused. Her will power comes to her aid. With the help of some experienced lawyers she gets a succession certificate to all her property from the court. Her uncle on learning this gets very furious with her. He tells her to hand all the documents to him. On her refusal to do so, he beats her up. From that day onwards, Dashisha is left all alone to struggle for her life and faces many obstacles in fighting with her uncle.

Dashisha is the only daughter of Ingen. She is humble and good. The novelist describes her character in this way.

Ingen's daughter, Dashisha is a very good girl. She looks after the household work. She hardly meets her mother, except at night. Though belonging to a well-to-do family, and provided with many maid-servants who attend to all her needs, she never stays idle. When she is taking her matriculate examination, she finds that she has attained her puberty. However, she is not conscious about herself.

Though young in age, yet she is brave. This is noted in her courageous spirit shown on the sudden death of her mother. She maintains her family's wealth and prestige by going to the court and obtaining succession certificate in order to protect her own rights. It is uncommon and unexpected for a girl of her age to do so.

She possesses a strong intuition. Though she is ignorant of her maternal uncle's motives, yet she never trusts him. Her suspicion is justified because he demands the property documents from her. On her refusal to hand the documents over, he beats her up and threatens to kill her.

Besides being brave and intelligent she is beautiful too. Her beauty is described by the novelist thus:

There are women who look attractive when viewed from a distance. But when viewed closely one often gets bad dreams. Yet this girl who has untidy hair, when you closely examine her, she yet looks extremely beautiful.

Raimon, her lover, falls in love with her at first sight. He describes her beauty in these words:

"I examined her and saw that right from her toe upto her thighs, she seems to have been sculptured by a professional sculptor. Michaelangelo, a great sculptor will be shocked to see her beauty. I guess any man who happens to see her will not be able to control himself".

The drivers who kidnapped her are amazed to see that:

"thought she is mad yet she is extremely beautiful. Unlike other mad people, she never maintain cleanliness, she dressed neatly with old dresses. She wears a mini skirt with a long jainkyrshah over it reaching her toe. Whenever the wind blows, or when she sit casually, one can see her well-shaped and smooth legs."

Raimon regards her as the most beautiful girl he has ever seen when he declares: "I am not mistaken if I say that you are the most beautiful girl especially when you are well-dressed."

She falls in love with her own beauty reflected in the mirror. She is admired by almost all her friends and neighbours. Her cousin, Ka Daiamon cannot help admiring her beauty. She often says to herself "If only I possess such rare beauty people will admire me especially with the education and position that have as a doctor.

Another female character of the novel is Daiamon. She is the only daughter of Arbor and Sibon. She studies medicine at Dibrugarh. She is clever and finds no difficulty in getting through her 1st year M.B.B.S.

Besides being clever, she is beautiful too.
Her body is slender and slim, agreeable with her face .. When she dresses up in a 'lungi' with her boycut hair-style, she looks like 'Miss Kantaralanakul Pimpa', a beauty from Thailand.

Her beauty is heightened by her fastidiousness in dress. She has countless numbers of imitation ear-rings and ear-tops which she matches with the different dresses that she dons. She is very particular about her dress . Whenever she is in a classroom or in a ward in the hospital she will wear only a jainsem.

Her life-style is different from that of other Khasi students studying medicine. She imitates the life styles of Anglo-Indians. As a result of which, she has very few Khasi friends. She loves the company of people from other communities. She likes eating outside. She often eats at Elora hotel near the market at Dibrugarh. Whenever she goes there with her friends, she likes to show off and laughs loudly. It seems as though she owns the hotel.

However, she has one good trait in her character Unlike her brother, she loves, respects and obeys her parents. She is ready to do anything that her parents ask her to do. Thus her parents are very pleased with her actions. She is very considerate. She studies hard in order to repay her parents for the hardships and trouble they go through for her sake.

She is industrious by nature. She is not able to complete her final examination since she fails in two subjects: Pathology and Surgery. It takes her six months more to pass in Pathology and after three attempts she passes Surgery. She spends another two years to specialise in Senior Housemanship in 'anasthesiology'. Despite the hardships that she undergoes she does not lose confidence in herself.

Daiamon proves to be a strong character. This is evident in her ability to stand against her mother's instigation to kill her cousin, Dashisha by injecting poison to her. She is confused and does not know what to do. She is torn between her loyalty towards her mother and her loyalty to her profession. However, her conscience gets the better of her and at last she succeeds in overcoming the temptation.

Like all young girls of her age, she loves day-dreaming. She admires Dashisha, her cousin very much. She often wonders what it would be like if she possesses her beauty and wealth.

Sibon is another female character of the novel. She is depicted as a cruel woman who instigates her husband to take possession of his sister's wealth in order to fill her purse. She goes to the extent of directing her own daughter to kill Dashisha who is under her daughter's care. She is ready to do anything in order to achieve what she wants.

As a mother, she has no concern for her children. As a wife, she is too domineering. Her husband is just a 'provider' whose sole

duty is only to provide her with wealth and possessions. She does not respect him at all.

She is described as a 'devil' and a 'crow' whose main role is to cackle and create confusion. She loves gambling, roaming etc. She has no time for anyone, she spends most of her time in outings.

She like people to think of her as a beauty queen and a young girl. Thus in order to attract people's attention she dresses up with the latest dress material available.

In short she is proud, self-centred and egoistic in nature. She is also suspicious and believers in witch-doctors.

Tang Ma Phi Khun Baieit is another novel published in 1984 by the same novelist. The story is about the sudden death of Bianglang's wife, Melamon. With the help of Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh, Balari succeed in administerring poison to Melamon. She is deeply in love with Bianglang and wants to draw his attention to herself. She treats his daughter, Wandashisha with great love and affection. Bianglang who is fully absorbed in his political career pays little attention to her. He is a candidate for the Mawprem constituency from a regional party. With great struggle on his part and his party-men he becomes a successful candidate. Now that he is free, he is able to pay attention to Balari. However, their love ends abruptly. Balari cannot forget what she had done to Melamon. Biang, too, is carried in his dream to his wife's graveyard. Biang, now fully occupied in his political career, neglects Balari. Balari out of shame and desperation sets off to Calcutta in search of mental peace. She cannot stay there for long; she comes back to Shillong and finds to her dismay, that Bianglang has developed an intimacy with his P.A. Patricia. The love affair of Balari and Bianglang ends tragically Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh envies Balari's affair with Bianglang. He wants to possess her. Biang happens to see his design and threatens to

fight him. However, he loses confidence in Balari and dismisses her as a flirt. Balari, unable to hear this any longer decides to commit suicide. In her suicide note she confess everything. Dr. Pradip Das is imprisoned. Bianglang is left alone in complete darkness. His only support is his daughter, Wandashisha.

Balari is the heroine of the novel. She is from Mawsynram village, whose parents have come to reside in Shillong for business. Balari has finished her B.A. and further joins B.Ed in N.E.H.U.

Besides being rich, Balari is beautiful as well. The novelist describes her beauty in these words:

Her eye-lashes resemble the rainbow. Whenever, she talks or looks, one side of her eyelashes goes upwards. Her teeth though big in size yet are straight and white as shining plates. It is her teeth that attract Bianglang's attention especially when she smiles. Her lips are thick and not so well-shaped and if not painted well with lipstick are ugly. She has brown hair which is tossed beautifully by a strong wind. The hair matches her yellowish skin. She has a long nose. Her round face suits whatever earrings she puts on. Her body is tall slender keeping with the rest of her body. She has a deep husky voice resembling that of Usha Uthup or Karen Carpenter.

Bianglang, her fiance consider her a very beautiful girl when he says "Wow god, you look great, I worship this beauty Balari.

Dr Pradip Das Lyngdoh remarks on Balari's.

"Look at her Balari, with your beauty, what is it that I would not do for you..."

Ven Kalden, a gentleman from Norway falls in love with Balari on his first meeting with her in Calcutta. He expresses his love by asking for a date with her which she declines.

Besides being beautiful, she is sexy too. This is remarked by

one of her friend thus: “Oh Balari you look so sexy”.

Her beauty is heightened by fastidiousness in dress. During her evening walk in Calcutta she dresses herself in a black midi skirt with a maroon top and also uses a long muffler of the same colour as her top. She knows how to select dress materials which suit her best.

Balari is a lover of music and dance. She takes deep interest in listening to English and Hindi disco songs. She is a good dancer too. When she dance the tango with Von Kalden, a Norwegian, the viewers are absolutely thrilled.

Like many young beautiful girls, Balari is flirtatious by nature. However, she does not surrender herself to every man she meets. She preserves her virginity for the man she loves as she herself puts it. “I will give this body to the one who I will marry”. The only man whom she loves is Bianglang. Thus she is loyal towards her lover.

Balari’s refusal to Dr. Pradip’s proposal to marry her shows what a strong character she has. She does not want to marry a man she does not love. Dr. Pradip tries even to seduce her, but he does not succeed because of her resistance. She threatens him by saying, “You dirty blackmailer. I don’t care, you are not going to spoil my virginity.. come what may; I will preserve my self-respect whatever be the case.”

Balari repents for having administered poison to Melamon, Bianglang’s wife. She wished she had not committed such an act. She cannot forgive herself anymore. Whenever Wandashisha, Biang’s daughter recalls her dead mother and how she wishes to die like her in order to meet her again. Balari feel guilty for she is the cause of all the miseries. She suffers mentally, physically and cries bitterly. In the last part of her life she proves her greatness as a woman. She feels that no one can forgive her for what she has done to Melamon. She

takes a glass of water filled with 10 drops of poison thinking to herself that she cannot compare her dirty life with Melamon's innocence.

She therefore adds another drop of poison to her glass and drinks it. The last word that she utters shows how great she is for she is ready to face the rock bottom reality of life. She says:

“Melamon dies by taking 8 drops only. I am not good enough to make myself equal with this innocent woman.” Balari's death causes a great blow to Bianglang. Sometime he condemns her but most of the time he feels pity for her. However, one cannot help appreciating her greatness as a character is ready to expose herself without trying to hide everything.

Like all the other female characters, Balari is not free from the impersonal forces deciding her fate. She is a victim of fate and destiny and too weak to fight against it. Death puts an end to all her trials and tribulations.

Another female character present in the novel is Lena, a call-girl who lives in Calcutta. She is a Khasi girl from Shillong. She stays in Calcutta in order to earn her living through her profession. She thinks Balari is a fool to have rejected Von Kalden, a rich businessman from Norway who has fallen for her. On Balari's refusal to take him, she takes a chance and spends the night with him. She feels happy that he has paid her well.

She imitates the life of Anglo-Indians in Calcutta. She uses a strange accent in Khasi conversation. This is not uncommon among the Khasis who feel that they are superior in talking in this manner.

U Mooiong or The Black Gold is L.H. Pde's fifth novel. The story is about a person named Raplang, the only son of Sneng and Tngier who reside, at Nongkhroh village. Raplang is sent to school at a very early age. He studies in the village school till he

finishes class V. He is sent for higher studies to Shillong, the State capital and stays there all by himself. His father dies while he is studying, but his mother does not allow him to discontinue his studies. While he is doing his final year in the college, he falls in love with a beautiful Bengali girl, Kalpana Devi. Kalpana is the daughter of Dhaneswar Sarma, a contractor who resides at Oakland. Though a Brahmin he is liberal. Raplang's love for Kalpana grows and at last he decides to marry her as soon as he gets a job. Luckily Raplang gets a job and therefore both of them get married without the knowledge and consent of the girl's parents.

Kalpana dies while delivering a baby girl. Rap is left alone with the burden to look after the baby. He is lucky for his mother comes forward to assist him. After serving for some more months in the office, he faces many problems from his officers and colleagues in the corporation. Unlike him, they are corrupt. He leaves the job and applies for a bank loan to buy a truck for himself. He engages Mon Bahadur as his helper and starts the business right away. He carries loads of coal from Laitryngew to Gauhati. Soon he prospers in his business because he is diligent. An accident takes place. Raplang and Mon Bahadur while returning from Gauhati meet Khrawbor, a driver at Umran. Khrawbor envies Raplang's prosperity and wants to destroy him. He challenges to fight him. In the fight both Raplang and his helper, Mon Bahadur are seriously injured. They are hospitalised for sometime and this cause a great loss to Raplang's business. Luckily, Emhi Dkhar, a woman from Bapung, a place noted for coal, comes to meet Raplang and begs him to help her in the supply of coal. He accepts the offer and soon prospers in the business. He falls in love with her daughter, Dianghun, and marries her. He leads a very happy married life and the business too expands rapidly.

Pde present in his novel characters from different strata of Society. Dianghun Dkhar is portrayed as the only daughter of Datne

and Emhi Dkhar. Her father, Datne is a local tailor who earns at least twenty rupees a day. He spend half of his earning on drinks. He is more literate than his wife for he has finished his class IV. On seeing that his wife is busy with the supply of coal, he discards his job as a tailor and helps her in the business. However, he cannot check the drivers mischief and corruption.

Dianghun is a beautiful girl. Her lover and husband Raplang, on seeing her for the first time, is struck by her beauty. He thinks to himself “What a good-looking girl she is”.

The novelist describes her beauty:

“She has white teeth which she does not care to clean. Her lips are pretty. Her complexion is brownish. What is striking in her beauty more is the thick eye-brow. Her hair is black but it seems as if she never combs. Her age is around eighteen to nineteen years.”

Raplang is very much attracted with the way she sways her body while walking. He finds her more attractive and beautiful each day that he meets her. On one occasion while Raplang and her parent are discussing buying a new truck with the agents, Dianghun serves them tea and snacks. She takes a cup of tea and hands it to Raplang who gazes at her soft and beautiful hands covered with soft hair. He is very much impressed with the natural beauty that she possesses and thus out of shock and excitement the cup falls on his lap. At that moment Raplang experiences a peculiar sensation which he has never felt before.

Dianghun's beauty is heightened by her fastidiousness in dresses. She now looks more modern. On the house-warming day, she dresses herself in a jainpien and jainkyrshah (traditional dress of the Syntengs) with a black-checked blouse. She puts on golden

slippers and gold necklace on her neck. Her teeth are milky white especially when she puts on a pale pink lipstick. Raplang is tempted to hold her in his arms and kiss her.

Dianghun is strong-willed and would not let her heart rule her head. She is a complex character and does not jump at Raplang's proposal of marrying her without telling him the truth that she is a married woman with a son. Her husband is Kishan Rai, a Bihari fellow who has cheated her by robbing her of all the money and has left from his hometown for good. At first, Raplang on hearing that she is a married woman regrets having proposed, to her at all. However, he realizes that she is not to be blamed at all for what has happened to her in the past. This shows Diang's greatness as a woman. She is ready to face the truth though she is fully aware of the obstacle that she is going to face. She does not lose confidence in herself or in her parents. At last she overcomes the obstacles and leads a happy married life with Raplang.

As a wife she is loyal towards her husband. Raplang, as an educated man, wants to teach her the modern way of living. He teaches her how to dance, how to talk in English and how to behave in front of others especially in parties. He even asks her to discontinue breast-feeding the baby in order to maintain her beauty. She never questions anything and just obeys him. Soon Raplang realizes his mistakes and blames himself for teaching her all sorts of things in order to maintain a certain status in the society. Dianghun is a great and understanding woman. When she sees that her husband has started neglecting his business and often goes to Shillong to enjoy himself, she secretly tells her mother-in-law and put up a plan to win him back to his better self. Her cleverness and love succeeds and Raplang once again becomes a responsible and industrious father.

She is simple-minded, good-natured and humble. Though she belongs to a rich family, yet she never acts as a rich girl. She knows

that her husband is the one who manages the whole business that belongs to her. She respects and adores her husband and never utters a word against him or the business he manages. She has faith in him.

Another female character in the novel is Emhi Dkhar. She is the mother of Dianghun and wife of Datne. She resides at Bapung with her family. She owns a large portion of land, which produces a large amount of coal. Previously she has rented out a plot of land to a Bihari fellow, Kishan Rai, who is a fraud and run away leaving his wife Dianghun and son behind. He never comes back. Emhi Dkhar invites Raplang to help her in the supply of coal since he owns a truck which he drives himself.

Emhi Dkhar is a beautiful woman. Her beauty is described by the novelist in the following words:

“... She has a yellowish complexion and thick curly hair. Her oval face is pretty. She has a chunky eye-brow. Raplang as soon as he sees her can make out that she must have been very Beautiful in her youth in Khliehriat Bapung area.”

