



Research Article

Folklore, Cultural Memory, and Indigenous Identity: A Critical Study of Indian Tribal Literature with Special Reference to the Works of Laltluangliana Khiangte

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Abstract

Indian tribal literature represents one of the oldest and most vibrant literary traditions in the country. Preserved for centuries through oral narratives, songs, myths, legends, rituals, and dramatic performances, it reflects the history, philosophy, and cultural identity of indigenous communities. Among the prominent scholars who have significantly contributed to the preservation and academic study of tribal literature, Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte occupies a distinguished position. As a folklorist, literary critic, playwright, translator, and scholar of Mizo literature, he has systematically documented oral traditions and interpreted them within modern literary and cultural frameworks.

This study critically examines the concepts of folklore, cultural memory, and indigenous identity with special reference to Khiangte's major works, including Folktales of Mizoram, Mizo Songs and Folk Tales, Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes, and selected dramatic writings. The research adopts a qualitative methodology based on textual analysis, supported by the theoretical perspectives of cultural memory, collective memory, and postcolonial literary studies. It argues that Khiangte's writings preserve endangered oral traditions while simultaneously strengthening indigenous identity and expanding the academic recognition of tribal literature in India.

The study further demonstrates that Khiangte's bilingual scholarship has successfully connected regional Mizo literature with national and international literary discourse. His works transform folklore into documented cultural archives and establish tribal literature as an important field of literary scholarship rather than merely an anthropological subject. The paper concludes that Khiangte's contribution has played a crucial role in preserving Mizo cultural heritage and enriching the broader tradition of Indian tribal literature.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indian tribal literature occupies a unique position within the diverse literary traditions of India. Unlike mainstream literary traditions that evolved primarily through written texts, tribal literature has been transmitted orally for centuries. Myths, legends, folktales, songs, proverbs, rituals, dances, and dramatic performances have preserved the cultural heritage of indigenous communities across generations. These oral traditions record not only historical experiences but also ethical values, ecological knowledge, social organization, and philosophical beliefs.

For tribal communities, literature is inseparable from everyday life. Oral narratives accompany agricultural practices, festivals, marriages, religious ceremonies, and community gatherings. Storytelling serves both educational and social purposes, enabling younger generations to inherit collective memory from their elders. Consequently, tribal literature functions as a living archive of indigenous knowledge rather than merely a form of entertainment.

Despite its richness, tribal literature remained marginalized in mainstream Indian literary studies for many years. Colonial scholars often viewed tribal communities from anthropological or administrative perspectives, treating their oral traditions as ethnographic material rather than literary achievements. Even after Independence, academic attention largely focused on classical, regional, and English literatures, leaving indigenous literary traditions comparatively underexplored.

The emergence of indigenous scholars transformed this situation by documenting oral traditions and developing critical frameworks rooted in tribal cultural experience. Among these scholars, Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte has made an exceptional contribution to the preservation and promotion of Mizo literature. Through his writings on folklore, drama, literary criticism, and cultural history, he has demonstrated that tribal literature possesses sophisticated aesthetic, historical, and philosophical dimensions deserving equal recognition within Indian literary studies.

The present study therefore examines the concepts of folklore, cultural memory, and indigenous identity through a critical analysis of Khiangte's major works. It argues that his writings function as literary texts, cultural archives, and historical documents that preserve the collective memory of the Mizo people while strengthening the position of tribal literature within contemporary Indian literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of Indian tribal literature has witnessed remarkable growth during the last three decades. Earlier research on tribal communities primarily focused on anthropology, sociology, and ethnography, where oral traditions were documented mainly as cultural practices rather than literary texts. Colonial administrators and missionaries collected myths, folktales, songs, and customs to understand indigenous societies, but these collections rarely examined their literary value or aesthetic significance. Consequently, tribal literature remained at the margins of mainstream Indian literary criticism.

The emergence of postcolonial literary studies and indigenous scholarship brought significant changes to this perspective.

Scholars began to recognize that tribal oral traditions preserve history, philosophy, ethics, ecological knowledge, and collective identity. They argued that folklore is not merely entertainment but an intellectual and cultural resource that deserves serious academic attention. This shift opened new avenues for studying tribal literature as an important component of Indian literary history.

One of the most influential theoretical contributions to the study of memory is that of Maurice Halbwachs, who introduced the concept of Collective Memory. According to Halbwachs, memory is socially constructed and preserved through communities rather than individuals. His theory explains how tribal societies maintain their identity by transmitting stories, rituals, songs, and customs from one generation to another.

Building upon this foundation, Jan Assmann developed the concept of Cultural Memory, arguing that societies preserve their historical consciousness through texts, rituals, symbols, monuments, and other cultural forms. Although Assmann's theory emerged from the study of ancient civilizations, it is highly relevant to tribal literature because indigenous communities preserve their collective past primarily through oral traditions. The present study employs Assmann's framework to understand how Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte transforms oral narratives into written cultural archives.

