CHAPTER-V

CONCLUSION

The suffering woman finds a very important place in the selected Khasi novels as seen in the previous chapters of this study. It is therefore felt necessary to present in this chapter a brief summary on the way different Khasi novelists have taken woman’s suffering as a theme in their novels.

The Introductory Chapter starts with a brief discussion on the concept of suffering according to Khasi folktales, Khasi traditional belief and also according to Christian faith. This is aimed at providing some basis for analysing the theme of suffering as projected in the selected texts. Some of the novelists are seen to have been deeply influenced by the folktales orally handed down from one generation to another throughout the centuries.

The theme of suffering is found to form a very important part in these oral tales and woman’s suffering as a mother, a lover, a wife or a daughter is clearly depicted in many of them. Authors such as Rabon Singh, H. Elias, H.O. Mawrie and P.G. Gatphoh have documented and transcreated many of these tales: the heart-rending grief and agony of the mother in ‘Ka Likai’ at the way she was deceived into eating her own child; the suffering mother at the tragic and untimely death of her only child ‘U Sier Laplang’; the heart-broken young girl due to the loss of her lover in ‘Ka Sohlyngngem’; the pain of the rejected wife in the story ‘U Klew bad ka Sngi’. Thus, the suffering of a woman is a recurring theme in many of the oral tales of the Khasis.

In traditional Khasi belief, suffering is believed to have started with the dispensation of U Diengïei which depicted the evil of iniquity, greed and sin (ka pap) that swept the whole of mankind. Tradition has it that U Diengïei overshadowed the earth after the Golden Age of U Sohpetbneng. The end of the Golden Age ushered in the next dispensation of Ka Kuli Juk.

Eminent authors such as H.O. Mawrie are of the view that after Ka Kuli Juk set in, man gropes in the dark as he has missed the peace, which only his Maker can
give. The main purport of the myth of U Diengiei is to explain about the dark age when U Hynńiewtrep first experienced a deep spiritual crisis and suffering.

This suffering was further intensified by utter darkness, physical and spiritual, culminating in Ka Krem Lamet Latang. Disaster and suffering covered upon all mankind because God has turned his face away from His Creation. Man then sought God's forgiveness; hope and light once again filled the earth. Nevertheless, the age of innocence was lost forever. Evil spirits found a place in man's heart and wrought much suffering to mankind.

H.O. Mawrie, P.G. Gatphoh and D.T. Laloo reflect on the terrifying U Thlen which became the cause of much suffering, misery and death since the demon can only be appeased by human sacrifice.

Besides U Thlen, there are also other evil spirits or demons which have caused untold suffering to mankind such a Lyngkhuh Pakhuh (water spirits and mountain spirits which cause sickness), U Rih (the devil which causes malaria), U Syngkhong Kynta Maram (which resides in places where a corpse is left unburied or uncremated), U Trongbah U Rwaibah (which resides in the sky and causes headache), Ka Niangriang (which lives under water and causes deafness), U Suid-um and Ka Thapbalong (which lives under water and causes deafness), Ka Puri Ka Diaw (which lives under water and affects the mental health of its victims). Other evil spirits are Ka Shwar and Ka Bih which, according to H.O. Mawrie, are evil spirits that torture human beings by throwing the sufferer into contortions and convulsions.

Therefore, Khasi traditional thought has its own views on what is suffering, what causes suffering and how far the sufferers are made to experience pain and adversity in their lives.

The next section of this chapter is devoted to a brief discussion on suffering according to Christian faith. In Christian belief, the primary cause of all suffering was caused by the disobedience of Adam and Eve to God's command in the garden of Eden as seen in the Book of Genesis in the Holy Bible. Therefore, suffering is one of the consequences of sin and rebellion against God's laws.
Although, suffering is by definition a very undesirable experience, in Christian faith it is also shown to lead to some greater good. Joseph suffered greatly at the hands of his brothers, who sold him into slavery. At the end of his life, however, Joseph looked back and saw that his family (indeed his nation) was saved by his suffering. The ultimate suffering for the sake of good is seen in the Passion of Christ. His final suffering at the Cross is to redeem and to save the world and the whole human race from eternal damnation.

Suffering may also be caused by demonic forces led by Satan. Here, the cause of suffering is neither the consequences of human sinfulness nor of God’s will but of the action of evil super-natural forces on human beings.

Both Khasi traditional thought and Christian faith have their own view on what is suffering, what are its causes and what are its consequences.