She is a very hard-working woman and her industry is shown in the weary and tired look in her face, though she is still young in age. Her husband is a local tailor who earns only twenty rupees a day and half of his earnings is spent on his drinks. Therefore, she has to work hard in order to support her family. Her husband helps her only when he learns that her business has prospered well. His help however cannot fully put a stop to the driver's mischief. At last Raplang's appearance in the business puts an end to the driver's waywardness. Emhi's business begins to expand rapidly and within a very short period she is able to buy a new truck, a beautiful house to live in, and plenty of money in.

Emhi proves herself to be a good mother. She has experienced deceit and cheating once from Kishan Rai, her son-in-law. He not only cheats and takes away all her wealth, he leaves her daughter with a broken heart. Thus when Raplang shows his fondness for her daughter, she takes all the precaution to allow him easy intimacy. She soon learns Raplang's good character. On seeing his loyalty and kind nature she gives her daughter's hand in marriage to him. Not only that, she gives him full power over her wealth and property and retires herself.

Donbok T. Laloo is a noted modern novelist of Khasi literature. He has written many novels. His major works are *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew Book I, II, Lasubon Book I, II, III and IV, Kam Miet Bynta I & II*. All his novels are based on the social, political and economic life of the Khasis in modern times. He finds the urban and rural life of the Khasis in a state of crisis. People's minds are confused because of the various problems they face each day. Therefore, out of desperation and helplessness they commit crimes and are involved in prostitution, gambling, theft, dacoity, drunkenness and so on.

Laloo has a keen understanding of women. This is because of his close and intimate relationship with them. He has an intuitive understanding of the female mind and is supremely explorative of female feelings and experiences. Therefore, in his novels he reveals the social evils present in the society which particularly affect women.

The novel *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew Book I & II* deals with the findings and researches of the author himself. S.S. Majaw consider D.T. Laloo "a realist of the century in Khasi literature." He further observes that the book *Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew* is a record presenting the truth of life as it is. "U Kynsai, the hero of the novel, is sent on a mission by a social association under the flag of 'Kymhun Sohpetbneng'. His mission is to find out the reasons that lead to the prevalence of social evils like drinking, gambling, murder, theft dacoity,

rape, abortion, prostitution and so on. The association instructs Kynsai to start his mission right away and give him a special watch word “Butter melts if kept near the fire” and it melts faster still if kept nearer.”

Kynsai’s mission is to find out the causes that compel young girls and even mothers to go into prostitution. As soon as he reaches Shillong, he goes to stay in a hotel as instructed by the association. Next morning he explores and locates the important places in Shillong town. Being a Sunday morning, a huge crowd in procession fills the roads on their way to churches. Kynsai is shocked to see all this. He also finds to his amazement that there are some localities in the town occupied by non-tribals. After the exploration, he goes to Lut Restaurant for lunch and there he happens to meet an old friend, Mr. Swait. With Mr. Swait’s help Kynsai is able to get to know two call-girls who regularly pay a visit to the Restaurant. Mr. Swait however cautions Kynsai to be tactful in his dealings with them so that he will know the facts of the matter. Kynsai learns from Mr. Swait that the call-girls do not like to be classed as prostitutes and usually they never give their real names. However, they never hide their titles or surnames. That’s because they are scared lest they commit incest. They are usually addressed by their common names at home like, Duh, Deng, Thei, Heh, Bih, Rit, Lud and so on.

Kynsai has gathered various information from various call-girls about the reasons that ultimately lead to prostitution. Mr. Swait informs Kynsai that there are two different types of standard call-girls. One group is known as Professional who come regularly. They are carefree, and are ready to accept any contract so long as they are well-paid. The other group belongs to the irregular call-girls. They never spend the nights in the hotels and are not ready to accept contract beyond a certain point.

Kynsai through his findings learns that a girl becomes a

prostitute out of compulsion. A maidservant of one household has to become a prostitute in order to maintain her standard of living. Her poor parents from the village collect all her monthly payments from the house-owner without giving her any pocket money or providing clothes and money for herself she goes for prostitution. Kynsai concludes that poverty is the major cause that leads to prostitution.

Sitalin, a call-girl is a married woman with one child. Her husband, though educated and having a good job commits adultery during her pregnancy. He leaves her and settles down with his second wife. Being poor, Sitalin is forced to be a prostitute to support herself and her child. She is a very beautiful woman. Kynsai, a person on a mission sent by Kynhun Sohpetbneng association, cannot help admiring her beauty. Sitalin's beauty is heightened by the way she dresses up. On the appointed day to meet Kynsai, she wears a light-pink coloured tight fitting sleeveless frock with reaching upto her knees. She puts on a white kashmiri shawl on her shoulders and matches her dress with pink ear-tops. Her face is well painted with lipstick and rouge. Her neck and legs are silky and fair, matching the high-heeled shoes that she puts on.

Duh, another call-girl, becomes a prostitute in order to support her sisters and brothers since her father is a drunkard, irresponsible towards his children. She has to discontinue her schooling when in class VI.

Another call-girl, Lyngkot, turns out to be a prostitute because she is used to sleeping with men from before. She is married to a jobless fellow who does not take care of her. In order to support herself and her husband she has to be a prostitute.

Judolin another call-girl. She does confess the reason as to why she turns out to be a call-girl. She is a very attractive woman.

Her beauty' s described thus: "She has a long face, and a pointed nose as if sculpted by a great sculptor, her red lips and cheeks throwing into relief her yellowish skin,..."

Her beauty is emphasizes by her skill in dressing. Like all the professional call-girls, she is modern and stylish. She loves changing her clothes regularly. The novelist describes her way of dressing up as follows:

... the rolled gold rings on her ears, moving like a pendulum adds more beauty to her bobbed and permed hair, the white sleeveless laced blouse, her permanent pleat black skirt, and her black high heeled sandals. The dresses she puts on add more beauty to her neck, hands and legs..."

Another call-girl whose name is not revealed in the novel, becomes a prostitute since she married a non-Khasi who left her to marry a girl from his own caste. In order to support her two children whom she keeps in a Boarding school, becomes a prostitute. We are ignorant of her educational qualifications and therefore from what she herself confess, she proves to be an easy-going woman who takes prostitution as an easy and the only means to livelihood.

Bih, another call-girl confesses that she belongs to a very rich family and her parents gave her so much freedom that she fell into bad company. When she was fifteen years old, she was married to a jobless handsome man. She love her husband very much and as soon as she delivered her first baby she went to settle down with him. Her husband is a lazy fellow who hardly goes to work. He is a drunkard who tortures her. He even beats her up during pregnancy. She willingly bears the consequences with the hope that he will mend his ways some day. She sells all her gold-ornaments gifted by her

mother in order to manage her household. At last after delivering her third child, unable to bear the hardships any longer, she runs away from him. She keeps her children under the loving care of her mother and eldest sister. As for herself she starts doing her small business by selling some goods to the officers on installment basis. But as bad luck will have it, her customers never clear their bills due to her. Her business flops. Having lost all the money in the business she has no way out but to turn to prostitution.

According to Lyngkot's Bih is the most desperate woman who is even ready to cheat anyone.

Kynsai come to the conclusion that there are various reasons that compel both married and unmarried women to prostitution. One of the major reasons is poverty. Married women turn out to prostitute because they are abandoned by their husband. Unmarried call-girls are usually villagers who come to Shillong town in quest of livelihood but are trapped into prostitution by some wicked people. Some others are orphans brought up by girl-suppliers and ultimately they are forced to prostitution right from childhood.

The most painful Phenomenon is to see girls who are kidnapped when very young. Even when they desire to run away or to free themselves from such profession, they cannot do so because they are kept under the strict custody of the guards who are gundas or dacoits. Out of fear for their lives they are forced to stay put against their wish.

However, there are call-girls who voluntarily enter the profession. These girls find great pleasure and enjoyment in the profession. They often go with men of high rank and position. They never ask for money but accept valuable gifts and presents. Sometimes when they are in need of money they just inform their clients and they immediately send them money or cheques.

In most cases, young unmarried girls become prostitutes because they desire to maintain a certain standard of living and expensive clothing. They are after comforts and luxuries and feel that prostitution is the only means to achieve all these.

Kam Miet Bynta I & II is another novel written by Donbok T. Laloo published in 1988. The novel deals with the duality of human character. The main plot of the novel is about Kupar's relationship with Rosil. Kupar, a young boy of 22 years of age, falls in love with Rosi, a school teacher of 30 years old. Despite the age difference, their love grows stronger each day. Rosi's father opposes her relationship with Kupar because of his antecedents. Rosi's father receives the information through a telephone-call made by Wilan who has delivered a child from him. Kupar had broken off the relationship declaring that the baby is not his. Rosi is now in a very critical position not knowing what to do. She loves Kupar very much and her love grows all the more strong on learning the truth about his past. However, she feels guilty for having to go against her father's wish. She asks Kupar to confess his past life. She learns that the baby is dead and that he is not its real father, since Wilan slept not only with him alone but with his two friends before his very eyes. Thus the two decide to continue their love-ties furtively.

The sub-plot in the novel is Wilan's and Rang's relationship. Wilan, ignorant of Rang's true life as a Police Inspector, uses him as her helper to take revenge on Kupar. Wilan's desire to take revenge on Kupar arises out of jealousy and hatred since he does not agree to be her husband. Rang who purposely comes to her for investigation accepts the offer to be her helper. Soon afterwards he wins her confidence and nocturnal business of supplying country liquor flourishes each day. Wilan is very much pleased with Rang's ability in the business. She is ignorant of his tricky intentions behind the scene. She confides to him about her intentions to take revenge on

Kupar. She falsely narrates the story saying that while she was studying in class X, Kupar asked her to fetch a book from his place. When she went there she found that his parents were out and that he was alone in the place. Instead of handing over the book, he forcibly seduced her despite her resistance. Soon she starts loving him. However, he cheats her taking her to Golflink with his friends. After having sex with her, he forces her to have sex with his friends too. She becomes pregnant and on learning this all of them ignore her. She is sure that the father of the child is Kupar and yet he does not accept her. His mother abuses her saying that she is a prostitute. The neighbours too point fingers at her especially because she is from a poor family. As for Kupar, no one dares say anything against him for she believes that this is because he is from a well-to-do family.

The Sub-plot coincides with the main plot in the end. Rang after having all the necessary informations needed for the plan, put up by the Police and Excise department, accompanies Wilan in the nocturnal operation as usual. This time he is fully aware that action is going to be taken by the Police and Excise Departments. He has full confidence that the two departments are going to round up the illegal liquor suppliers. Wilan, her gang and Jhem, the liquor merchant, are eventually caught and jailed.

Rosi is the heroine of the novel. She is the only daughter in the family and belongs to a very orthodox catholic family (p. 8). She and her family reside somewhere in Upper Shillong. This is evident from the description given on P. 18 about the journey undertaken by Rosi and Kupar on her way back home from the market.

Rosi is around 30 years of age. This is evident from her father's talk. "You are now in your thirties, I believe I need not remind you of that..."

Wilan's description (p.35) too shows that Rosi is not so young when she says to Rang "She is quite old in age, but is still single."

Kupar too reminds Rosi for her being older than him in age when he says to her "You are older than to me in age..."

Rosi is beautiful in her own way. She is the most beautiful girl in Kupar's eyes, her lover. This is evident in the letter he writes to her. The letter runs:

When I see you on your way to school daily, somehow god's power seems to imprint your beautiful face in my heart.

Rosi is a very religious minded girl. She has full faith and belief in her own religion. She prays to God everyday and offers thanks to Him before tea or meal. Kupar, her lover, is surprised to see her religiosity. Kupar belongs to traditional Khasi religion. Rosi invites Kupar to go to church with her, and to be converted to Christianity. Kupar, however, now fully in love with her, promises that someday he will become a Christian.

Rosi is an intelligent and bright school teacher. This is acknowledged by Kupar

"... you are a bright and clever teacher..."

Rosi is loyal and truthful to her lover and her parents. Her loyalty is divided into two different worlds – her loyalty towards her parents and her loyalty towards her lover. She is, therefore, placed in a very difficult position. In her love for her parents, she feels that she should obey and respect their wishes. Her father gets information through a telephone call that Kupar is a bad guy once married to Wilan, a prostitute. As a protective father, he does not want his only daughter to be involved with such a person. His only wish is to see his daughter prosper in life.

On learning the true life-history of Kupar, Rosi cannot help

feeling sorry for him. She feels that Kubar is blamed for no fault of his. She knows that rumours and scandals spread rapidly and how tormenting they prove to the people involved.

People usually are used to listening to rumours and scandals without trying to go into the heart of the matter. Rosi proves herself a strong-willed woman prepared to take risk for her lover's sake. Therefore, she secretly continues her relationship with Kubar against her father's wish. In the meantime, she is determined to guide Kubar not to do anything that might undermine people's confidence in his character. The task is not easy. She is scolded and abused by her parents and neighbours who condemn her for having an affair with an infamous boy. The neighbours call her a spinster who no longer gets any proposal because of her age and is, therefore, forced to marry a boy. Some others believe that she is after the boy's prosperity and wealth since he is from a rich family. All these accusations only strengthen her love for him. At last, her parents unable to tolerate it any longer threaten to throw her out of the house if she continues her relationship with him. Rosi confides in Kubar about her miserable condition and both of them decide to end their miseries by marriage. However, Kubar on knowing that Rosi is no longer a virgin gets furious and decides to break away from her.

Rosi suffers much indeed. She feels sorry for her bitter experiences. She has taken so much pain to mend Kubar's ways. Now at long last, instead of being relieved from the miseries she has to suffer immensely. She does not achieve what she really deserves. At last, unable to bear the ordeal any longer, she writes a letter to him telling him that she truly loves him. She further informs him that she has no wish to live any longer without his love.

Rosi is strong-willed and has great confidence in herself. She submits herself completely to her lover without expecting anything in return. This is evident in the last letter she writes saying that she

will continue to love him even if he betrays her. She further declares that she cannot bear to be humiliated and ill treated by a person she loves though she is prepared to accept the world's humiliation and ill-treatment. We find that her faith never flags her. Finally she wins back his love and get married with the consent of her parents.

Another female character in the novel is Wilan. She is from a poor family and has been a prostitute ever since her teenage days. She leaves school when in class X never to continue, her studies again.

Wilan is a beautiful girl. She is modern. Her beauty is heightened by her modern dress-sense. Her beauty is compared to that of a kitten because of her playfulness and coquetry. She is a prostitute by profession. As soon as she sees that Rang is looking at her, she glances at her breast and shakes her body in order to attract his attention. Rang is awe-struck to see her beautiful face, goo physique and height as she walks gracefully towards him. He can make out from her face that she is around 20 to 22 years old. On (p.24) the novelist draws a clear picture of her beauty:

Wilan's delicate and plumpy body is so well shaped that any man who happens to view it cannot help admiring it especially because of its smooth and fair complexion.

Wilan's desire to take revenge on Kupar suggests that she is an aggressive woman never prepared to take a 'no' for an answer. She traps Kupar because she finds him handsome. She cheats him by inviting him to come over to her place. When he does so she seduces him and cheats him saying that she is a virgin. She even goes to the extent of sleeping with his two other friends in his presence. When she becomes pregnant she puts the blame totally on Kupar, declaring that he is the child's father. On his denial, she gets furious

and tries ways and means to get the better of him. As soon as she meets Rang and learns that he is looking for a job, she engages him as her helper intending to use him as her right-hand man to take revenge on Kupar. She succeeds in taking revenge on Kupar for Kupar is jailed but later bailed out by his parents. However, she has no peace of mind and regrets what she has done to Kupar. At last, she is caught for her evil actions by the Police and Excise Department. She meets with an accident while she is trying to escape from the Police. She is seriously injured. Her future is totally bleak because there is no hope of her being able to regain her normal health again. She, however, repents for what she has done to Kupar. This is evident from her reaction towards Kupar when he asks for her forgiveness. She sheds tears on hearing him beg for forgiveness. Which shows that she really feels sorry for what she done to him.

Remy Phankon is known as an able and popular playwright through his play *U Kiang Nangbah*. He also proves himself as an able novelist through his novel *Ka Dak Bangla I & II*.