The question of identity has also received considerable scholarly attention. Stuart Hall argues that cultural identity is not fixed but continuously reconstructed through history, memory, language, and representation. This perspective is especially useful in understanding Mizo literature, where indigenous identity evolves through interaction between traditional customs and modern social realities. Similarly, Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory emphasizes cultural negotiation and hybridity, providing a useful framework for examining how tribal communities adapt to changing historical conditions without abandoning their cultural heritage.

Within the Indian context, G. N. Devy has made pioneering contributions by emphasizing the importance of tribal languages and oral traditions in redefining Indian literary history. He argues that tribal literature should be recognized as an integral part of Indian literature rather than being confined to anthropology or folklore studies. Likewise, Ram Dayal Munda highlighted the inseparable relationship between tribal language, music, ritual, ecology, and literature. His writings demonstrate that indigenous knowledge systems preserve valuable cultural and environmental wisdom.

In the field of Mizo literary studies, Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte occupies a unique position. His works, including *Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes*, *Folktales of Mizoram*, and *Mizo Songs and Folk Tales*, have significantly contributed to documenting and interpreting Mizo oral traditions. Unlike earlier collectors of folklore, Khiangte combines documentation with literary criticism, historical analysis, and cultural interpretation. His scholarship presents folklore not merely as a relic of the past but as a dynamic expression of indigenous identity and collective memory.

Despite the growing body of research on tribal literature, relatively few studies have examined Khiangte's complete

literary contribution through an interdisciplinary perspective. Most existing studies focus either on folklore, drama, or language separately. There remains a need for an integrated analysis that connects folklore, cultural memory, indigenous identity, and literary criticism. The present study attempts to fill this gap by critically examining Kiangte's major works within the broader framework of Indian tribal literary studies.

3: RESEARCH GAP, OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Gap

Indian tribal literature has increasingly become an important area of literary research, particularly after the rise of postcolonial and indigenous literary studies. Several scholars have explored tribal folklore, oral traditions, language, cultural practices, and identity formation. However, much of the existing research has focused either on the anthropological aspects of tribal communities or on the literary analysis of specific texts. Comparatively fewer studies have attempted to examine tribal literature through an interdisciplinary framework that combines folklore, cultural memory, identity, and literary criticism.

In the context of Mizo literature, Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte has received recognition as a folklorist, playwright, literary critic, and cultural historian. Nevertheless, most available studies discuss his contributions separately. Some focus on his collections of folklore, while others examine his dramatic writings or literary criticism. There is very limited research that critically evaluates his complete literary corpus through the interconnected perspectives of folklore, cultural memory, and indigenous identity.

Another important gap is the lack of detailed analysis of Kiangte's bilingual scholarship. His writings in both Mizo and English have significantly contributed to introducing Mizo literature to a wider national and international readership. However, the literary and cultural significance of this bilingual approach has not been adequately explored. Similarly, the relationship between oral tradition, written literature, and the preservation of indigenous knowledge systems remains insufficiently examined.

The present study seeks to address these research gaps by providing a comprehensive critical analysis of Kiangte's major works through the theoretical perspectives of cultural memory, collective memory, postcolonial literary criticism, and indigenous literary studies. It aims to demonstrate that his writings function not only as literary texts but also as cultural archives that preserve the historical consciousness and identity of the Mizo people.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present research has the following objectives:

- To examine the contribution of Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte to Indian tribal literature.
- To analyze the role of folklore in preserving Mizo cultural memory.
- To explore the representation of indigenous identity in Kiangte's literary works.

- To study the significance of oral traditions in the development of Mizo literature.
- To evaluate Kiangte's contribution to Mizo drama and literary criticism.
- To examine the role of bilingual scholarship in promoting tribal literature.
- To analyze the relevance of Kiangte's works in the broader context of Indian literary studies.
- To assess the contemporary significance of tribal literature in preserving indigenous cultural heritage.

3.3 Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does Laltluangliana Kiangte preserve Mizo folklore through his writings?
- In what ways do his works function as repositories of cultural memory?
- How is indigenous identity represented in his literary and critical works?
- What role does bilingual scholarship play in promoting Mizo literature?
- How do Kiangte's writings contribute to the development of Indian tribal literary studies?
- What is the significance of folklore in preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage?

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research is qualitative in nature and is based primarily on textual analysis. It examines the selected literary and critical works of Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte in order to understand the relationship between folklore, cultural memory, and indigenous identity.

Primary Sources

The primary sources include the major works of Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte, such as:

Folktales of Mizoram

Mizo Songs and Folk Tales

Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes

Selected dramatic works and critical essays

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources include books, peer-reviewed journal articles, research theses, conference papers, and scholarly writings on tribal literature, folklore studies, cultural memory, indigenous identity, and postcolonial literary theory.

Method of Analysis

The collected material is analysed using:

Close Textual Analysis

Comparative Literary Analysis

Folklore Studies

Cultural Memory Theory

Postcolonial Literary Criticism

Indigenous Literary Studies

The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach, combining literature, folklore, history, cultural studies, and indigenous

knowledge systems. This approach helps in understanding the broader literary, cultural, and historical significance of Khiangte's writings.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study is based on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that combines Folklore Studies, Cultural Memory Theory, Collective Memory, Cultural Identity, and Postcolonial Literary Theory. Since the selected works of Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte deal with folklore, oral traditions, cultural preservation, and indigenous identity, these theories provide an appropriate foundation for understanding the literary and cultural significance of his writings.

4.1 Folklore as a Literary and Cultural Archive

Folklore is one of the earliest forms of human expression. It includes folktales, myths, legends, songs, proverbs, riddles, rituals, festivals, and oral narratives that are transmitted from one generation to another. In tribal societies, folklore functions as a living archive of collective knowledge. It preserves history, ethical values, social customs, ecological knowledge, and religious beliefs.

Unlike written literature, folklore is dynamic and participatory. Every generation contributes to its preservation and reinterpretation. Therefore, folklore is not merely a collection of old stories but a continuing process through which communities maintain their cultural continuity and identity.

Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte approaches folklore from this perspective. His works demonstrate that Mizo folktales and songs are valuable literary texts that reflect the intellectual, emotional, and philosophical life of the community. By documenting oral traditions, he transforms fragile cultural memories into permanent literary records.

4.2 Jan Assmann's Theory of Cultural Memory

Jan Assmann distinguishes between Communicative Memory and Cultural Memory. Communicative memory survives through everyday conversations and generally extends over only a few generations. Cultural memory, however, is preserved through texts, rituals, songs, monuments, symbols, and institutional practices that enable a community to remember its past over long periods.

This theory is highly relevant to the study of Mizo literature. Before the widespread use of written texts, the Mizo people preserved their history and identity through oral narratives and songs. Khiangte's documentation of these traditions converts communicative memory into cultural memory by preserving them in books. His works therefore function as permanent cultural archives that connect the past with the present.

Assmann also argues that cultural memory plays a crucial role in maintaining collective identity. Communities repeatedly reinterpret their traditions according to changing historical circumstances. Khiangte's writings illustrate this process by preserving indigenous traditions while presenting them within modern literary scholarship.

4.3 Maurice Halbwachs and Collective Memory

Maurice Halbwachs introduced the concept of Collective Memory, arguing that memory is socially constructed rather than purely individual. According to him, families, communities, religious institutions, and cultural practices shape the way people remember the past.

This concept explains why folklore remains central to tribal societies. Stories, songs, rituals, and festivals preserve the shared experiences of the community. They teach younger generations about history, morality, and social responsibility. Khiangte's collections of Mizo folklore strengthen collective memory by ensuring that these traditions remain available even as oral transmission declines in modern society.

4.4 Stuart Hall's Theory of Cultural Identity

Stuart Hall argues that cultural identity is not fixed or permanent. Instead, it is continuously reconstructed through history, language, memory, and representation. Identity evolves as communities respond to political, social, and cultural changes.

This theory is particularly relevant to Mizo society, which has experienced significant historical transformations through colonial rule, missionary education, modernization, and globalization. Khiangte's writings demonstrate that Mizo identity is preserved not by rejecting change but by adapting traditional values to contemporary circumstances. His bilingual scholarship enables younger generations to engage with global knowledge while remaining connected to their indigenous heritage.

4.5 Homi K. Bhabha's Postcolonial Theory

Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory emphasizes hybridity, cultural negotiation, and representation. According to Bhabha, colonized societies do not simply imitate dominant cultures. Instead, they negotiate between indigenous traditions and external influences to create new cultural identities.

Khiangte's works reflect this process of cultural negotiation. His writings combine indigenous oral traditions with modern literary criticism, theatre, and academic research. Rather than allowing modernization to replace traditional culture, he demonstrates how both can coexist and enrich one another. This approach enables Mizo literature to remain rooted in local traditions while participating in national and international literary discourse.

4.6 Relevance of the Theoretical Framework

The combined application of these theories provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the works of Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte. Folklore Studies explain the literary significance of oral traditions; Cultural Memory Theory highlights their role in preserving historical consciousness; Collective Memory explains how communities sustain identity through shared narratives; Cultural Identity Theory explores the dynamic nature of indigenous identity; and Postcolonial Theory demonstrates how tribal literature negotiates between tradition and modernity.

Using these interconnected perspectives, the present study argues that Khiangte's literary corpus is not merely a

documentation of folklore but a sustained intellectual effort to preserve Mizo cultural heritage, strengthen indigenous identity, and establish tribal literature as an important field of Indian literary studies.