The Novel *Ka Dak Bangla* is based on the story of Shilok, a first class and rich contractor residing at Mawprem, Shillong. He is in his mid-thirties and has two daughters. He is good, generous yet proud and a spend thrift who is very fond of women. He has few friends because of his wife's shrewd character. He usually spends his evenings in a popular restaurant by the name of Temi Bar N. Restaurant. It is in this restaurant that he happens to meet his two friends Padiah and Maitphang. He grows so fond of their company that he invites them to accompany him to Lumpyllun for overnight stay at a guest house. He even asks them to bring along with them a woman for him. The two mischievous friends who have now engineered a plot against him bring a woman Linda, a call-girl from Calcutta, to entertain him. As soon as they arrive at the guest house, the men give way to drink and food. Shilak and Linda make love

and fall asleep. Shilak wakes up in the middle of the night and finds to his astonishment that Padiah and Maitphang have taken his brief case, broken the lock and takes out his money. Shilak is shocked to see all this. Unable to face the consequences, he dashes towards them despite their stern warning. He is stabbed to death. Having killed Shilak, Maitphang and Padiah wake Linda up. Get into the car and plan a hasty departure. Maitphang who is now scared with the turn of events drives the car at full speed. Unable to control the car they soon meet a fatal accident. The story does not end here, for the guest house turns out to be a hunting place for ghosts. Almost all the guests who come to stay there meet a fatal death. The news spreads far and wide and the police try various ways and means to find the culprit but in vain. At last, Pynshai, a well-know rituals performer (Nongknia) comes to know about the incident. He voluntarily goes to the guest house to find out the reason behind all this. With the help of supernatural power he fights against the evil spirit haunting the place. Further, Pynshai and Rang, the chowkidar of the guest house give a detailed report to the police that the culprit is none other than the ghost of Shilak himself. On the following morning the police, photographers and news reporters flock to the guest house. The police dig a hole as indicated by Pynshai and find a man's skull and bones along with a golden necklace and ring. They pack them carefully and send these to the forensic science laboratory for examination. Thus the ghost disappears and once again peace and tranquility prevails in the guest house. Rang, the chowkidar, resigns his job and leaves the place for good, since then the guest house is reduced to ruins.

Linda is a prostitute from Calcutta. She comes to Shillong with Padiah, a man who has promised to bring a woman for Shilak. Linda's real name is Dalin. She is the only daughter from a poor family in Kynrew village. She has lost her father when only 14 years old. Her father's sudden death brings many problems in her life.

She drops her studies in order to earn her living. Her mother, Lanot, after a year of her husband's death remarries Shankhmat. Shankhmat is a man of bad character but tricks people into believing that his character is above suspicious plans exploiting Dalin's youth. At last, having won their confidence, he suggests to his wife to let one of them stay at home in order to do the household chores. His wife is so pleased with his suggestion that she decides to let her daughter stay back. Shankhmat on hearing this is filled with excitement for he can now carry out his plan smoothly and successfully. Thus one fine evening after his hard-day's work, he complains to be suffering from dysentery. Early in the morning his wife goes to the market as usual. Dalin is seduced by her stepfather. Lanot and her friends catch him redhanded. Shankhmat tries to run away only to stumble on the way and die. The whole locality condemns both mother and daughter. Dalin, unable to tolerate the gossips any longer, runs away to Shillong in search of a job. Unluckily she is trapped by Sianti who promises to get a job for her but sells her instead to Rapsbun, a girl-supplier. Rapsbun takes Dalin to Calcutta and sells her to Prakash at the rate of Rs. 3000/-. Thus Dalin becomes a prostitute until she dies in the accident.

She is a weak character and cannot fight against worldly temptations. She has to pay dearly for her actions. Though she is a call-girl yet she is innocent for she is not involved in the crime committed by Maitphang and Padiiah. She is totally ignorant of Shilak's death.

Pascal Malngiang's novel *Ban Ieid Ka Pynmong* is among the most popular Khasi novel in the present decade. He is a modern Khasi author. He has written innumerable books and novels. He is a successful novelist. His novels reflect the demoralization and social evils in modern times. The novels that I am going to discuss are *Ban Ieid Ka Pynmong* published in 1985 and *Phi La Kular* published in 1986.

Ban leid Ka Pynmong is a novel based on the love story of Kubar and Syrpai and Kubar's brief love-affair with Diang. Kubar is the only son of a good and respectable family. His mother is a school-teacher and his father a Junior Secretary in Meghalaya Secretariat who resides in Shillong. As a school boy Kubar often plays truant. At last his parents, on noticing his playfulness, send him to a boarding school at Guahati. His stay in the boarding slowly and gradually moulds his character and personality. He has improved in his studies and stands first in the class. He proves a good sportsman too and he wins first prize in a music competition held in the school. He then attends a music school in order to obtain a diploma. By the time he passes his Master Degree in Economics from Gauhati University he gets a Diploma as well. He returns to his home-town, gets a job as an Inspector in the Supply Branch. He falls in love with Syrpailin, his friend's sister. He loves her company and her regularly. In the midst of all this, he meets Diang on the wedding day of Lurshai, his closest friend. He falls in love with her at first sight. Since then he meets her everyday ignoring his former lover, Syrpai. Syrpai learns from his friends that he is going around with Diang. Kubar is amazed to find himself so much in love with Diang and feels that he has known her all his life. His affair with her ends abruptly because Diang comes to know about his previous love-affair with Syrpai. She does not want so spoil Syrpai's undying love for him. She breaks away from him telling him that she is engaged to another man and is about to marry him. Kubar loses all hope and desperately turns to Syrpai for reconciliation. The novel ends with the marriage of Kubar and Syrpai.

Syrpai is the leading character in the novel. She is described as a good and understanding woman. She comes from a respected family. She lost her father when she was very young. She has two brothers and one sister and stands second in the family. She is described as an attractive girl. Kubar, on coming to Shillong during

vacation is surprised to see her growing up into a beautiful woman. She resembles her mother very much. She is round-faced. She has straight hair of shoulder length. Her eyes are greenish, a beautiful spot in the left cheek below her nose enhances her beautiful face. She wears star-like gold earrings that match her perfectly well.

She finishes her B.A. Honours in Education from North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. She is simple, decent, friendly and possesses a genial personality. She wins love and respect from the old as well as from the youngsters and children. Kupar loves her for her amiable character. Kupar's mother loves Syrpai for her simplicity, gentleness and good character. She once remarks to her son, Kupa; "Syrpai and her sister are like my own children. They are decent girls. I like them specially for their unpretentious character not present even in our close relatives". Kupa's mother encourages her son to marry her. Even Kupa's father, who passes no remark on Syrpai, never objects to his son's affair with her. It shows that he too likes and loves Syrpai and her family.

Syrpai is loyal towards her lover, Kupa and is never suspicious of him. Even when she learns of his flirtatious character she forgives him and reconciles with him. She is not egoistic or self-centred.

Besides being a woman of good character she is also a good sportswoman. During her college-days she takes active part in basket ball and has gone to Chandigarh to represent the team from Meghalaya. She is good in play acting too. Her popularity as a leading heroine begins from the time she plays the role in a drama entitled "Tang I trep". Kupa, her lover and fiancée goes to watch her act in the drama.

After graduation, Syrpai gets a job as a Stenographer in a Social Welfare Office at Shillong. She contributes her income to the family. She is helpful and understanding towards her mother. That is

why after her graduation she finds a job in order to lighten the family burden.

Syrpai is depicted as a flat character. She is straight-forward, just good and content with herself. A woman of her character cannot be expected to do anything wrong. She sacrifices her life for love and, therefore, enjoys the fruits of love in the end.

Another female character in the novel is Diang. She is depicted as a round character. She is more experienced in matters of love than Syrpai. She is fully aware of Kupaar's love for her, yet she is aware of Syrpai's parallel love for him and approval of the two families of their love. Kupaar submits himself completely to her. She does not want to take advantage of his love though at heart she yearns for him. Her conscience gets the better of her and with a heavy heart. She tells him that she is engaged and is going to get married very soon. Kupaar becomes desperate and takes to drinking in order to forget her. With his parents' help he is able to reconcile with his old love Syrpai though he still feels the pain of separation tugging at his heart. Diang is a great and rational woman. She is superior to Syrpai.

Diang is described as a beautiful woman. She is more beautiful than Syrpai. She has a good taste in dress. On her friend's wedding day, she is her brides maid. She wears oval-shaped golden earrings. Her lips are soft, her hair is long and her nose not so pointed as that of Syrpai. Kupaar falls in love with her at first sight. He regards her as the most beautiful woman he has ever met. Since the day he meets her is passionately in love with her. He often buys precious gifts for her to express his love. But the most precious gift of all, is an engagement ring which he buys for two thousand rupees.

Another female character in the novel is Kupaar's mother. She is a teacher in a High School at Laitumkhrah. As a mother she loves

her son, Kupa, very much and wishes him well in life. In order to control her son from going astray, she accepts her husband's suggestion to send him to a boarding School. She knows she cannot bear to be away from her only son, yet she lets him go for a better future for him. She is a devoted and understanding mother. She understands her son's feelings and sentiments and lends him a helping hand in times of crisis and stress. In one occasion she finds her son drunk but forgives him by warning him not to get drunk anymore. She learns that her son no longer has an affair with Syrpai, a girl she is very fond of, but that he is going around with another woman, Diang. When her son is dropped by Diang, she feels pity for him. She advises him to meet Syrpai and reconcile with her. Thus at last, Kupa's life is set to right again because of his mother's cleverness.

As a wife she is affectionate, dutiful, understanding and shares her husband's feelings and aspirations. She stand by him in times of depression or happiness, and never betrays him. She has absolute faith in him. Therefore, their conjugal life is full of happiness till her husband expires.

Another female character in the novel is Lurshai's mother. She is depicted as a kind, understanding, hard-working, responsible woman. Her husband dies leaving four children behind. Thus she has to bear the burden of bringing them up and gives them proper education. She is lucky to have a cloth-shop for a living. She educates her children with the money she earns from the shop. Her eldest son, Lurshai finishes his post-graduate studies and becomes a Lecturer in Dibrugarh University. Her second daughter, Syrpailin finished her B.A. with Education honours and works as a stenographer in the Social Welfare Office. Her youngest daughter is doing her P.U. and her youngest son is doing his matriculation. She trains and moulds her children to be self-sufficient and lead independent lives. She asks them to help her in the business during

vacation. Thus each and every one contributes to the family income.

As a mother she understands her children's problems. This is evident in her reaction towards her youngest daughter's confession of pregnancy by Synshar, Synshar refuses to be her husband. On seeing her daughter's stupidity she takes pity on her and encourages her to continue with her studies in spite of the quandary she is in. Lushai's mother is a good example for the society. Many woman like her exist in our society today who refuse to let adversity get the better of their equipoise.

Phi La Kular is a novel based on the story about the young couple Teilang and Badashisha who have just entered into a new phase of life, that is, marriage. Teilang, the hero of the novel, is an engineering working at Nongstoin. He has lost his mother and is therefore, left under the loving care of his father. His father is a carpenter by profession but educates his son by hard labour. Badashisha come from a rich family. Her parents are businessmen. Though rich, yet they are unhappy. Her mother is very money-minded, ready to give her only daughter into marriage to a Marwari guy just for the sake of money. Luckily her (Badashisha's) father intervenes. On another occasion, her mother insists that she get married to Freddie Lynds an adopted son of a rich man involved in gambling, robbery, kidnapping and so on. Freddie promises to give her mother a large sum of money. Bada who is then having steady love affair with Teilang gets married with him despite her mother's opposition. Her mother however, tries ways and means to spoil her marriage. She goes to the extent of applying unfair means by asking Ready and Freddie to kidnap her to Calcutta. Luckily, Bada is rescued by Teilang's maternal uncle. Teilang meets his maternal uncle who declares that all his wealth and possession shall go to him. Teilang and Bada start their life afresh and Bada's mother is left repenting.

Badashisha is the heroine of the novel. She is the only daughter

of Kynsai and Bapynshngain residing at Nongrim Hills near Mizo Modern High School. Her father's village in Mawsynram and her mother of from Jowai.

Bada is a beautiful girl. Her husband and lover, Teilang, describes her beauty in these words:

You are really beautiful... your face is
like that of your mother. A black spot
on your neck adds to your beauty. You have a
good height with dark beautiful eyes.

Malngiang presents her as a beautiful girl in her twenties. She has a Chinese face with a peculiar appeal. Her well-combed curly hair suits her face. She is humble by nature. Despite her beauty and wealth she never wears ornaments except the golden earrings and wedding ring given by her husband. Unlike her mother she is not money-minded and does not like to be treated as a rich girl. This revealed in her discussion with her husband:

I do not pine for wealth, it is my mother,
who, for the sake of money is ready to spoil
my life ... I give you my word that I will
always be by your side in times of peace of
depression...

Bada's mother instigates her to leave her husband and to marry Freddie in order to have all his wealth. Bada pays no heed to her mother's advice. She is firm in her love and devotion towards her husband. Her mother, on failing to instigate her, creates a plan with Freddie and Ready to kidnap her to Calcutta. The plan fails and the truth is revealed. Bada's truthfulness is rewarded at last. She wins love and admiration not only from her husband but from her friends and neighbours too.

Another female character in the novel is Bapynshngain. She is the mother of Badashisha and wife of Kynsai, a businessman. She too is a businesswoman by profession and come from Jowai. She is rich yet she is horribly avaricious. She is ready to do anything in order to achieve wealth and property. She is ready to sell her only daughter to Mohan Das, a girl supplier, for one lakh and fifty thousand rupees. Earlier she had always wanted her daughter to marry Freddie for his money. But she fails for her daughter is in love with Teilang and marries him.

She has revealed herself as an irresponsible mother. Instead of being protective to her daughter and tries to sell her. Despite the flaw in her character we cannot condemn her. She realizes her mistakes and repents for what she has done and even begs forgiveness for her daughter and son-in-law. Thus they are reconciled in the end.

Fidalya Toi is the first woman novelist in Khasi literature. Her first and foremost novel is *Nga leit Tang Ia Phi Thup I and II*.

The novel *Nga leit Tang Ia Phi* is based on a love-story of Ka Lutmon and U Sainlang. Besides the difficulties that Lutmon undergoes in her love-life, she faces economic and family problems too. She is torn apart by her desire to help her mother for the smoothening of the family business and also wants to please her lover by fulfilling his wish. Sainlang, her lover, is at present doing his B.D. As a Pastor he wishes his lover to be truthful towards God. He is shocked to hear that Lutmon has resigned from the post of Lady Supervisor in the Social Welfare Department to join her mother's business. He fears that wealth will ruin her life one day.

However, Sainlang cannot put a stop to her plans. Lutmon is gradually destroyed by her greed. Lal, her driver, proves a loyal and devoted servant. At last having gained her confidence, with the

help of his handyman he is able to set a trap for Lutmon and robs her of the money she has just withdrawn from the bank. Lutmon in order to save her prestige tries to make a narrow escape by jumping over the running lorry and dies on the spot.

Lutmon is the leading woman character in the novel. She is the only daughter in the family. Her father left her and mother when she was very young. Being the only daughter she has a great responsibility towards the family. She resigns her job as a Lady Supervisor in the Social Welfare Department Office to help her mother in the business of coal-supply. She feels that her presence in the business is very much needed in order to check the lorry drier's corruption and cheating. She confides to her fiancée about the problem.

You know Sain, I am the only daughter. It is my responsibility to guide my mother. In most cases, she is cheated by the drivers, who dare to do so in my presence.

Beside being a responsible girl, she fully understands her mother's problems. As an educated young girl she is very ambitious. She always dreams of building her own empire through her business of coal supply. Her business flourishes increasingly. Within a very short period of time she is able to invest 15 lakhs of rupees in the bank.

Lutmon believes in hard-work. Nothing can be successful without hard-work. She devotes herself to her work and hardly finds time for herself. As she herself tells her mother "since the time I started doing my own business. I hardly find time to take my meal... They say personal business is more leisurely. Now that I experience it myself. I will say that every job has its own compulsions.

Lutmon is described as a very beautiful girl. Sainlang, her lover, falls for her beauty. She has an oval face, covered with black-

silky hair. Her big eyes are surrounded by thick and curly eye lashes. Her wide lips indicate kindness. She has a row of straight white teeth. Her complexion is red and fair.