5. Analysis of Folktales of Mizoram

Among the significant contributions of Professor Laltluangliana Khiantge, Folktales of Mizoram occupies a central place in the preservation of Mizo oral heritage. The book is more than a collection of traditional stories; it is a literary and cultural document that records the worldview, moral values, historical consciousness, and collective experiences of the Mizo people. By documenting narratives that were transmitted orally for generations, Khiantge safeguards a valuable part of indigenous knowledge that might otherwise have been lost in the process of modernization.

5.1 Folktales as Repositories of Cultural Memory

The folktales collected by Khiantge function as repositories of cultural memory. They preserve stories of heroes, ancestors, supernatural beings, animals, and village life, enabling each generation to remain connected with its historical and cultural roots. These narratives transmit social values such as courage, honesty, hospitality, cooperation, and respect for elders.

Viewed through Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory, these stories become enduring cultural records. They transform community experiences into a lasting literary form, ensuring that collective memories survive beyond oral transmission. Khiantge's work therefore serves as a bridge between traditional oral culture and contemporary literary scholarship.

5.2 Representation of Indigenous Identity

A major strength of Folktales of Mizoram is its portrayal of indigenous identity. The characters, landscapes, customs, and beliefs reflect the distinctive cultural life of the Mizo community. Rather than presenting tribal society through stereotypes, the folktales reveal a complex social world shaped by kinship, communal responsibility, and harmony with nature. These narratives also reinforce the Mizo ethical ideal of Tlawmngaihna, which emphasizes selflessness, courage, discipline, compassion, and service to the community. This value system is repeatedly reflected in the actions of heroes and ordinary villagers, demonstrating that moral conduct is inseparable from cultural identity.

5.3 Nature and Ecological Consciousness

Another important aspect of the folktales is their intimate relationship with the natural environment. Mountains, forests, rivers, birds, and animals are not merely settings for the stories but active participants in the cultural imagination of the Mizo people. Nature is treated with reverence and respect, reflecting an indigenous ecological philosophy based on coexistence rather than exploitation.

This ecological consciousness is highly relevant in the contemporary world, where environmental degradation threatens both biodiversity and indigenous ways of life. Khiantge's documentation of these narratives highlights the environmental wisdom embedded in tribal traditions and

demonstrates that folklore can contribute to modern ecological discourse.

5.4 Literary and Narrative Techniques

Khiantge preserves the oral flavour of the original stories while presenting them in a clear and accessible written form. His narration retains the simplicity, rhythm, symbolism, and repetition characteristic of oral storytelling. At the same time, explanatory notes and contextual interpretation help readers from different cultural backgrounds appreciate the deeper meanings of the narratives.

His bilingual scholarship further expands the reach of Mizo folklore by making these traditions accessible to national and international audiences without diminishing their cultural authenticity.

5.5 Critical Evaluation

From a literary perspective, Folktales of Mizoram successfully combines documentation, interpretation, and cultural preservation. The work demonstrates that folklore is not merely a source of entertainment but an important form of literature that records history, ethics, identity, and collective memory. It also challenges the traditional distinction between "oral" and "written" literature by showing that oral narratives possess artistic complexity and intellectual depth.

The book makes a significant contribution to Indian tribal literary studies by preserving endangered oral traditions and providing scholars with authentic material for interdisciplinary research. Through this work, Khiantge establishes folklore as a living cultural archive that continues to shape indigenous identity in the modern world.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

Folktales of Mizoram illustrates that folklore is central to the preservation of Mizo cultural heritage. Through systematic documentation and thoughtful interpretation, Professor Laltluangliana Khiantge transforms oral narratives into enduring literary texts. His work strengthens cultural memory, affirms indigenous identity, and demonstrates that tribal literature deserves a prominent place within the broader tradition of Indian literature.

6. Analysis of Mizo Songs and Folk Tales

Mizo Songs and Folk Tales is one of Professor Laltluangliana Khiantge's most significant contributions to the study of Mizo oral literature. The work documents the rich tradition of Mizo folk songs and narratives, preserving a cultural heritage that had long been transmitted orally. By recording these traditions in written form, Khiantge not only safeguards an important aspect of Mizo culture but also demonstrates that oral literature possesses artistic, historical, and intellectual value equal to written literary traditions.

6.1 Folk Songs as Expressions of Collective Experience

Mizo folk songs are closely connected with the daily life of the community. They accompany festivals, agricultural activities, hunting expeditions, religious ceremonies, marriage celebrations, and moments of grief. Through these songs,

individuals express personal emotions while simultaneously reflecting the shared experiences of the community.

The songs celebrate courage, friendship, love, sacrifice, and communal harmony. They also preserve memories of historical events and heroic figures, ensuring that important experiences remain alive in the collective consciousness of future generations. In this sense, folk songs become a medium through which cultural values are transmitted from one generation to another.

6.2 Cultural Memory and Oral Tradition

From the perspective of Jan Assmann's Cultural Memory Theory, Mizo folk songs function as repositories of cultural memory. Before the widespread use of writing, these songs preserved the history, beliefs, and traditions of the Mizo people. They served as mnemonic devices that enabled communities to remember their ancestors, social customs, and moral principles. By documenting these songs, Khiangte transforms oral memory into written cultural memory. His work ensures that valuable traditions survive despite rapid social change, urbanization, and globalization. Thus, the book becomes both a literary text and a cultural archive.

6.3 Themes of Nature and Ecological Awareness

Nature occupies a central place in Mizo folk songs. Mountains, forests, rivers, birds, flowers, and changing seasons are described not merely as scenic backgrounds but as companions in human life. The relationship between people and nature is characterized by respect, gratitude, and coexistence.

These songs reflect an indigenous ecological philosophy in which humans are considered part of the natural world rather than its masters. Such perspectives have contemporary relevance, offering insights into sustainable living and environmental ethics. Khiangte's documentation of these traditions contributes to current discussions on ecological conservation and indigenous environmental knowledge.

6.4 Literary Qualities of the Songs

One of the remarkable features of Mizo folk songs is their poetic beauty. The songs employ imagery, symbolism, rhythm, repetition, and metaphor to create emotional depth and artistic expression. Their language is simple yet highly evocative, enabling listeners to experience both aesthetic pleasure and cultural meaning.

Khiangte carefully preserves these literary qualities in his translations and interpretations. His scholarship allows readers unfamiliar with the Mizo language to appreciate the poetic richness of the songs while maintaining their cultural authenticity. This achievement reflects his skill as both a translator and a literary critic.

6.5 Preservation of Indigenous Identity

The folk songs documented in the book play an essential role in preserving indigenous identity. They reinforce traditional values such as Tlawmngaihna, respect for elders, communal solidarity, hospitality, and bravery. These ethical ideals shape the social and cultural identity of the Mizo people and continue to influence contemporary life.

Using Stuart Hall's concept of cultural identity, these songs can be understood as dynamic expressions of identity that connect the past with the present. They enable younger generations to remain rooted in their cultural heritage while adapting to changing social conditions.

6.6 Critical Evaluation

Mizo Songs and Folk Tales is far more than a collection of traditional songs and stories. It is an important scholarly work that integrates folklore, literary criticism, translation, and cultural history. Khiangte demonstrates that oral literature deserves the same critical attention as written literature because it embodies the intellectual and aesthetic achievements of indigenous communities.

The work also highlights the importance of preserving endangered oral traditions in an era of rapid globalization. By documenting, interpreting, and translating Mizo songs, Khiangte ensures that this cultural heritage remains accessible to scholars, students, and general readers. Consequently, the book strengthens the position of Mizo literature within the broader field of Indian tribal literary studies.

6.7 Concluding Remarks

Mizo Songs and Folk Tales illustrate how oral poetry preserves history, emotions, ethical values, and cultural identity. Through systematic documentation and critical interpretation, Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte transforms oral traditions into enduring literary texts. His work not only safeguards the cultural memory of the Mizo community but also enriches Indian tribal literature by demonstrating the artistic excellence and intellectual depth of indigenous oral traditions.

7. Analysis of Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes

Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes is one of the pioneering critical studies on the history and evolution of Mizo theatre. In this work, Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte traces the development of Mizo drama from its indigenous performative traditions to modern theatrical practices. He demonstrates that drama is not merely a form of entertainment but a cultural institution through which society expresses its history, values, beliefs, and collective aspirations.

7.1 Origin and Evolution of Mizo Drama

Khiangte explains that the roots of Mizo drama lie in traditional community performances, festivals, storytelling sessions, dances, and ritual practices. Before the emergence of written scripts, dramatic expression existed through oral performances that celebrated community life and transmitted moral values.

The arrival of Christianity, missionary education, and modern schooling introduced new dramatic techniques and written plays. However, instead of replacing indigenous traditions, these influences interacted with local cultural practices. As a result, modern Mizo drama developed as a synthesis of traditional heritage and contemporary theatrical forms.

7.2 Themes and Social Concerns

The book identifies several recurring themes in Mizo drama, including:

Community life and social harmony
 Heroism and sacrifice
 Justice and moral responsibility
 Family relationships
 Cultural identity
 Tradition and modernity
 Social transformation

Khiangte argues that these themes reflect the lived experiences of the Mizo people. Dramatic literature becomes a medium for preserving cultural values while encouraging critical reflection on contemporary social issues.

7.3 Drama as a Medium of Cultural Memory

Using Jan Assmann's concept of Cultural Memory, Mizo drama can be understood as a performative archive of indigenous culture. Dramatic performances preserve historical events, customs, language, and ethical ideals through dialogue, music, costumes, and stage performance.

Khiangte emphasizes that theatre enables collective remembrance by recreating shared historical experiences before a living audience. Drama therefore functions both as literature and as a cultural practice that strengthens communal identity.