In addition to her beauty, Lutmon possesses a good dress sense. Her figure is tall and slim and whatever she puts on suits her very much. On one occasion when she goes to a Crusade with her lover, she puts on a deep blue Nara reaching below her knees, exposing her beautiful and well-shaped legs. She puts on golden ear-rings combined with white stones, and a golden chain around her long and beautiful neck.

Dengla, her friend and neighbours, considers her as a pretty woman when she remarks to her. "Yes, you can do so because you are rich and beautiful too..."

Lutmon's mother too is proud to see that her daughter has blossomed into a beautiful woman.

Lutmon has a great love for poetry. This is revealed in what she recites to her lover to express her loving his love when he intends to break away from her. The words run:

"O! my darling Sain, hold me in your arms
when my heart aches with bitterness, do not
lock the door of love. Love-ties cannot be
easily conquered by evil, let's not untie our
love and save out selves from the world's
scandals and disrespect."

Further the above words signify the true love she has for her lover. The words expressed come from the depth of her heart. She is a devoted lover who cannot tolerate her lover's indifference. She expects pity from her lover and therefore on hearing that he does not hate her but cannot love her anymore, she cannot help uttering

those words: "Ah... that is a feeling I cannot bear. If you hate me there is still hope for me. It is this indifference that hurts me."

Sainlang swears that he truly loves her in the beginning of the novel. However, he does not respond to her plea. Out of desperation, she turns to Lal, her driver who readily takes advantages since he wants to befool her in order to win her confidence and make his plans successful.

Lutmon is very fickle-minded. Right from the beginning of the novel, she reveals her weakness for Lal. She considers him as the most handsome man she has ever seen and perhaps more handsome than her own lover too. However, she hides her feelings till the end when Sainlang, her lover breaks away from her. Now that she is free, she submits herself to Lal not realising that he just wants to flatter her.

Like most women of today, she is very ambitious and proud too. She has made up her mind to build up an empire for herself. Thus she resigns her job as a Lady Supervisor in the Social Welfare Office to step into the family business right away. She becomes victim of avarice as Sainlang has warned her previously. "The wealth that you are hunting now is like a flood, it swamps and carries away whatever comes across it on the way. When it gets dried up, the ground can even burst apart" Ultimately Lutmon loses control over herself for now her life is ruled by money. She tastes the bitterness of life in the end and dies in an accident.

However, we cannot fully condemn her. She suffers mentally and physically in the end. She cannot forgive herself for what she has done. She is not given a chance to quench her thirst in her serious accident. She dies as a thirsty woman with no one to fulfill her last wish.

Lutmon is helpful, humble, generous, philosophical minded

and imaginative too. As a woman she is not free from vices such as jealousy and suspicion. She admits her jealousy and suspicion to her friend Diangmon thus: "I am a woman full of jealousy and suspicion..."

She firmly believes in God. She realises that "even if she is deceived by her most beloved and closest friend, God is still there to guide and help her live on earth."

Another female character in the novel is Dengla. She is from Lad Rymbai village, a place noted for coal. She is Lutmon's neighbour and friend. Being a girl from a poor family, she undergoes many problems during her stay in the village. Lutmon knows all her problems and helps her secure a job in her place after resignation. Since then Dengla stays at Jowai.

Dengla is a simple girl from the village. As soon as she goes to stay at Jowai she changes her mode of life by trying to adapt herself to the town-life. She becomes a new woman now. Her friend, Lutmon, is surprised to see the new look in her and can hardly recognise her.

Dengla was not so pretty before. Her beauty is gradually heightened by her care in dressing and grooming. She boy-cut her hair, trime her eye-brows, applies lipstick and rouge to her face. She puts on a long jainsem that makes her all the more beautiful and appealing.

Lutmon is greatly shocked to see her transformed into a beauty.

Like all young girls, she enjoys her town-life tremendously. She likes watching films in cinema halls and video parlours. She often attends tea-parties and dinner-parties. On each occasion she enjoys dancing and drinking and once she dances and drink for the whole night. She goes to picnics with friends occasionally.

Dengla is care-free too. She is not that particular in choosing friends and lovers. She tells Lutmon that she does not mind flirting around with men in order to get a free treat films. This suggests her loose character. She further boasts by saying that she has received innumerable number of proposals from men besides the boyfriend that she goes steady with Lutmon is not at all surprised to hear all this, for she suspects Dengla to have had an affair, earlier with a married man called Ken. Since then Lutmon like all the villagers suspects her to be a flirt. Diangmon, another friend of Dengla, is of the opinion that Dengla has no self-control. Diangmon feels awkward to be in Dengla's company because of her gawkiness and bad behaviour.

Dengla like most women likes gossiping. This is confirmed, on one occasion when she pays a visit to her village. In her meeting with Lutmon she tells her that Diangmon avoids her company and has become very proud now. She is ignorant of Diangmon's financial and economic problems at home.

Dengla's life changes after her fatal illness. She is now a good lady with good etiquette and conduct.

Dengla possesses a great reasoning power not present in the other female characters of the novel. Unlike Lutmon and Diangmon she never allows her heart to rule her head. She confesses to Lutmon that she has pasted life's bitterness at home as well as in the society. No one seems to understand her predicament. Yet with a courages minds hs e suffer pangs of life quietly without complain.

Her friends, Lutmon and Diangmon, deceive her, yet she pays no heed to such trivialities. She has a great heart ad understands their human weaknesses. She is a great philosopher who believes that she will be bale to overcomeall her difficulties in no time and that God will help her exonerate herself and make people realise

their mistake. She is ready to help Lutmon in sorting out her love affairs with Sainlang. She is ready to forget and forgive her friend's mistakes. She can thus be considered the greatest woman character of the novel.

Another female character in the novel is Diangmon. She is the closest friend of Lutmon. She is a graduate and work in the P.W.D. Office at Jowai. She has two brothers and one sister and she is the second in the family. She comes from a respectable family. Lutmon described her family thus:

“...your family is like that of Lasaros,
Martha and Mary... a family ruled by happiness.
All the four of you are brilliant students.
Look, how many rich and well-off children spoil
their lives. You, who have grown up in poverty
shall become great one day.”

Dianghun is not beautiful in the conventional sense. Her eyes are chinky like that of the Chinese, her nose is not so pointed, her lips are small. She has long hair which she makes into a bun that signifies her simplicity. Her fore-head indicates her good character so no man dares to talk ill of her.

She is a very reserved girl and choosy with regard to friends. She is humble, responsible and considerate.

However, she is not free from weakness. Her weakness is that she falls in love with her closest friend's fiancée Sainlang. Despite the fact that she knows about his affair with Lutmon, she encourages him to love her. This experience is not uncommon. But the question is how she loses her conscience when she knows that her friend is desperately in love with him and he with her.

Another female character in the novel is Lutmon's mother. She is described as a responsible mother who loves her daughter

very much. She ungrudgingly gives everything to her daughter. She leads a very hard life and suffer very much. She is however timid, foolish and is a victim of naivety. She had married a countless number of husbands who turn out to be a suckers only. She is easily brain-washed by sweet talkers and therefore her coal-supply business fails during her management. However, she is lucky to have a daughter like Lutmon who is able to check her foolishness in time.

References :

1. Peace Roy Pariat, *Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*, "Shi Kyntien Ar Kyntien Kwai, p.ix.
2. Do
3. Peace Roy pariat, *Ka shangkhawiah Ki Rang*, Second Edition, p. 2.
4. -Do- p. 4.
5. -Do- p. 22. Act.II. Sc.I.
6. -Do- p. 24.
7. -Do- p. 24.
8. -Do- p. 61.
9. -Do- p. 61.
10. -Do- p. 89.
11. -Do- p. 1.
12. -Do- p. 1.
13. Op.cit - p. 21.
14. Op.cit - p. 4.
15. Op.cit - p. 7.
16. Op.cit - p. 23.
17. -Do- p. 31.

18. -Do- p. 9.
19. S.J.Duncan Hoojon, *Phuit Ka Sabuit*, "Ki Mad Ia Ka Shillong", p. 172.
20. Leslie Hardinge Pde, *The Sun Magazine*, "Khasi Novelist", Vol.XII. No. 36, April 8, 1989, p. 26/xii.
21. L.H.Pde, *Ka Khun Ba La Jah*, 1970 p. 26.
22. -Do- p. 25.
23. L.H.Pde, *Ka Khun Ba La Jah*, p. 35.
24. -Do- p. 53.
25. L.H.Pde, *Ka Khun Ba La Jah*, p. 109.
26. L.H.Pde, *Ka Bih*, (Second Edition) pp. 17-18.
27. L.H.Pde, *U Raimon bad ka Dashisha*, p. 37.
28. -Do- p. 42.
29. -Do- p. 51.
30. Op.cit. - p. 61.
31. L.H.Pde, *U Raimon bad ka Dashisha*, p. 9.
32. Op.cit. - p. 32.
33. -Do- p. 17.
34. -Do- p. 57.
35. -Do- p. 96.
36. L.H.Pde, *U Mooiong*, p. 33.
37. -Do- p. 29.
38. S.S.Majaw, *Ka Jyrsieh Longbriew, Book I*, "U Kritik" dated 20.10.83 as published in *Ka Jyrsieh Longbriew, Book II*.
39. -Do-
40. D.T.Laloo, *Ka Jyrsieh Longbriew, Book I*.
41. -Do- p. 3.
42. D.T.Laloo, *Ka Jyrsieh Longbriew, Book I*. p. 22. first edition.
43. -Do- p. 22.
44. D.T.Laloo, *Kam Miet*, Bynta I. p. 31.
45. -Do- p. 35.
46. -Do- p. 38.
47. -Do- p. 42.
48. -Do-
49. -Do- p. 24.

50. Pascal Malngiang, *Ban ieid ka pynmong*, 1st edition, pp. 30-31.
51. -Do- p. 67.
52. -Do- p. 60.
53. Pascal malngiang, *Phi La Kular*, 1st edition.
54. -Do-
55. Fidalya Toi, *Nga Ieit Tang Ia Phi*, Thup I, 1st edition, 2987. p. 4.
56. Op.cit. - p. 50.
57. Op.cit. - p. 15.
58. -Do- Part II, p. 14.
59. -Do- p. 17.
60. -Do- p. 23.
61. -Do- Part I, pp. 11-12.
62. -Do- p. 21.

CHAPTER –IV

CHARACTERISATION

Peace Roy Pariat stands as one of the major Khasi dramatists of the 20th century. His plays include *Ka Romili*, *Jingrhah*, *Na Nongkyndong Sha Sor*, *Bor Ksuid Pyrshah Bor Blei*, *Ka Kyrzan*, *Leit*, *Leit ym dei Jingieit Shet Jakai*, *Ka Maryngod*. He had no proper education yet through his personal and practical experience as a star performer he was able to write and direct plays on the stage. He represented the social life of people in Shillong during the Second World War. He confessed that he wrote his dramas according to the size of the stage, the availability of screens and according to the intelligence of the audience. His aim as a dramatist is to represent the life of the Khasis according to the changing times during the Second World War when the Khasi way of life changed rapidly from what it used to be. As a practical writer he writes a drama and puts it to a test by a number of rehearsals. He visualizes the life of the rich and the poor, the joys and sorrows of life. He then transforms all this by his imagination, arranges the ideas systematically in such a manner as to arouse the sense of pity and fear in the audience. He uses a common language understandable by all for he believes that “the stage is the mirror of human life.”

Peace Roy Pariat in his drama *Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*, (snare for men) presents the desire of Madina to acquire wealth at the expense of others. The play is based on three corner stones and these include the three households: The household of Madina, the

household of Suraiji and the household of Jamindar Sapon. This type of plot can be called an Aritotlean plot with a beginning, a middle and an end. The main plot of the play starts with Madina and Shamarkhan. Madina appears merely as a tool in the hands of an evil supernatural power of Shamarkhan. He has given her the magic power to acquire wealth by enticing rich men to surrender themselves to her sweet words and beauty. However, the magical power does not last long. Shamarkhan gives her another magical power in the form of two rings. A ring on her right hand, when dipped into a cup of tea or glass of drink has the power of enslaving the person who happens to drink it. The ring on her left hand has the power to enable her to get rid of those who have lost their wealth. Madina succeeds in making fools of rich men and acquires most of their wealth through the two magic rings. She applies the power to Suraiji and after getting all his wealth gets rid of him. She intices Suraiji's son-in-law, Jan, who comes in search of Suraiji. Jan falls into her trap and drives away his wife Jani and his only son from home. Jan becomes a drunkard and a gambler and loses all his money. The evil power however, cannot last for long. Suraiji who has redeemed and changed his life, with the help of some divine power given by a hermit, is able to cure Jan of the evil power. Thus Jan realizes his mistake and repents for what he has done. He became blind and returns to his father to beg his forgiveness. Madina and Shamarkhan face a tragic and Jan meet his wife and son. There is a happy reconciliation of the family members in the end.

In order to understand the above definition let me take into consideration Peace Roy Pariat's presentation of characters. In the play *Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*, Madina is the main character. She lives with Shamarkhan. From her conversation with Suraiji we learn that she lives an unclean life. She requests Suraiji to revisit her place and when he comes, she befools him by offering him a glass of

liquor into which she has dipped with her right ring. Suraiji is blinded with love and desire for Madina and offers all his wealth, she gets rid of hi by offering a drink touched by her left ring. Madina's thirst for wealth does not end here. She even hooks Jan, the son of Sapon and the son-in-law of Suraiji who goes to her place in search of his father-in-law. She bluffs him saying that Suraiji has left her and that he used to beat her day in and day out. She even blames Suraiji for forcing her to be a drunkard. She then entices Jan by offering him a cup of tea that she has dipped, her right ring into. Thus Jan is enslaved by her evil power. Jan drives his beloved wife Jani and his only son from home. He spends all his money on Madina till he is reduced to complete penury.

Madina commits all these misdeeds since she is instigated by Samarkhan. She is a mere tool in Shamarkhan's hands. In the concluding Section of the play, Madina and Shamarkhan kill themselves. Madina blames Shamarkhan for having instigated her to lead a dirty life by uttering these words. "... I will end you first who taught me ..."

Madina had no feelings for others. Her position as a woman is defined as "inferior to that of the municipal dustbin". She is even compared to "a fairy of the rivulet at Umsohsun, that gathers all the filth and dirty drainage water," As remarked by Noren, a gambler.

However, we cannot condemn her totally. As a woman, she shows her courage and candour. She never tries to hide her true self. She can therefore be regarded as a great character. In the last part of the play, she repents for her misdeeds and even advises Noren and does the gamblers to change and modify their lives by saying: "If you believe in my words, go and be good people. Stay away from evil." This signifies the good side of her character. Though she herself can no loner escape evils, she does not want others to follow her bad example. She is therefore a round character in the play.

Another female character in the play is 'Jani'. She is a good character. She possesses all the good qualities such as simplicity, innocence, humility, politeness and modesty. She is an orphan since her very childhood and is left under the care of her uncle Suraiji. She is "good looking" as remarked by Kumar, a character in the play. She is straightforward and cannot tolerate deceit, indecency and wickedness.

She has confidence in herself and believes that God is all in all and sees the truth. She is chased away by her uncle yet her confidence in herself and in God saves her from the several hardships of life. She meets Thakur and gets the job of a maid-servant at Sapono's place. She then gets married to Jan, the only son of Sapono. However, after delivering a baby boy, she is chased away by her husband. This time, too, she is saved from the hardships of life for she meets a hermit who offers her food and shelter in the forest. She stays in the forest till she meets her husband and her uncle Suraiji.

Like her father, Jani is always firm in her decision. She believes that everyone in this world makes mistakes in life and the elders are no exception to this. She feels that it is the duty of the younger ones to point out their mistakes. She herself pointed out to her uncle saying:

"Uncle do not be furious. Why do you have to show your anger? How we converse then? A father ought to teach his children persuasively. Children often make mistakes. But uncle, at present you will find many children whose fathers are addicted to drinks, gambling and so on. Thus the children are compelled to give proper guidance to their fathers."

Jani is a very lovable girl. Sapono, her father-in-law, is very much impressed by her amiable and polite character in his very first meeting with her. He praise her thus: "... I have never seen an

innocent, holy and simple woman like her..." Suraiji, her uncle, too, realizes her true and good character and regrets having chased her away from home by exclaiming: "... Jani, Jani my most holy child, where are you? Forgive me..."

As a wife, she is dutiful, respects and admires, her husband very much. She even hides her husband's misdoings from her father-in-law. She almost sacrifices her life for her husband's sake. Her perseverance pays her in the end. Her husband and her uncle return to her and beg her forgiveness. The name 'Jani' suits her perfectly. Suraiji her uncle, explains the meaning of the word 'Jani' as given by his father who says. "The name Jani I shall call, and Jani shall be perfect, beautiful, cool, innocent and delicate like this precious stone. Her life is more precious than the stone itself..."

Peace Roy Pariat presents two starkly different female characters. Madina is an embodiment of evil. Madina is a round character with a strong personality, a woman who has come into contact with outsiders. She is calculating tricky, daring. She plays her part well as a call-girl who has been instigated by Shamarkhan, a man with magic power. Jani is a flat character who shows her simplicity, innocence and goodness right from the beginning till the end. She is good throughout the audience feels pity for the tragic events taking place in her life, yet one is pleased to see that she finds peace and contentment in the end. However, we cannot class her a great character. Madina is the only character who can be regarded as great because she has in her all the qualities expected of a woman in such circumstances. She meets her tragic end courageously, yet before dying she repents for her sins and confesses that it is Shamarkhan who instigated her to do all these misdeeds in her life.

Simon Jenkin Duncan Hoojon is a renowned short-story writer. He has written innumerable short-stories such as *Ki Mad Ia Ka Shillong*, *Wat Ai Nishan Ia Kiwei*, *Bthei! Skei*, *Phim Ngeit* and so on.

In a novelette *Ki Mad Ia Ka Shillong*, the writer deals with the inner truths present in the human mind. The school-master Mr. Rishon is a highly respected gentleman admired by all the school children and the villagers as well. Yet he is not free from certain flaws. Like all the school-masters, he encourage his students to do well in their studies in order to rise in life. However, he misleads them saying that they should study hard in order to be free from hard-labour like tilling the land, sowing seeds and so on. Thus the school-children as they progress in studies, neglect and ignore all the household chores and no longer help their parents in cultivation. U Kyrhai and Ka Rimai are examples of such students. After finishing their lower primary examinations they leave their village in search of livelihood in Shillong town. They find to their dismay that the education they have inadequate for them to get a decent job. They are compelled to accept any job given to them. Being innocent they are misled by the townfolks and thus get involved in dacoity, theft, prostitution, gambling and so on.

Simon Jenkin has a keen understanding of woman. He feels that women are weak and thus are exploited by men. Rimai is an example of such women. Yet because of her courage and truthfulness she is able to free herself from such circumstances.

Rimai is depicted as a simple, obedient and hard-working village girl. She enjoys her village life and loves nature. Her life suddenly changes when Deribon comes to fetch her, promising her parents that she will send her for further studies in Shillong. Deribon does not keep her promise and tempts Rimai to prostitution instead. Rimai ignores her suggestion and runs away from her place and goes to stay with an old lady who is from her nearby village. The old lady instructs Rimai to return to the village at once. Rimai is ashamed and dare not to do so. Finally, the old lady finds the job of a maid-servant for Rimai. Thus Rimai goes to stay in the house of Mr.

Modring. While staying there she happens to meet Mr. Robin Das, who pays frequent visit to Mar Modring. Soon she develops a close relationship with him and thus finally she leaves Mr. Modring's place and goes to stay with Robin Das as his wife. A week later, she sees her father passing by her house. Her father on seeing her starts calling out her name but she does not respond to him. Her husband calls the police and accuses him of theft. Rimai feels guilty for deceiving her father and goes to the police station to bail him out. The police pay no heed to her pleading. At last with the help of Mr. Ken, her father is bailed out of the Police Station.

Rimai can be regarded as a round character in the story. She begins her life as a simple village girl, but through her personal experience and contact with people she learns that life on the whole is a complicated affair. She realizes that in order to survive one has to adapt oneself to the circumstances. The writer is successful in portraying the character of Rimai.

Deribon is another female character in the novelette. She is from the same village as Rimai. She is one of the young girls who leave their village in search of livelihood in Shillong. She is an experienced call-girl who has stayed in Calcutta for more than two years. She is known to all as an infamous young woman. She visits her village only once and that is when she goes to fetch Rimai from her parents. Through Deribon the author wants to unveil the social evils that have invaded the Khasi society during the period after the Second World War. Deribon meets a tragic death in the end. She is killed by a thief who steals her necklace. She pays for her misdeeds through her fatal end.

Another writer that I am going to deal with is Leslie Harding Pde. He is considered as a prominent novelist of the closing decade of the 20th century. His novels deal with the social, economic and political consequences affecting the Khasi way of life. He himself

confesses “I always try to put into my books a social message.”

His first novel *Ka Khun Ba La Jah* was published in 1970. The novel is based on the consequences of events that took place during the period in the year 1954 to 1960. The theme relates to a poor family in a village near Kynshi river. Krim and his wife Jiedmon have two daughters – Hunmon and Lumlin. They live a very happy life together. In the midst of such happiness, Krim dies suddenly. Jiedmon takes much trouble to educate her children. At last when she can no longer support them she asks her eldest daughter Hunmon to discontinue her studies. She helps her mother in running the tea stall. Nabon, a childless businesswoman from Shillong on seeing Hunmon pleads with Jiedmon to allow her daughter to go with her. She promises that she will send her to a good school for proper education. Unluckily Nabon dies at the end of the year. Jiedmon instructs her daughter to return to the village at once but she does not listen to her. Hunmon continues to stay in the hope that she will inherit Nabon's property. Nabon's brother appears and discards her. Hunmon now carrying a child from Junon, is compelled to leave the place. She gives birth to a baby who dies in the hospital. She undergoes several hardships and at last unable to bear it any longer she returns to her village fully penitent. There she meets her old friend and lover, Olmand and they decide to live together. The plot is simple concerned with the life of Hunmon only. Nabon is the cause of Hunmon's suffering. Nabon's death brings about the end of her trial for Hunmon returns to her village a few months later.

L.H. Pde succeeds in the portrayal of Hunmon's character. She is described as an extremely beautiful girl. Her lover and fiancée. Olmand is very much impressed by her beauty. He confesses that he has fallen in love with her at first sight and since then he cannot forget her beautiful face. He explains her beauty.

“There are beauties that can be bought, and some others that can be borrowed. But God has given you perfect beauty.”

Hunmon's beauty is heightened by her dress sense change. Nabon, her mistress loves her so much that she buys her beautiful dresses every now and then. Whenever she puts on such dresses the neighbours and friends cannot help praising her beauty saying among themselves. "From where has Nabon brought such a beauty."

Hunmon's meeting with Junom at Shillong makes her forget her modesty. She is so much in love with him that she submits herself to him and thus loses her virginity. This shows her readiness to sacrifice her own life for the sake of love.

Hunmon is divided between two different worlds – the world of her parents, a rural life and the world of the city. As a girl who belongs to a rural society. She is simple, innocent, good and knows nothing of deceit and cunning. Her sudden contact with urban life changes her mode of living. Being innocent she is misled by the townfolks and gradually starts committing one blunder after another. She is oblivious of her position and her family. She is full of greed and ambition. Misguided by her untrue friends she decides to become an heiress after the sudden death of her mistress. She even ignores her mother's instructions to return to the village. She is driven away from Nabon's place by Burom Manik, Nabon's brother. She suffers a great deal. She then realizes that it is only her mother she can fall back upon. She therefore, returns to her village fully repentant.

Hunmon has her own philosophy of life. She believes that the world is materialistic and belongs to the rich only. This is revealed in her statement "Honour where are you now? You tempted and pleased us the people of this world with temporary colours and took it away leaving nothing to protect one's dignity."

Another female character in the novel is Jiedmon. She is the wife of Krim and the mother of two children – Hunmon and Lumlin. She is depicted as a dutiful wife and mother. She loves and respects her husband very much. She does all the household work and even

helps her husband in the fields. She is a very religious woman. She teaches her children to offer prayers to God. She herself prays that her children will be saved from evils. Her family is a liberal Christian family. She never argues with anyone over anything.

She has a strong intuition. This is evident from the tears falling from her eyes before the arrival of her husband's dead body. She is shocked to see her husband dead. She feels that God is not doing justice to her and thus takes this as a punishment for her weakness.

She remembers her loving husband even after his death. Soon after her husband's death her clan betrays her by taking away her paddy fields. Yet she never utters a word of complaint against their misdeed. She firmly believes that righteousness often triumphs in the end. Though her life is hard and tough yet she is happy and content.

She loves her children very much. She tries her level best to educate them but to no avail. Therefore when Nabon, her friend from Shillong expresses her desire to educate Hunmon she readily accepts her offer. She wants her daughter to be educated and to have a better life. Hunmon's life changes completely with the death of Nabon. She is proud, arrogant and disowns her own mother in front of her friends. Jiedmon is so furious with her daughter that she threatens to disown her as her daughter. However, she cannot do so for we find that in the end she accepts her daughter who return home repenting. Her greatness as a mother and woman is evident here in her readiness to forget and forgive her daughter's misconduct. The novelist succeeds in his portrayal of the two female characters in the novel. Hunmon as a girl who plays a dual role is a round character. Jiedmon who plays a simple role is a flat character.

Ka Bih is another novelle written by the same novelist and published in 1972. The plot of the novelette centres around prostitution. Ka Melina is the eldest daughter of a prostitute. She is

only eleven years at that time. U Donkumar, the hero of the novelette, meets Melina on his way back home from college. The sight of a poor girl novelette meets Melina on his way back home from college. The sight of a poor girls dressed in shabby clothes fills his heart with pity. On learning that she cannot afford to go to school he extends his help to her. Thus Melina joins the school. However, Don cannot prevent Melina from going astray. Once he decides to marry her in order to save her from prostitution. It is too late though for she is already instigated by her mother into prostitution. Melina on learning of Don's good intentions to save her, feels ashamed of what she has done. She, therefore, commits suicide. She dies for no fault of her own. Here we find that there is no poetic justice in the novelette for her mother who is the real sinner still continues living whereas Melina, who is innocent and good, dies. The plot therefore is a weak plot with no justification at all. Melina is depicted as a young girl who out of simplicity and innocence is misguided by her mother's a prostitute. The author fails in the portrayal of Melina's character. She seems to have no feelings, no sense of judgment from within her. She is, therefore, a very weak character. Perhaps the novelists intention in portraying this particular character is to highlight the social evils of the modern Khasi society. Woman are victims of the social and economic changes of the times. They are being suppressed because of their helplessness and vulnerability as human beings. Melina cannot fight against the sudden changes that swept the society. Therefore her good qualities remain dormant. Being weak, she is compelled to submit herself to the man she does not love in order to please her greedy mother.

Another female character in the novel is Melina's mother. She is depicted as a domineering greedy self-centered and egoistic character. She is an unprotective mother ready to ruin her daughter's life for the sake of money. She even cheats her daughter saying that Donkumar does not love her. She even hides the love letters that

come from Donkupar in order to make her daughter forget him. She is a prostitute by profession and, therefore, wants her daughter to follow her footsteps. She is a flat character having only one aim in life and that is to earn money. She therefore represents the evil tendencies of life.

Another novel written by Leslie Harding Pde is *U Raimon Bad Ka Dashisha* published in 1980. The theme of the novel concerns the malpractice preset in modern Khasi families with special reference to the distribution of wealth. Jngen and Arbor belong to a rich family. Their parents divide the wealth among them before they die. Arbor cannot tolerate to see his sister getting a larger share than him. His resentment leads to the conflicts in the novel. His wife, Sibon and his sons and daughter consider themselves rich people. As a result, Arbor soon loses the large amount of money that he inherits from his parents. He now has only the cars hypothecated to a bank. His inability to repay the loan compels him to secretly sell a plot of land at Umran that belongs to his sister, Jngen. His sister gets furious on learning this and she goes to discuss the matter with him. Arbor not able to face his sister, chases her away. Thus Jngen blinded by anger and disappointment, meets a road accident and dies. Dashisha, Jngen daughter is ignorant of her uncle's misdeeds. Yet guided by her strong intuition she goes to the court to attain a succession certificate to all her property. Arbor gets furious with her and orders her to hand all the documents to him. On her denial he beats her up and even turns her into a mentally retarded girl with the help of some supernatural power given by a Sadhu. Raimon appears on the scene and saves Dashisha from calamity. Once again Dashisha attains her normal health and get married to Raimon. The plot is simple. Raimon turn out to be a saviour to Dashisha.

Female characters dominate male character in the novel. The novelist fails to do justice to male characters whereas the female

characters have been presented in vivid detail. Their feelings, passions habits, lies and dislikes are clearly delineated. The female characters dominate the male characters. For example, Arbor is a man monopolized and controlled by his wife, Sibon. He does not dare say anything in her presence. He is, in short, a man with no voice, a man of no character. Raimon, the hero of the novel, too, acts only as a saviour of his beloved, Dashisha. His only role in the novel is to safeguard Dashisha and to save her life.

The novelist succeeds in the portrayal of female characters. He gives a clear and detailed picture of the life, habits, likes and dislikes feelings and passions of all the female characters. For example, Dashisha is depicted as a beautiful girl in her teens.

Her lover and fiancée, Raimon falls in love with her at his very first meeting with her despite knowing that she is mentally retarded. His love for her is so great that he is ready to sacrifice his own life for her. He helps her attain her normal health by taking the troubles of finding a doctor for the purpose.

Dashisha is depicted as a simple, innocent girl full of bravery and courage to fight for her own right. She possesses all the attributes of a good character. She is intelligent, intuitive and humble too.

Another female character, Daiamon is depicted as a beautiful girl. The novelist compare her beauty with that of “Miss Kantaralanakul Pimpa from Thailand” Besides being beautiful she is intelligent, good at studies, considerate, helpful to her parents and strongwilled. She possesses a very strong character. This is evident in her ability to fight against her mother’s instigation to inject Dashisha, her niece, with poison in the hospital. She is very ambitious young girl of nature. She takes her own stand in the society.

The novelist has given a clear picture of the female characters in the novel neglecting the male characters. Nothing is known about

Arbor's sons. The novelist explains that all the sons of Arbor are suckers who spend their time in enjoyment and merry-making.

Tang Ma Phi Khun Baieit is another novel published in 1984 by the same author. The story is about the sudden death of Bianglang's wife, Melamon. Balari with the help of Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh succeeds in administering poison to Melamon. Balari, who is deeply in love with Biang, treats his daughter Wandashisha with great love and affection. Biang, being a candidate contesting for the M.L.A. election, finds little time to care for her. His being elected as a member of Legislative Assembly from Mawprem Constituency only make him busier than before. He has no time for his daughter or Balari his girl friend. Balari leaves Shillong out of desperation to stay at Calcutta for a weekend. She returns only to find that Biang has developed intimacy with his P.A Patricia. On the other hand, Dr. Pradip Das who has helped Balari in the scheme of administering poison to Biang's wife Melamon, blackmails Balari threatening to confess the truth to Bianglang that Balari is the murderer of his wife. He gives her a chance saying that he will conceal the truth only if she submits herself to him. Pradip fails to reduce Balari due to the sudden appearance of Biang on the scene. Biang takes Balari as a flirt and ignores her. Balari, unable to bear the consequences, decides to commit suicide. She confesses in the suicide note about her true love for him and how in order to get him she has administered poison to Melamon his wife with the help of Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh. Finally Pradip is imprisoned, whereas Biang is left all alone in total darkness. His only consolation is his daughter, Wandashisha.

The novel contains a double plot. The main plot is Bianglang and Balari's friendship and love-affair. The sub-plot is that of Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh and Balari. Balari is seen to have played a dual role in the novel. Her role as a lover and fiancée to Bianglang is to please Biang and his daughter in order that Biang will love her and

consider her a true friend in every adversity. The other role is that she has to keep her friendship with Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh so that her true colours will not be found out by her lover, Biang. Her efforts to please both the men fail since Biang her lover suspects that she is a flirt having a secret affair with Pradip. Pradip, on the other hand, takes full advantage of her, threatening that he will reveal the truth to Biang if she does not allow him to possess her. Finally, we find that she cannot achieve her goal and dies instead. The two plots are intertwined in such a way that one fails to notice the difference between the two. The novelist shows his skill in plot construction.