7.4 Analysis of Pasaltha Khuangchera

Among Khiangte's dramatic and historical works, Pasaltha Khuangchera occupies a special place because it celebrates one of the legendary heroes of Mizo history. The work reconstructs the life and achievements of Khuangchera as a symbol of courage, leadership, patriotism, and devotion to the community.

Heroism and Indigenous Leadership

The central character represents the traditional Mizo ideal of the Pasaltha—a brave and selfless warrior who protects the dignity and welfare of society. His actions embody the ethical principle of Tlawmgaihna, which values courage, sacrifice, humility, discipline, and service to others.

Rather than portraying heroism as individual glory, Khiangte presents it as a responsibility toward the community. The hero's greatness lies in his commitment to collective welfare rather than personal ambition.

Representation of Indigenous Identity

The work also serves as an important expression of indigenous identity. Through descriptions of customs, social institutions, warfare, village organization, and traditional beliefs, Khiangte reconstructs the cultural world of pre-colonial Mizo society.

Viewed through Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity, Pasaltha Khuangchera demonstrates that identity is sustained through stories, historical memory, and cultural representation. The narrative encourages contemporary readers to appreciate their heritage while adapting to changing social realities.

Postcolonial Perspective

From the perspective of Homi K. Bhabha's postcolonial theory, the text illustrates how indigenous societies negotiate between tradition and modernity. Khiangte does not romanticize the past; instead, he presents traditional values as living resources that continue to inspire present and future generations.

The work therefore resists cultural marginalization by affirming the dignity and intellectual richness of indigenous history. It contributes to the broader postcolonial project of restoring the voices of communities that were often ignored in mainstream historical and literary narratives.

Literary Significance

From a literary perspective, Pasaltha Khuangchera successfully combines historical documentation with dramatic imagination. Rich characterization, vivid descriptions, symbolic imagery, and engaging narration make the work both aesthetically appealing and culturally meaningful.

Khiangte's scholarship demonstrates that tribal heroic narratives deserve recognition alongside other major literary traditions of India. By presenting indigenous heroes within a critical literary framework, he expands the scope of Indian literary studies.

7.5 Critical Evaluation

Both Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes and Pasaltha Khuangchera illustrate Professor Khiangte's commitment to preserving Mizo cultural heritage through literary scholarship. While the first work provides a historical and critical understanding of Mizo theatre, the second embodies indigenous ideals through the portrayal of a legendary hero.

Together, these works reveal that drama is not merely a performative art but also a powerful medium for preserving collective memory, reinforcing cultural identity, and transmitting ethical values. They establish Mizo dramatic literature as an important component of Indian tribal literature and demonstrate Khiangte's lasting contribution to folklore studies, theatre, and indigenous literary criticism.

8. Analysis of Tribal Culture, Folklore and Literature

Tribal Culture, Folklore and Literature reflect Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte's broad vision of tribal literary studies. In this work, he argues that tribal literature cannot be understood separately from the cultural life of indigenous communities. Folklore, language, rituals, music, festivals, oral narratives, and traditional knowledge together constitute the foundation of tribal literature. Therefore, the study of tribal literature requires an interdisciplinary approach that connects literary criticism with history, anthropology, folklore, and cultural studies.

8.1 Tribal Culture as the Foundation of Literature

Khiangte emphasizes that literature grows naturally from the lived experiences of the community. Tribal songs, myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, and rituals are not isolated artistic forms; they express the values, beliefs, and worldview of indigenous society.

For the Mizo community, literature is deeply connected with everyday life. Agricultural practices, festivals, religious ceremonies, and social customs provide the context in which oral traditions are created and transmitted. This close relationship between culture and literature distinguishes tribal literary traditions from many written literary forms.

8.2 Folklore as Indigenous Knowledge

One of the major arguments advanced by Kiangte is that folklore preserves indigenous knowledge systems. Traditional narratives contain information about history, environmental practices, social organization, ethical principles, conflict resolution, and relationships with nature.

This perspective challenges the misconception that folklore consists only of imaginary stories. Instead, folklore becomes a source of intellectual and cultural knowledge that deserves systematic academic study. Through careful documentation and interpretation, Kiangte demonstrates that oral traditions preserve sophisticated philosophical and social ideas.

8.3 Language and Cultural Preservation

Language plays a central role in preserving cultural identity. Kiangte repeatedly emphasizes that tribal languages are not merely tools of communication; they are repositories of collective memory, traditional knowledge, and cultural expression.

His bilingual scholarship in Mizo and English has been particularly significant. By translating and interpreting Mizo literary texts for wider audiences, he has helped bridge the gap between regional indigenous literature and mainstream literary scholarship. At the same time, he preserves the originality and cultural nuances of the source traditions.

8.4 Indigenous Identity in a Changing World

Modernization, globalization, migration, and technological change have transformed the lives of many tribal communities. These developments have created new opportunities but have also endangered oral traditions and indigenous languages.