Having discussed the story and the plot, let me now turn to a more interesting topic, that is, the novelist's art of characterization with special reference to this particular novel. The novelist in this novel succeeds in the portrayal of characters since he has given a clear picture of both the male and female characters. The hero of the novel is Bianglang. He is depicted as a strong-willed and disciplined teacher of one school. He has a manly appearance. He has long hair with shade of gray here and there. He has a fair complexion with a healthy and strong physique. He possesses all the attributes of a good character. He is kind, loyal, considerate, truthful, strong-willed, self-disciplined, responsible, hard-working, rich, manly, intelligent and very brilliant. He is a man with an identity of his own. The reader, after having read the novel cannot forget the name of Bianglang. This proves the novelist's resourcefulness in the portrayal of character.

Another male character, Dr. Pradip Das Lyngdoh, is depicted as a doctor who has finished his studies from Silchar Medical College in 1979. He has a private clinic at Police Bazaar. His father is a Sylheti whose name is Anil Chandra Das and comes from a low caste, the caste of the fishermen. His mother is a Khasi by the name of Meribon Lyngdoh. She has her own plot of land and a house.

Thus she is able to support Pradip in his studies. Pradip is the man who helps Balari in administering poison to Melamon, Bianglang's wife. He is a dirty-minded person and helps in order to get a chance of seducing her. He threatens Balari that he will tell the whole truth if she does not submit her body to him. He is in short a character representing the evil tendencies of human nature. The novelist succeeds in portraying this particular character very well.

Balari is the heroine of the novel. She is depicted as the only daughter of a rich family from Mawsynram village. She is presently staying in Shillong with her parents. She is an educated girl who passed her B.A. and B.Ed from the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong. She is a very beautiful girl. She is a combination of good and evil. She is intelligent, kind, considerate, sincere, intuitive. She is, however, too hasty in taking decision. She is ready to poison Melamon in order to get her husband Bianglang. However, deep in her heart she suffers very much for what she has done to Melamon. She feels guilty and repents for her sins. This is evident in her suicide note confession. She commit suicide in order to pay for her sins. She is however a great woman she considers love as the greatest weapon for her life. She loses Bianglang's confidence in her and feels that she is doomed finally.

Another female character in the novel is Lina. She is depicted as a call-girl at Calcutta. She is a Khasi girl from Shillong, who left her home-town in search of livelihood.

Tang Ma Phi Khun Baieit is a novel based on a new outlook. The male characters in the novel dominate the female characters.

U Mooiong or the Black Gold is L.H. Pde's fifth novel. The novel has a double plot- the first plot is the Raplang-Kalpana Devi plot and the other is the Raplang-Diaghun plot. The first plot ends with the death of Kalpana Devi, Raplang's wife, after giving birth to

a baby girl. Raplang with the help of his mother raises the little girl. Few years later he meets Dianghun, a village girl from Bapung, and marries her.

The novelist presents characters of different status, rank and family background. Raplang is depicted as the hero of the novel. He is the only son of Sneng and Jngiar, the cultivators. His parents send him to school and college at Shillong till he finishes his graduation with honours in Economics. He then gets the job of an administrative officer and married Kalpana. His wife dies after delivering a baby-girl. After a few years he remarried Dianghun, a village girl from Bapung. He is a man of good character. He is hard-working, understanding, obedient towards his parents. Loyal and sincere. He can never forget his first love, Kaplana. His love for her continues even after her death. His hard work enables him to become a rich man in the end.

There are four female characters in the novel. They are Kalpana Devi, Dianghun, Jngiar, and Emhi Dkhar. Kalpana Devi is the daughter of Dhaneswar Sarma, a Brahmin. She has a good physique and is quite beautiful in her own way. She belongs to the modern times and is liberal unlike her parents who are orthodox Brahmins. She is an educated young lady who has finished her graduation. She is loyal, sincere and ready to sacrifice her life for love. She surrenders herself completely to her lover Raplang despite parental opposition. She has a very short life for she soon dies after delivering a baby-girl.

Dianghun Dkhar is the only daughter of Emhi Dkhar and Datne. She is pretty in her own natural way. She is strong-willed, confident, loyal, considerate, simple-minded, good natured, humble and sincere. She faces many obstacles in her married life yet she is firm and, therefore, succeeds in the end.

Emhi Dkhar is the wife of Datne and the mother of Dianghun. She is beautiful, hard-working, and concerned about daughter's welfare.

In this novel, too, we find that the male characters dominate the female characters. Raplang stands out as a man of character and integrity.

Donbok T. Laloo has written many novels. They are *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew Book I and Book II*, *Lasubon Book I & II, III*, *Kam Miet Book I & II*.

Let us look at the plot construction of the novels written by Donbok T. Laloo. *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew* has no plot. It is, however, a novel based on the findings and researches of the novelist about the social and economic problems faced by the Khasi society in modern times. Women are the victims of modern society. Kynsai, the hero of the novel, is sent on a mission by a social organization named 'Kynhun Sohpetbneng'. His duty is to find out the causes of the prevalence of social evils like prostitution. He is amazed to find that there are two types of standard call girls professional and casual. The main reason that leads to prostitution is mainly economic problems caused by broken homes or the desire to raise the standard of living. There are however, some who turn out to be call-girls out of their own free will or out of compulsion since they are kidnapped. The novelist himself returns to 'Kynhun Sohpetbneng' after his mission. The novel has an optimistic end since the novelist envisages a better future for the Khasi society.

There is no heroine in the novel. All the female character in the novel are tarred with same brush. The hero, Kynsai, who is the novelist himself. Kynsai looms large in the novel. The female characters are the call-girls whom Kynsai goes to meet and hold interview with about the reasons behind their career as call-girls.

The novelist accurately depicts the appearance, physical features etc. of the female characters. The call-girls are beautiful and attractive in their own way. He also succeeds in revealing their problems, their feelings and philosophy of life.

Another novel written by Donbok T. Laloo is *Kam Miet Bynta I & II* published in 1988. The novel has a double plot. The main plot is Kupar's relationship with Rosi and the sub-plot is Rang's relationship with Wilan, a call-girl. The main plot starts from the very beginning of the novel where Kupar, a boy of twenty, falls in love with Rosi, a school teacher of thirty years of age. Rosi's father opposes the relationship because of the boy's. Despite her father's opposition Rosi secretly continues her affair with Kupar. Wilan tries ways and means to destroy Kupar's life and confides to Rang about her secret plan to wreck Kupar's reputation. Rang who is a police inspector soon finds out all the details of the conspiracy. He informs his department and the Excise department about the nocturnal business of illicit supply of liquor. Thus Wilan, her gang and Jhem the liquor merchant are caught and jailed.

D.T. Laloo succeeds in the portrayal of women characters. The woman characters dominated the male characters. Rosi, the heroine of the novel is depicted as a pretty young woman in her thirties. She is the only daughter in the family. She possesses all the attributes of a good character. She is an orthodox Christian, an intelligent and bright teacher, loyal and truthful to her lover, obedient towards her parents, confident and strong-willed. As a round character she is not flawless. She confides to her lover, Kupar, that she has lost her virginity during her teenage days because she was forcibly seduced by a young boy. Kupar, on learning this gets furious and he too grabs her with the intention to leave her for good. Rosi suffers immensely after that and decides to end her life by committing suicide. She is saved by Kupar's father who learns about her secret

and comes to her place to have a one- on – one talk with her father about their relationship. Thus Rosi meets Kupaar in the end.

Rosi contributes much to the development of the play in that she is able to prevail upon Kupaar irrespective of his past misdoings.

Another female character, Wilan, is depicted as a beautiful call-girl who has had an affair with Kupaar before. She is flirtatious by nature and has had innumerable affairs becoming a call-girl. When pregnant, she claims Kupaar as her husband since she loves him most. Kupaar's denial as the baby's father irritates her and she decides to take revenge on him whenever she gets the chance. Therefore when she sees Kupaar going together with Rosi to a movie she takes revenge on him by making a telephone call to Rosi's father to tell him that Kupaar is married to her and that he has deserted her in pregnancy. The news shocks Rosi's father and he immediately warns his daughter never to be friend Kupaar any longer. Wilan does not stop here. She takes further revenge on Kupaar in a restaurant saying that he raped her. Thus Kupaar is taken to the Police Station and locked up by the police. In the end we find that Wilan meets with a serious car accident and is seriously injured. She repents for what she has done.

Kupaar, the hero of the novel, is depicted as a twenty year old boy who falls in love with Rosi. Though young in age yet he is courageous and straight-forward. This is seen in his courage to go nonchalantly to Rosi's house. He is intelligent and has passed his Pre-University examinations but discontinues his studies and helps his father in the business. He is handsome, strong and yet fickle-minded. He has loved Rosi from the very first day that he sees her, yet on learning that she is no longer a virgin he begins to suspect her. He even ignores her after making love to her. He is not unimpeachable. He is said to have had an acquaintance with Wilan, a call-girl. It is Rosi who changes and modifies his life. In the end we find that Kupaar marries Rosi and that brings the novel to a happy ending.

Rang, another male character in the novel, is depicted as a police inspector who succeeds in the scheme of finding the liquor supplier and the man and woman involved in the night operation of liquor supply. He starts his mission by having a close acquaintance with Wilan, a call-girl. His tactics and intelligence win Wilan's and Jhem's confidence. He gives the necessary information to the Police and Excise Department. Thus on an appointed time and day, Wilan, her gang, and Jhem the liquor merchant are caught. The role of Rang in the novel is to find the culprit. He is able to save Kubar's prestige and proves his innocence since Wilan has confided to Rang about her plan to take revenge on Kubar. Therefore, the role of Rang in the novel is very significant in the novel.

Thus we find that in the novel the female characters are more vibrant than their male counterparts. The novelist, perhaps, is better equipped to portray female characters than male characters.

Another novelist that I want to deal with is Remy Phankon. He has written only one novel so far and the name of the novel is *Dak Bangla I & II*. The novel has two plots, Dalin- Shankhmat episode and Shilak – Linda episode. Dalin or Linda is the only daughter of Lanot, who has lost her father in her childhood. Lanot remarries Shankhmat. Shankhmat forcibly seduces Dalin during her mother's absence. Lanot and her friends catch Shankhmat red handed. Shankhmat while trying to escape, falls down and dies. Dalin runs away from home and comes to Shillong in search of a new livelihood. Unluckily, she meets Sianti who introduces her to Rapsbun, a girl-supplier. Rapsbun takes Dalin to Calcutta and sells her to Mr. Prakash, a manager of prostitutes. Thus Dalin becomes a prostitute with a new name 'Linda'.

Linda comes to Shillong only once, at a time when Padiak and Maitphang, the crooks request her to come for a few days. Linda comes to meet her friends who introduce her to Shilak, a rich

contractor. The four of the set off for Lumpyllun and spend the night at a guest house. They indulge themselves in drink and food. Shilak and Linda make love to each other and fall asleep. Meanwhile Padiah and Maitphang take Shilak's briefcase full of money and try to break the lock. Shilak wakes up in time to see his two friends' mischief. In his struggle to get back his money he is stabbed to death. They bury the dead body under the floor of the room itself and hastily leave the place with Linda. However, the three of them meet with an accident on the way and die.

There is also one more episode and that is the Shilak episode. The novel does not end with the death of Shilak. The guest house turns out to be haunted by ghosts. The ghost is none other than Shilak himself. This underscores the Khasi belief and suspicion about the supernatural powers of the dead. According to Khasi belief, the bones of a person who dies in an accident should be purified through **Umkoi Umsham**. The bones thus purified can be put together in a Mawbah of a particular clan. Shilak's dead body remains inside the four walls of the guest house. Every night his ghost appears and kills those who happen to stay in the room and disturb him. The police, ignorant about the ghosts, suspect Rang, the Chowkidar as a murderer. After a long interval of time, we find that with the help of Pynshai, a well-known ritual performer, Shilak's ghost is driven away from the guest house. The skeleton of Shilak is found from under the room.

Shilak is depicted as the hero of the novel. The novelist gives a detailed description about his character. Further, he is given the main role in the novel. All the other characters rotate around him. The name of Shilak appears in the very beginning of the novel. He is described as a rich government contractor who is married to Jrain, a domineering woman. He has two daughters. He is kind, generous, proud, spendthrift, boastful and womaniser. He always want people

to know that he is rich man. He is in his mid thirties possessing a car and a house. He therefore possesses positive as well as negative qualities. The negative qualities present in him enable his two friends, Maitphang and Padiah, the crooks, to take advantage of him. He is killed in the end. Shilak's death is caused by his own carelessness. He extends his friendship to Maitphang and Padiah without having a proper knowledge of their antecedents. He meets them in the restaurant and confides that he is a government contractor without caring to ask about their backgrounds. Another reason leading to his tragic end is perhaps his own character. As stated earlier he is a womanizer. Padiah and Maitphang's readiness to provide a woman for him pleases him very much that he readily accepts their suggestion to go to Lumpyllun for a night's stay at a guest house. His wife's possessive character is another factor responsible for his tragic end. On opening page of the novel we learn that he is a busy man, who has very few friends to accompany him at home. The reason is that Jrain is a violent and stubborn woman. She is rude and un-courteous to visitors, friends and neighbours". Shilak's death fills the readers heart with a sense of pity and fear. The most horrifying aspect is the spirit of Shilak that haunts the guest house after his death. The guests who happen to stay in the room where the dead body of Shilak is buried are killed by his spirit, as stated earlier.

Shilak is a round character and is undoubtedly the best specimen of male characters.

Dalin later known as Linda, is the heroine of the novel. The novelist narrates the life of Dalin reporting that she is the only daughter of Lanot and has lost her father in her childhood. Her stepfather rapes her and since then she has left her village and becomes a prostitute in Calcutta. She undergoes bitter experience in life and therefore becomes desperate and frustrated. She is used by men, loses confidence in herself and God. She is defeated because she

cannot fight against the heavy odds in her life. She meets a tragic end through an accident. Therefore her death is not justified since she commit no crime like Padiah and Maitphang, the crooks. Though a prostitute by profession she possesses a much better character than Padiah ad Maitphang. One cannot help feeling pity for her trial and tribulation in life.

We find that a male character, Shilak dominates the other characters like Linda. Maitphang Padian and Jrain. The other characters are only a foil to the hero.

Gloster S. Rapthap is a recent modern novelist. His competence as a novelist is proved through his two novels – *Ka Miet Badum Book I & II* and *Sha Sor Ka Mem Baieit, Book I & II*. His novels are the first of their kind and create a new era in the history of Khasi fiction. His themes are not restricted to Meghalaya only but range outside of it. He proves his skill in the art of narration, plot construction ad characterization.

Ka Miet Badum Part I & II was published in 1988. The theme is love and its complication. There are two plots in it – Raplang-Kerlin episode and Kerlin – Dawamon episode. The author in the person of Raplang narrates the story. Raplang is returning from college one night when suddenly there is rainfall blocking his way back home. In order to prevent himself from getting wet, he takes shelter in a bus stand. There he views a horrifying scene of a deserted house and hears the baby crying. Then a woman dressed in white with a golden necklace appears from the backyard of the house. After while, a black Ambassador car appears from nowhere. A police officer and a woman step out of the car and disappear into the backyard of the house. The sight so horrifies him that Raplang approaches the house for safety. He knocks at the door and Kong Janai, a fair woman, appears before him. She welcomes him inside the house and offers a cup of tea. He learns from her that the horrifying

sight that he has seen is an apparition. Thus an intimacy grows up between Raplang and Kong Janai and her daughters – Berlin and Kerlin. Raplang falls in love with Kerlin and propose to her. Kerlin accepts the proposal with the consent of her parents. Their love affair flourished for sometime. Complications start due to Kong Janai's sudden realization of the innumerable proposals made to Kerlin by some rich youngsters. Raplang discontinues his visit to Kerlin's place. Berlin too is married to Lamphrang Bynnud and goes to stay with her husband at Nongthymmai. Kerlin is left alone with no friends. Dawamon's appearance pleases, Kerlin very much especially when he promises to get her a job. Dawamon tries ways and means to ruin Kerlin's relationship with Raplang. He instigates Kerlin's neighbour to spread scandals against Raplang. Thus the relationship between the two ends abruptly. Out of desperation both of them become alcoholics. Raplang, in a state of drunkenness, meets Bahun and decides to marry her. The two are engaged to get married very soon. In the meantime, Dawamon, an agent of the girl-supplier from Calcutta, coaxes Kerlin into believing that he is her true lover. Kerlin blindly accepts the proposal without realizing that he is a married man. Dawamon shows her an appointment letter of a job at Guahati. Kerlin confides to her mother about her relationship with Dawamon and the job that he has got for her. Her mother in order to save her daughter's prestige asks Dawamon to marry her daughter. On the appointed day, Dawamon comes drunk to marry Kerlin. Kong Bither, his wife puts her foot down and takes him away. Kerlin faces shame and dishonour in life. At last unable to tolerate the consequences any longer she decides to go to Guahati and joins the job that Dawamon has got for her. Dawamon tells her to go with an officer in his car. Kerlin, ignorant that the Officer is a crook, follows him. Thus she is kidnapped to Lumding and is kept in Friend's hotel. Her parents on learning that Kerlin has not arrived at Guahati requests Raplang to find her. Raplang who is a detective

under oriental Detective Agency at Bombay frees Kerlin from the crooks and brings her home.

The novelist intends to intersperse the plot of Kerlin's love and marriage with Raplang – Bahun episode. However, the two episodes serve as a connecting thread to the main plot.

Gloster S. Rapthap succeeds in the portrayal of male as well as female characters. Raplang who is the mouth piece of the author, is depicted as a young man in his twenties who is doing his B.Sc in college. He is a man of good character. He is the only son of rich family. Though rich, yet he is well-behaved and humble. He is straightforward, intelligent, courageous, strong and handsome. As a lover he is loyal and his love for Kerlin is true and sincere. He loves Kerlin till the last, despite the several obstacles that he comes across. As a young man of the present age, he is not from temptations He becomes a drunkard out of desperation since Kerlin does not trust his love and deserts him.

Dawamon another male character is depicted as a round character. He is aggressive egoistic, eccentric, money-minded and heartless. He is a married man yet he flirts with Kerlin for the sake of money. He intends to win her confidence so that he will be able to sell her out to a girl-supplier at Calcutta. He plays a very important role in the novel.

Kerlin is depicted as the youngest daughter of Kong Janai. She is a eighteen year old girl preparing for her matriculate examination. She is beautiful innocent, straightforward, kind, generous yet fickle-minded and intransigent at times. She loves Raplang from the very start. Her love for him grows stronger and stronger each day. She believes in his love despite her mother's opposition. She is a strong-willed character. This seen in her struggle to preserve her virginity even though she has been kidnapped and

sold to the girl-supplier and locked at Friend's hotel in Lumding. She confides to Raplang that she is ready to kill herself by taking a poisonous tablet in order to prevent herself from being seduced. She is a round character. As a heroin she has an identity of her own. She dominates all the other female characters in the novel. Almost all the characters rotate around her.

Berlin is the eldest sister of Kerlin. She plays her part well as a sister who shares the sorrows and joys of her sister. She gets married to Lamphrang Bynnud from Nongthymmai. She acts as a reporter and reports all the facts to Raplang's relationship with Kerlin. In the first place, she is the one who informs Raplang of the scandal spread against him by some people that causes Kerlin to break away from him. In the last part of the novel she is the one who informs Raplang about the disappearance of Kerlin when she is expected to be at Guahati. Her part is a vital one for the smooth completion of the theme.

Another female character is Kong Janai, the mother of Berlin and Kerlin. She is depicted as a hospitable, kind-hearted, understanding, humble though fickle-minded at times. She has a great responsibility towards her children. She wants to see her daughters prospering in their day to day life. She does everything in order to please her children. The negative qualities of her character sometimes get the better of her. When her daughter Kerlin receives innumerable proposals from rich young men she feels proud of her daughter's beauty and feels that Raplang is no longer fit to be her daughter's husband. Her fickle-mindedness spoils her daughter's life. However, in the end she repents for what she has done and once again she reunites, her daughter Kerlin to Raplang in her death-bed.

Another novel written by Gloster S. Rapthap is *Sha Sor Ka Mem Baieit* published in 1989. There are two plots in it, Donald – Rosie episode and Donald – Danica episode. There is also another sub-plot- Rosie–Danica episode.

The plot starts with the arrival of two young Anglo-Indian girls at Shillong looking for Pinewood Hotel. The street boys or punks, as the author calls them, on hearing them asking about Pinewood Hotel politely guide them to the hotel taking the road that goes to Wards Lake. Instead of taking straight to Pinewood, they lead them to Golflinks trying to seduce them. Luckily Donald Majaw with the police help saves them eventually. The punks are thus taken to the police station to be locked-up. Donald takes the responsibility of guiding the young ladies to the hotel. Thus within their short stay at Shillong a strong intimacy develops among them. Donald and Rosie fall in love with each other. Daisy soon gets married with Babul and leaves her home to stay with her husband at Guahati. Rosie is left to stay with her mother in Halflong. Her mother is opposed to her relationship with Donald and forces her to break away from him. Rosie falls ill out of desperation and is hospitalized for ten months. During this period, her mother hides all the letters that she receives from Donald. At last she writes a letter to him bluffing him that Rosie is no longer interested in him and that she is engaged to another man at Halflong. Donald out of desperation turns to Danica for consolation. He is amazed to find that he is in love with her. His love for Danica grows stronger and stronger each day. In the midst of such happiness, Rosie appears to confuse him. Rosie confides to him about her illness. She secretly learns from Danica that Donald is having an affair with Danica after breaking from her. Rosie feels responsible for the situation and decides to go away from his life. On reaching her home-town she sends both of them invitation to come to her place for the wedding ceremony of her niece; she however warns Danica not to tell Donald about the truth. Thus the two set off for the journey to Halflong. On the way Danica is kidnapped to Lumding by some kidnappers. Donald, on failing to find Danica goes straightaway to Rosie's place. Rosie confides to Donald that is her wedding and pleads with him to tell her about the

whereabouts of Danica. Donald tells her about Danica's sudden disappearance from the train. Rosie further instructs Donald to find Danica immediately. Rosie dies after Donald's departure before going to Church. Donald undergoes many obstacles in his struggle to find Danica. He is able at last to free her from the kidnappers.

Donald Majaw is depicted as the hero of the novel. He appears from the very beginning of the novel in the form of a saviour or rescuer who saves the young ladies Rosie and Daisy from getting seduced by the punks. He is depicted as handsome, strong, straightforward, kind, generous, friendly and ready to help anyone in distress. He himself tells Daisy Clare "... to help mankind is my hobby." As a lover he is loyal and truthful. He loves Rosie very much. His love for her continues even after breaking away from her. This is evident in his readiness to accept her once more in his second meeting with her. He loves Danica too, with whom he has an affair after breaking away from Rosie. He respects Danica and her relatives so much that he does not dare to break their hearts. However, we can easily differentiate his love for Rosie and that for Danica. In the first instance Donald's love springs out of his heart whereas in the latter case it is out of compulsion and perhaps desperation. On learning that Rosie is getting married he turns to Danica and wishes to find her immediately. Therefore Donald is fickle minded and has no steadfast mind about anything. It is this weakness in him that brings about confusion in his life. He believes that time will heal everything. Donald plays his part well in the novel. He has an identity of his own.

Another male character in the novel is Babul. He is depicted as the husband of Daisy, Rosie's eldest sister. He has a very small part to play. He is a man who takes possession of Daisy by taking her to Guahati thus leaving Rosie in solitary confusion. He appears during Rosie's stay in the hospital to accompany his wife. He appears,

too, in the end of the novel as a visitor at Rosie's wedding and death.

Shanbor is another male character in the novel. He is depicted as a friend of Donald who is ready to lend his Maruti car to the young ladies, Rosie and Daisy, for sight-seeing. He is the husband of Sunita and brother-in-law of Danica, Donald's girl-friend. He is kind, generous, humorous, broad-minded and has a great love and responsibility towards his wife, children and to his sister-in-law, Danica. He plays his part well as a friend and comforter of Donald. He acts as an adviser to Donald in times of stress and strain. He is a reliable friend till the end.

Rosie Clare is a female character in the novel. She is the younger sister of Daisy Clare and a girl-friend and lover of Donald Majaw. She is depicted as a flat character. She loves Donald so much that she ends her life for his sake. She has a great heart and is ready to suffer for the sake of her lover. She knows that Donald is having an affair with Danica after breaking away from her. She does not want to stand between their love. She, therefore, leaves Donald for good and pleads with him to love and marry Danica. She undergoes great suffering in her life for no fault of her own. It is her mother who cheats her by hiding all the letters that she receives from Donald during her illness. Her mother instigates Donald through a letter to break away from Rosie since she is engaged to another man. Rosie loves and respects her mother so much that she does not even dare say anything against her mother's misdeed. She proves her true love to Donald by taking away her life before marriage.

Daisy Clare is another female character in the novel. She is the eldest sister of Rosie. She is depicted as an understanding, passionate, generous and kind-hearted woman. She tries to help her sister in time of stress and strain by pleading with her mother not oppose Rosie's love affair with Donald but in vain. She lacks courage,

and compassion as an elder sister for she does not fight for her sister's sake. She is a weak character.

Danica may be regarded as the heroine of the novel. Unlike Rosie, she is active till the end of the novel. Her names appears in the second chapter in a conversation between Donald and Shanbor. She is depicted as a beautiful girl. She is warmhearted, generous, loyal, truthful though sometimes she cannot control her anger. She loves and respects Donald and feels pity for the desperation caused to him by Rosie's deceit. Therefore, when he proposes to her she readily accepts him and promises to be loyal and truthful to him. She is courageous, strong-willed and humorous too. She meets her lover in the end as she has always wanted.

Ka Kam Kalbut is W. Tiewsoh's first novel published in 1975. It has a love-theme. U Mel, the hero of the novel, is left all alone with no relatives after the sudden death of his father. He is compelled to discontinue his studies at Shillong and returns to his village at Mustoh to resume the work of his father. He becomes a school master in a primary school and looks after a plot of cultivated land left by his father. He meets Noli, Along's eldest daughter and falls in love with her. Their love undergoes several ups and downs because of the opposition of the girl's parents. The opposition in turn strengthens their ties and ultimately the two get married on their own without the parent's knowledge or consent. Along, the girl's father gets furious because of this act. He tries ways and means to put an end to their relationship. He does not succeed because their love is firm, strong and invincible. Noli dies after delivering her third child. Her death causes a great disaster to Mel who now has to look after his three children, the youngest of all is only 3 months old and in great need of the mother. Mel, however, does not lose confidence in himself and gradually overcomes all the obstacles and finally turns out to be a rich and successful businessman.

Noli is the heroine of the novel. She is the eldest daughter of Along, the village chief, and of Billianda.

Noli's family believes in the Khasi traditional religion. According to their custom, a young girl gets married only after taking part in the traditional festival dances for three times. Noli has taken part in the dances for three times and therefore, it is favourable time for her to get married. However, she has not received any proposal so far. Mel is the only person who has proposed, to her. She accepts his proposal for she has fallen in love with him right from her first meeting with him.

Noli is a beautiful girl. She is a bright and beautiful girl. Her beauty is also remarked by Kordon in his conversation with Mel –

‘She is beautiful indeed, I told you she matches you so well’.

Mel, her lover, notices her beauty right from his first meeting with her while they are crossing the river. He finds her more charming and attractive in his second meeting with her. Her voice is soft and musical and thrills him very much. He feels that she is beyond his reach. Yet he loves her dearly.

Noli is loyal towards her lover. She has given word to her lover that she will remain faithful to him forever. Despite her father's opposition of her love affairs with Mel, she does not give up easily. Her love for him is so great that she bears all the unbearable scolding, and acrimony of her father. She is very much humiliated and suffers intensely. At last unable to bear the trauma, she runs away to her lover and settles down with him.

She is also loyal and faithful towards her parents. This is evident from the fact that she never grumbles and patiently listens to what they say. She has always wanted to marry a man with their consent. However, when her father strongly opposes her relationship with

Mel, a school-teacher much loved and respected by the entire village she is deeply hurt. Her father strongly condemns Mel as a hypocrite who side with his opponent during the **Wadar Ship election**. He abuses his daughter for loving and wanting to marry such a hypocrite. This greatly upsets her and finally she leaves her parental home and goes to stay with her lover once and for all.

She is a strong-willed character. She is by her husband's side always even in times of crisis. Her parent's opposition and dislike continue even after their marriage. They try their best to spoil her married life so that she returns to them with repentance. Their expectations are belied. Their opposition only strengthens her love.

Like all rustic girls she is sincere, obedient and hard-working too. As a housewife she does all the household work and helps her husband in cultivation. She is a woman who believes that when love and skill work together, one can achieve a miracle. Though she lives in poverty with her husband yet she is happy and satisfied.

She is also very friendly and tactful in her dealings with friends, relatives and neighbours. Almost all the villagers pay frequent visits to her place, and help her in times of need. She has a good soul and is dynamics. She is loved and respected by all. Their household commands respect from all the villagers.

Despite all her virtues Noli yet undergoes several trials in life. Her father does not forgive her till the end. On one occasion we find that her father, being the headman of the village, issues an order that each and every household in the village must send a single person, a man or woman, to cherrapunjee village for carrying the Army's loads down to Shella. Anyone who fails to turn up will be fined Rs.50/- each. It so happens that Mel, Noli's husband, is seriously ill at the time. Noli too has just delivered a child and, therefore, she is not in a position to go. Noli, afraid of not able to pay the fine, decides to

go in her husband's place. Despite her husband's resistance, Noli goes to Cherrapunjee. When she returns from her journey she falls seriously ill and dies.

Noli suffers for no fault of her own. Her father kills her. Her death causes a great loss to her husband, her children and to the villagers as well. The villagers condemn her father for being wicked and unpardonably perverse.

Another female character in the novel is Billianda, Noli's mother and the wife of Along, the headman of Mustoh village. Billianda is divided between two different worlds – the world of her husband, and the world of her children. She fails to please either side and remains helpless. Her failure causes a great disaster to her household and thus her world is shattered to piece in the end.

Billianda is a good and devoted wife. She respects her husband very much, to the extent that she dares not go against his stubborn will, even though she is fully aware of his bad intentions and motives. Whatever he says is a command to her. She intends to marry off her eldest daughter, Noli, to Mel, a school-teacher. She abruptly drops the idea as soon as her husband expresses his disapproval. She is largely responsible for her husband's wretched character and despicable nature.

Unlike most Khasi mother, she neglects her brother and kurs (clansmen) and never seeks their advice or opinion on a family matter as prevalent in the Khasi custom. She fails to guide her children to the right path. The face dishonour and ignominy at the end.

Despite the flaw in her character, she realises her mistakes. Her husband blames her for the elopement of her eldest daughter Noli. She gets very furious when she hears this. She scolds her husband and accuses him of being irresponsible, possessive, dominating and proud as a father.

She shows her sympathy towards her daughter by giving away a plot of cultivated land to her on the advice of her maternal uncle. She is too weak to fight against her husband's aggressive character.

Ka Melody is a novel written by Khrawkupar Kharlukhi and published in 1989. The novel is based on a story about a girl, Melody who becomes blind during her teens. She is the only child in the family. She has lost her mother during her childhood. Her father is an I.A.S. officer working in New Delhi. She is left under the care of her aunt and uncle. Her father loves and cares for her very much. Despite his busy profession, he visits her twice or thrice a year. His visits gradually become less frequent from the time of his remarriage. Yet, he continues to send garment, presents and a large sum of money, and writes letters to Melody's uncle and aunt. Melody's life is full of fun, gaiety and joy. After passing out her P.U Exams, her life suddenly change because she turns blind. The reason behind this is the wrong eyedrop being poured into her diseased eyes. Kitlang, a young boy from Jaiaw, falls in love with Melody at first sight. He learns that she is a blind girl, yet he cannot help loving her. His mother opposes his idea and warns him not to get involved with her. Kit, however, is pining for her love. At last, unable to bear the secrecy any longer, he decides to declare his love for her. He declares that he will be loyal to her always. His mother and maternal uncle are worried about his affair with Melody. They tries ways and means to make him forget her but in vain. They tell him to get married with Kiki, a rich neighbour, whom he has known since his childhood. Their opposition only strengthens his love for Melody and he finally decides not to leave her come what may. He then tries to find out ways and means to cure her blindness. He writes a letter to Karlan's aunt who is a nurse in A.I.I.M.S at Delhi telling her about Melody's yes. Kit receives a letter from Melody father who assures him of his close relationship with his daughter. Melody's father died suddenly leaving behind a will that in the event of his death, his eyes shall be donated to his

daughter. Mr. Dring, Melody's uncle, requests Kitlang to accompany Melody to Delhi for her treatment. He seeks permission from Kit's father too. Kit readily accepts the offer. Meanwhile Melody dies in an accident caused by Kiki who threatens to stab Kit. His beloved's death is a stunning blow. He lives brooding over her death.