Kiangte does not oppose social change; rather, he argues that development should not lead to the loss of cultural identity. His writings encourage younger generations to embrace education and modernity while remaining connected to their linguistic, historical, and cultural heritage.

Using Stuart Hall's theory, indigenous identity can be understood as dynamic rather than static. Kiangte's works illustrate that cultural identity is continuously reconstructed through memory, language, and shared traditions.

8.5 Overall Contribution to Indian Tribal Literature

Professor Lalitluangliana Kiangte has made a significant contribution to Indian tribal literary studies in several ways:

- He systematically documented endangered Mizo oral traditions.
- He established folklore as an important field of literary criticism.
- He preserved indigenous cultural memory through scholarly research.
- He promoted Mizo literature at national and international levels through bilingual scholarship.
- He contributed to the development of tribal theatre, folklore studies, literary criticism, and cultural history.
- He encouraged interdisciplinary approaches to the study of indigenous literature.

- His scholarship demonstrates that tribal literature should be studied not as a peripheral tradition but as an integral part of Indian literary history.

8.6 CRITICAL DISCUSSION

A critical reading of Kiangte's major works reveals a consistent intellectual vision. Whether he writes about folklore, songs, drama, or tribal culture, his central concern remains the preservation of indigenous heritage and the recognition of tribal literature as a serious field of academic inquiry.

From the perspective of Cultural Memory Theory, his writings convert oral traditions into permanent cultural archives. Through Collective Memory, they strengthen community identity by preserving shared experiences and values. Postcolonial criticism further reveals that his scholarship challenges the historical marginalization of tribal voices by placing indigenous knowledge at the centre of literary discourse.

Although Kiangte's works primarily focus on Mizo culture, their significance extends beyond regional boundaries. They offer valuable insights into broader questions of identity, memory, language, ecology, and cultural preservation that are relevant to tribal communities across India and beyond.

8.7 Concluding Remarks

Tribal Culture, Folklore and Literature represent the culmination of Kiangte's literary and scholarly vision. The work demonstrates that folklore, language, and cultural memory are inseparable from indigenous identity. By documenting, interpreting, and preserving these traditions, Kiangte has made an enduring contribution to Mizo literature and to the wider field of Indian tribal literary studies.

His writings provide an important model for future researchers interested in tribal literature, comparative indigenous studies, folklore, and postcolonial cultural criticism.

9. MAJOR FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The present study critically examined the selected works of Professor Lalitluangliana Kiangte to understand the relationship between folklore, cultural memory, and indigenous identity in Indian tribal literature. The analysis reveals that Kiangte's scholarship has made a significant contribution to the preservation and promotion of Mizo literary heritage while also enriching the broader field of Indian tribal literary studies. The following are the major findings of the research.

9.1 Folklore as a Living Cultural Archive

The study establishes that folklore is not merely a collection of traditional stories but a living cultural archive that preserves the historical experiences, ethical values, and collective wisdom of indigenous communities. Through works such as *Folktales of Mizoram* and *Mizo Songs and Folk Tales*, Kiangte demonstrates that oral traditions embody the intellectual and cultural achievements of the Mizo people.

The documentation of these traditions ensures their continuity despite rapid modernization and changing social conditions. Thus, folklore emerges as a dynamic medium through which cultural heritage is transmitted across generations.

9.2 Preservation of Cultural Memory

One of the most significant findings of this study is that Kiangte's writings function as repositories of cultural memory. Drawing upon Jan Assmann's theory, the research demonstrates that his books transform oral traditions into permanent written records, thereby preserving the collective memory of the Mizo community.

Historical events, myths, heroic narratives, folk songs, rituals, and traditional beliefs are systematically documented and interpreted. These texts enable future generations to remain connected with their ancestral heritage while adapting to modern social realities.

9.3 Representation of Indigenous Identity

The analysis shows that indigenous identity occupies a central place in Kiangte's literary vision. His writings portray tribal communities as culturally rich, intellectually vibrant, and historically significant rather than as isolated or marginalized groups.

Traditional values such as Tlawmngaihna, communal cooperation, respect for elders, courage, honesty, and social responsibility are consistently represented as defining characteristics of Mizo identity. This positive representation challenges stereotypes and contributes to the cultural dignity of indigenous communities.

9.4 Literary Recognition of Tribal Oral Traditions

The study finds that Kiangte successfully bridges the gap between oral and written literature. His scholarship demonstrates that oral narratives possess literary qualities such as symbolism, imagery, characterization, narrative structure, and philosophical depth.

Consequently, tribal oral literature deserves the same academic recognition as written literary traditions. This finding contributes to expanding the scope of Indian literary criticism and encourages the inclusion of indigenous texts within mainstream literary studies.

9.5 Contribution to Tribal Literary Criticism

Unlike earlier folklorists who primarily documented oral traditions, Kiangte combines collection with critical interpretation. His writings analyze the literary, historical, cultural, and social dimensions of folklore.