Melody is the heroine of the novel. The story of the novel rotates around her life. She belongs to a modern society, yet her life is different for she lives in an isolated world of her own. She is an ideal woman of the modern age for she is able to retain her better instincts despite the evils present in modern society.

Melody is a pretty girl. Her lover and fiancée, Kitlang regards her a rare beauty like that of a 'fairy'. Kitlang explains her beauty thus:

"I see an innocent girl full of gentleness. Her cheeks are soft and clean, her lips red and soft, her chin is well-shaped. Her hair is curly and soft like a cotton plume. Her complexion is fair and clear as if it is being massaged by skin experts. She wears black goggles..."

Mimi, a young girl and Kit's niece, cannot help praising Melody's beauty to her grandmother thus: "Grandma, we met a friend of our maternal uncle who is exquisitely beautiful..."

Kitlang finds her prettier by the day. She is a perfect beauty to him. On one occasion when he goes to meet her he finds her knitting in the verandah of her place. She is not aware of his arrival so Kit finds an excellent opportunity to view her pretty face. Her wet curly hair hangs on both sides of her shoulder. Her beautiful and well-shaped figure overwhelms Kitlang and he has an urge to possess and own her. She is very attractive young woman. She is totally incomparable. She wears a thin frock with short sleeves revealing her well-shaped and fair legs.

Her beauty is enhanced by her fastidiousness in dress. Kitlang, her lover, is struck to see her nicely dressed each time he meets her. One day when he goes to meet her he finds her putting on a yellow cardigan and a violet like frock, a well-blended colour that suits her perfectly well. She blossoms beautifully in such a dress.

Unlike modern girls, Melody has a great love for nature. Though she is a blind girl she praises nature and its surroundings. She can easily locate the herbs, ferns and creepers available in the surroundings through her extra-sensory intuition. She asks Kitlang to pluck some ferns by directing him to a place where the ferns grow. She then offers them to his niece and nephew. She is philosopher who believes in nature and its. She feels sorry for people who are divorced from Nature. This is evident in her wistful statement to her lover.

People nowadays have strange thoughts, sorrow and anxiety blind their eyes and deafen their ears... Most of the people are changing. They are busy with this materialistic world they strive after wealth, power, influence and so on. When they wake up in the morning they no longer sing or whistle because of their dirty thoughts. They often feel offended and suspect everyone. They have no love for their brother and trust to friends.

Melody is very intelligent, sensitive and logical. Kitlang is shocked to discover that she is a blind girl. He had not noticed it until Melody herself told him, within a very short time in his first meeting with her, he learns that she is more intelligent and accurate than any normal girl of her age. She is polite, well-behaved and a good conversationalist. She seems to know everything that happens in the world. Kitlang feels very sorry for her. Yet Melody, who has read his thoughts tells him "You need not worry for me ... I have lived in total darkness since my teenage days and I am used to it. It is no longer a problem for me. I am quite happy and contented with

myself. Yes, I can no longer take part in youthful enjoyments like sports or other entertainments like all the youngsters. My life is a quiet one yet it is full of happiness and perhaps contentment too. I have to sacrifice so many things but I dare say that happiness fills my heart as much as yours.

The above utterances express, her courage and confidence despite her blindness, she is ready to fight for survival like all normal people. It is a strange spirit not present in a handicapped person. She is ready to face the world and its challenges come what may. She accepts her fate with equanimity.

Further, Melody possesses self respect and is averse to pity. This is evident in her reaction towards Kit's proposal to befriend her. She thinks that Kit's proposal of extending his relationship with her is a result of the pity he feels for her loneliness. She therefore begs him not to misunderstand her feelings by saying: "Brother, I am scared lest you misunderstand me, I am not begging for your friendship. She further says "How come a youngster like you can offer your friendship to a woman like me. I have nothing to offer you in return; I will be a burden to you."

She is hard-working, tenacious and helpful to others. She never stays idle. She does not want to be a burden to anyone. She always spends her time knitting cardigans which she offers as presents to her blind friends whenever she calls on them. She also likes gardening, and flowers that bloom in the garden are offered to her blind friends. Once a week she goes to a Nursing Home for the blind at Laitumkhrah. This shows how good and helpful and unselfish she is towards others. She forgets her own miseries and likes to share other's sorrows.

As a lover, she is loyal, sincere, truthful, understanding and considerate towards her fiancée and lover Kitlang. She realises her own position as a blind woman and does not want her lover, when

she truly loves with all her heart, to suffer on her account. She ignores his marriage proposal saying that she will be a burden to him. This shows how strong and great she is as a woman. She tells, Kit "I am a woman who means nothing to my family, to my neighbours and to you." She further goes on to say "Because my future is dark like the world I live in, I do not want you to fall in this dark pitch... You are a man with a bright future awaiting you but the fruit of my life is total darkness."

Kitlang is proud of having possessed such a beautiful woman of perfect character. This is evident in his words when he says to himself: "She is my angel and no one but I have a right to possess her..."

Melody has a great love and affection towards children. This is shown by her reaction towards her fiancée's niece and nephews. On her first meeting with them she gives them ferns that she plucks from the hills as a sign of love. The children too are drawn towards her. Melody is greatly loved and admired by her lover Kitlang, his parents, his sisters, his nieces, nephews and friends. Kit loves her so much that he often calls her 'the queen of his heart, and the salt of the World.'

Melody dies while trying to save her lover Kitlang from being killed by Kiki, a frustrated woman who is desperately in love with him. Her death causes a great loss not only her lover but to her family, friends, neighbours, to her lover's family and to the society as well. She is missed by everyone who have met and befriended her. She has set a good example to the Khasi society, especially in these modern times.

Another female character is Kiki. She comes from a rich family and is the only daughter. She is a respectful girl who is deeply in love with Kitlang, who does not return her love. Kitlang and Kiki are neighbours. Their friendship begins right from their childhood days.

Their relationship continues till their teenage days yet Kit has no special feeling for her. He is merely acquainted with her. When Kiki goes to stay at Jorhat during her holidays, Kit does not feel lonely without her. Actually, Kit forgets her as soon as he meets Melody. Kiki cannot bear Kit's affair with Melody. She tries ways and means to spoil his love affair by setting a trap for him. She finds an opportunity to trap him during the car accident where she is injured. She confesses in the presence of her family members and friends that she cannot live without him and requests him not to leave her anymore. This irritates Kitlang who has no such feeling towards her. Kit's maternal uncle is glad to hear such news and forces him to have an affair with Kiki, whom he considers as an ideal partner for Kit since she comes from a rich and respectable family.

Kit's mother considers Kiki as an ideal partner for Kit because she is a girl of good character who has confessed that she truly loves Kit in the presence of all the family members. Kit too cannot deny the fact about Kiki when he says; "She is a perfect woman considering her looks, character and behaviour" yet I cannot marry her because I happen to love another woman who is blind.

Kiki is a woman who cannot accept defeat from anyone. She is greatly offended when Kit denies his love for her. She threatens Kit that he will have to pay dearly for this when she utters these words: "Mind you Kit, I will never forget this. I have never despised by anyone in my life. A time will come when I shall take revenge on you and your Melody, mind you."

This reveals her desperation, jealousy, possessiveness, and stubborn character. She further shows her frustration. When she takes out a knife and threatens to cut Kit's throat just because he refuses to love her. She blames Melody for snatching away Kit from her life. She is therefore a weak character who has no feelings for others. Her frustration gets the better of her and she takes her revenge

on Kit and Melody by taking out her knife and threatens to kill them. Melody in order to save her lover gets herself killed by Kiki. Kiki too falls into a river and dies on the spot.

References :

1. R.S.Lyngdoh, "Shikyntien arkyntien kwai" A preface to P.R.Pariat's *Ka Shankhawiah Ki Rang*, p. vi.
2. -Do- p. ix.
3. P.R.Pariat, *Shankhawiah Ki Rang*, p. 91.
4. -Do- p. 61.
5. -Do-
6. -Do- p. 89.
7. -Do- p. 7.
8. Op-cit. - p. 23.
9. -Do- p. 31.
10. Op-cit. - p. 9.
11. L.H.Pde, The Sun Magazine, "Khasi Novelist", Vol. XII, 1989. p. 26/xii
12. -Do- p. 35.
13. -Do-
14. Op.cit. - p.
15. L.H.Pde, *U Raimon bad ka Dashisha*, p. 9.

16. L.H.Pde, *Tang Maphi Khun Baieid*, pp. 3-4.
17. Remy G Phankon, *Ka Dak Bangla*, I, 1st edition, 1989. p. 1.
18. Gloster G.Rapthap, *Sha Sor Ka Mem Baieit*, Part I ed. 1989. p. 8.
19. K.Kharlukhi, *Melody*, 1989. p. 6.
20. K.Kharlukhi, *Melody*, p. 68.
21. -Do- p. 45.
22. -Do- p. 45.
23. -Do- pp. 6-7.
24. -Do- p. 13.
25. -Do- p. 14.
26. -Do- p. 48.
27. -Do- p. 49.
28. -Do- p. 51.
29. -Do- p. 61.
30. -Do- p. 61.
31. -Do- p. 62.
32. -Do- p. 81.

CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter I have discussed the concept of Khasi womanhood; They are different from the woman of other Societies in that Khasi women share equal status with men. Therefore, a Khasi thinks that no feminist movement is relevant to the Khasi society. Perhaps the Khasis are the only race in the world which considers the mother as the sould of life; the fountainhead of inspiration; the preserver of all traditions, usages and conventions; the guardian of all ancestral properties and above all, the keeper of the clan's religious rites. If a woman happens to be a *Khadduh* she prepares all the necessary items for various religious ceremonies but, it is her maternal uncles or brothers who perform the rituals. Some are not confined to household chores only. They contribute to the family income by engaging themselves in different economic activities. Traditionally, women cannot participate in village councils or State assembly. They cannot normally hold office of Syiemship, Sirdarship, Lyngdohship or Wahadarship. They are, however, free to participate in all socio-cultural activities like dances, celebrations, weddings and funerals.

Though the practice of clan lineage and inheritance of property is followed from the mother's side, yet woman are not all powerful. She is a much harassed individual, for, she has to shoulder heavy responsibilities to ensure the welfare of the family. She is to look after the welfare of the orphans, widows and widowers of the

clan in trying times. Hence, within the clanland a plot of land known as “Ka Ri-phniang” is kept apart, and the income from there is used for giving shelter to needy people who are still considered part of the clan.

The second chapter entitled Khasi Womenhood in the idyllic world is further sub-divided into two section – “A” and “B”. “A” is entitled *The Good Old World of P.E. Swer ad S.J.D. Hoojon*, whereas section “B” is entitled Realistic Portrayal of the Khasi Women.

P.E. Swer succeeds in portraying a flawless traditional Khasi woman through his heroine Lekhimai. She is a specimen of an ideal Khasi woman who gets married to Mangkara according to Khasi religion and culture. She is often endearingly addressed ‘Chakoina’, a name signifying the good qualities of her character.

S.J.D. Hoojon, too, succeeds in portraying women characters like Shatai Rande and Kmie u Bor. Like all village maidens Shatai is modest, humble, respectful ad intelligent. She dare not accept the Syiem’s proposal without her brother’s consent. Kmie u Bor is depicted as a hospitable, considerate ad loyal partner of her husband.

Lasubon and Pherlibon of D.T. Laloo are depicted as simple young women belonging to their times. Shitala Koina, Kortimai ad Syntiwwbon of D.S. Khongdup are good examples of Khasi womanhood. So also Maibon Rani and Meirisan of D.S. Khongdup are responsible mothers greatly concerned for the welfare of their children.

The two great World wars of the 20th Century are responsible for bringing about all kinds of social evils in the Khasi society. Women, being so vulnerable are the first to be victimized. Examples can be cited from P.R. Pariat’s play, *Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*. Madina, the heroine of the play is victimized and thus turns into a call-girl.

Rimai, Hunmon, Melina, Lina, Wilan, Dalin of other writers are examples of such women who fall a prey to social evils.

The next chapter deals with the art of characterization employed by different writers namely Peace Roy Pariat, S.J. Duncan Hoojon, Leslie Harding Pde, Donbok T. Laloo, Remy Phankon, Gloster S. Raptap, W. Tiewsoh and Khrawkupar Kharlukhi. The art of characterisation differs from one author to another. Peace Roy Pariat depicts Madina as the heroine of the play *Ka Shangkhawiah Ki Rang*. Living through a difficult and transitional period she is victimized through the witchcraft of Shamarkhan, a man who possesses magical power. S.J. Duncan Hoojon demonstrates the predicament of women by showing how their weakness leads to their exploitation by wicked and unscrupulous men. Riman, the main character of *Ki Mad Ia Ka Shillong* is an example of such women. L.H. Pde succeeds in the portrayal of women characters. In his first novel *Ka Khun Ba La Jah*, he shows Hunmon's position as a simple village girl being misled by sex – driver men. Melina, the tragic heroine of *Ka Bih*, is a good and simple girl but through unavoidable circumstances she turns into a call-girl in her later life because of her mother. In another novel *U Raimon Bad Ka Dashisha* female characters dominate the male characters. The story rotates around Dashisha, the heroine of the novel. Raimon, Dashisha's lover and fiancée plays the role of a saviour. In another novel *Tang Ma Phi Khun Baieid*, Pde succeeds in the portrayal of both male and female characters. In this novel we find that men characters dominate the women characters. Bianglang, the hero of the novel, is a man of status and influence. He is a round character. The story of the novel rotates around him. In *U Mooiong* or *The Black Gold*, Pde presents characters of different status, rank and family background. Raplang is the hero of the novel. The female characters are Kalpana Devi, Dianghun, Ingjar and Emhi Dkhar. D.T. Laloo in his novel *Ka Jyrsieh Ka Longbriew Book I*

and *II* portrays Kynsai as the hero of the novel. Kynsai is the novelist's mouth-piece. There is no heroine in the novel, for all the female characters remain undifferentiated. They are call-girls with whom Kynsai hold interviews about the reasons behind their profession. In another novel *Ka Kam Miet*, Lalloo succeeds in the portrayal of women characters. Women characters here seem to dominate the male characters. Remy Phankon, in his novel *Dak Bangla I & II*, depicts Shilak as the hero of the novel. All the other characters rotate around him. He may be considered as the best specimen of male character. Other male characters are Padiah and Maitphang. The female characters are Dalin or Linda, Dalin's mother and Jrain, Shilak's wife. Gloster S. Rapthap, in his novel *Ka Miet Badum* Book I and II, succeeds in the portrayal of male as well as female characters. Raplang is the author's mouth-piece and is depicted as the hero of the novel. Dawamon, another male character, is depicted as a round character. The female characters are Kerlin, Berlin, Kong Janai and Kong Bither. Rapthap's mother novel is *Sha Sor Ka Mem Baieit*. Donald Majaw is the hero of the novel. The other male characters are Babul and Shanbor. The female characters are Rosie Clare, Daisy clare, Danica and her sister, Kmie ka Per. Another novelist, W. Tiewsoh in *Ka Kam Kalbut*, depicts the rural life in Mustoh village. The female characters are Noli, Nel, Billianda and Kong Eno. The male character are Mel, Along, Kordon, Hendi, Naising, Doni, Nadar and some others. Khrawkupar Kharlukhi is a modern novelist whose first work is *Ka Melody* published in 1989. Melody is the heroine of the novel. The story of the novel rotates around her life. She belongs to a modern society, yet her life is different for she lives in an isolated world of her own. The other female characters are Kiki, Kit's mother and sister. The hero of the novel is Kitlang, Melody's fiancée. The other male characters are Bah Dring, Melody's uncle and Kit's father and his maternal uncle.

There is no need to repeat the role of the female characters in

all the plays and novels during the period under review. Suffice it to say that the role of the important women characters has already been examined in the previous chapters. I regret to say that I have omitted characters in some other fictions because of constraints of space. However, I have selected representative women characters from the best plays and fictions of the six formative decades of Khasi literature.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Dr. (Mrs) Dakamon Mawroh is
presently working as a senior
grade lecturer in the Department
of Khasi at Shillong College,
Shillong, Meghalaya [India]*

RS. 175/-