This interdisciplinary methodology has strengthened tribal literary criticism by integrating literature with folklore studies, cultural studies, history, anthropology, and postcolonial theory. His scholarship therefore represents an important methodological contribution to indigenous literary research.

9.6 Relevance of Bilingual Scholarship

Another important finding is the significance of Kiangte's bilingual scholarship. By writing in both Mizo and English, he has introduced regional tribal literature to a wider academic audience without compromising its cultural authenticity.

This bilingual approach facilitates comparative literary studies and promotes greater national and international recognition of Mizo literature.

9.7 Contemporary Relevance

The research also demonstrates the continuing relevance of Kiangte's works in the contemporary world. At a time when globalization, migration, and technological change threaten many indigenous languages and oral traditions, his writings highlight the importance of cultural preservation.

Furthermore, the ecological values reflected in Mizo folklore offer valuable insights into sustainable living and environmental ethics. Indigenous knowledge systems documented by Kiangte remain highly relevant to present-day discussions on cultural diversity, ecological conservation, and inclusive literary studies.

9.8 Overall Discussion

The findings collectively indicate that Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte has transformed the study of Mizo folklore into a rigorous academic discipline. His writings preserve cultural memory, strengthen indigenous identity, promote bilingual literary scholarship, and expand the scope of Indian tribal literature.

From the perspectives of Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann, Stuart Hall, and Homi K. Bhabha, Kiangte's works demonstrate that literature functions simultaneously as an artistic expression, a cultural archive, and a means of identity formation. His scholarship successfully connects oral tradition with modern literary criticism, ensuring that indigenous voices receive the recognition they deserve within contemporary literary discourse.

9.9 Concluding Observation

The overall findings confirm that Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte's contribution extends far beyond the preservation of Mizo folklore. He has established a comprehensive intellectual framework through which tribal literature can be studied as a rich literary, cultural, and historical tradition. His works continue to inspire scholars working in tribal literature, folklore studies, indigenous knowledge systems, postcolonial criticism, cultural memory studies, and comparative literature.

10. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the selected works of Professor Laltluangliana Kiangte to explore the relationship between folklore, cultural memory, and indigenous identity in Indian tribal literature. The analysis demonstrates that Kiangte has made a pioneering contribution to documenting, preserving, and interpreting the oral traditions of the Mizo community. His scholarship extends beyond the collection of folklore; it establishes indigenous literature as an intellectually rich and aesthetically significant field of literary study.

The study confirms that folklore functions as a repository of historical experience, ethical values, ecological knowledge, and collective memory. Through works such as Folktales of Mizoram, Mizo Songs and Folk Tales, Mizo Drama: Origin, Development and Themes, and Tribal Culture, Folklore and Literature, Kiangte transforms oral traditions into enduring literary and cultural archives. His writings preserve the historical consciousness of the Mizo people while strengthening

their cultural identity in the context of contemporary social change.

The application of the theories of Maurice Halbwachs, Jan Assmann, Stuart Hall, and Homi K. Bhabha demonstrates that Khiangte's works are not merely literary texts but also instruments of cultural preservation and identity formation. His scholarship illustrates how indigenous communities maintain continuity through memory, language, folklore, and shared cultural practices.

Another major contribution of Khiangte is his bilingual scholarship, which has introduced Mizo literature to wider national and international audiences. By translating and critically interpreting indigenous literary traditions, he has helped integrate Mizo literature into mainstream Indian literary studies. His writings challenge the historical marginalization of tribal voices and affirm the importance of indigenous knowledge systems within contemporary literary discourse.

The study therefore concludes that Professor Laltluangliana Khiangte occupies a distinguished position in Indian tribal literary scholarship. His works preserve cultural heritage, promote indigenous identity, enrich folklore studies, and inspire future research in tribal literature and cultural studies.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed:

Tribal literature should be included more extensively in university curricula across India.

More translations of tribal literary works into English and other Indian languages should be encouraged.

Government agencies and academic institutions should support the digital preservation of oral traditions and folklore.

Comparative studies between Mizo literature and other Indian tribal literatures should be promoted.

Greater attention should be given to interdisciplinary research combining literature, folklore, anthropology, history, and cultural studies.

Indigenous writers and researchers should receive institutional support for documenting endangered languages and oral traditions.

Tribal literary texts should be incorporated into national discussions on cultural diversity and inclusive literary history.

Future Scope

The present study opens several possibilities for further research:

Comparative studies of Laltluangliana Khiangte and other tribal writers from different regions of India.

Ecocritical analysis of Mizo folklore and environmental ethics.

Gender perspectives in Mizo tribal literature.

Translation studies focusing on indigenous oral traditions.

Digital archiving and documentation of endangered tribal folklore.

Comparative research between Indian tribal literature and Indigenous literatures from other parts of the world.

Studies on language preservation and cultural sustainability in tribal communities.

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