Chapter II presents a textual analysis on F.M. Pugh’s *Ka Gulabpi* and S.Q. Sumer’s *Ka Hima Ka Jingieit*. Both novelists depict the suffering of their women characters in relation to their quest for romantic love. F.M. Pugh’s Gulabpi suffered tremendously because of her love and faithfulness to Surendar Singh. A dramatic sequence of events ensued when she was kidnapped and kept confined in a small dark room because of her refusal to marry a man she despised, Pyrdip Kumar. Her beloved Surendar Singh was seriously injured in his fight against Pyrdip Kumar’s men. Poor Gulabpi had to suffer much mental and emotional agony beside physical discomforts until her father rescued her from the clutches of her tormentor. S. Q. Sumer’s Rosabina, an Indian girl, suffered due to her reckless decision in entering into a relationship with a man she hardly knew and one who came from a totally different cultural background. Rosabina had to go through the humiliation of being discriminated against in a white dominated society. She also faced financial hardship because her husband, General Power had to go to the battlefield, leaving her and her little son behind. In desperation, she turned to her father whom she had neglected for so long for help. She lied to her father about her son’s identity but could not continue the deception for her father found out the truth about her. In deep disappointment, he broke off all relationship with her, leaving her alone and defenceless in this world. She was finally given a ray of hope when she met her husband again who then appeared an
aged-looking man limping very badly. They did not recognize each other any more and when they did, their son accidentally pushed his father to the ground. The poor man was fatally injured. Rosabina had to face heartache and grief once again when she lost her husband for the second time but this time it was a final loss for General Power died in the arms of his beloved Rosbina.

Chapter III presents a textual analysis of B.C. Jyrwa’s novels and K.W. Nongrum’s novels. These two novelists paint a different picture of women’s suffering especially with regard to matters of the heart. B.C. Jyrwa’s on *U Khaiñ Bad Ka Ngen* depicts a love-struck young woman whose romance with a rich young man was cut off in a very painful way. Though Ngen and Khaiñ were deeply in love with each other and wanted to get married and to build a family together, yet their dreams were shattered when they faced stiff opposition from both sets of parents. Ngen’s mother felt that coming from poverty-stricken family, her daughter would not be treated well nor be accepted by Khaiñ’s family. His family, and his mother in particular, were very harsh in their opinion of Ngen. His mother made it very clear to her son that marrying a poor girl like Ngen would whittle away all their wealth and property. In the end, the two lovers were parted and Ngen had to suffer bitterly and in silence throughout her life for there would never be room in her heart for anyone else but Khaiñ.

In the novel, *U Kyrdoh Mawlynnai* a female character faced much heart-ache and pain because of the actions of her drunken husband. He not only left his wife and her new-born child in a pitiable condition at the hospital, he even sold off whatever precious little possession they had to indulge in his drinking bouts. The poor woman had no choice but to abandon her infant at the hospital since she had no means to pay for the hospital bill. The poor woman never had any peace nor joy any more because of the terrible act she had done. Her son was adopted by a rich childless couple and became a doctor. She, however, met him again when she was admitted as patient in the hospital where he worked. Mother and son were finally re-united at the end of the story.

K.W. Nongrum’s *Ka Pung Ka Jingieit* deals with the theme of idealistic love between his main characters. His technique of presentation is rather simplistic and idealistic. Therefore, the theme of suffering depicted by the novelist is very limited.
In this novel, Darihun lost her mother at a very early age. Her father remarried but there was always love and closeness between father and daughter. While she was in college in Shillong, Darihun met Phrangsngi while he was visiting his brother Donsngi. Darihun later completed her studies and got a job as a school teacher in a village nearby Phrangsngi’s village and when they met again the second time their love for each other began to take root.

Unfortunately, dark clouds cast a shadow over the couple when Darihun’s father did not approve of Phrangsngi as his daughter’s choice because he was not as well-educated as Darihun. However, her suffering was short-lived for in the end her father, because of his tender love towards his daughter, relented and gave his approval and his blessings to her and her beloved Phrangsngi.

Nongrum’s novel *U Shanbor Bad U Wadbor* revolves around the relationship between two pairs of lovers: one between Shanbor and Rupamon and the other between Wadbor and Wanpli. Initially, Shanbor’s parents wanted their eldest son to marry Wanpli, yet they did not force their wishes on him when Shanbor expressed his love for Rupamon. They eventually led a happy married life.

The other couple in the novel, Wadbor and Wanpli had a difficult time because Wanpli’s father disliked Wadbor. Later on, Wanpli’s father bowed down to her wishes and allowed her to marry the man of her choice.

Women’s suffering in K.W. Nongrum’s novels is caused by matters of the heart when a woman character had to face difficulties in her relationship with the man she loved. In both the novels, Nongrum presents an ideal romantic love between lovers but one where hurdles were placed by the girl’s family. The girl’s father disapproved of the love affair between his daughter and the man of her choice, not so much because the suitor was disagreeable or unsuitable but because of his concern that his daughter should have the best in her life. In the end, the lovers prevailed and any suffering was removed and both the novels have a happy ending.

As indicated by the title of this chapter, the women characters of both Jyrwa’s and Nongrum’s are mainly one-dimensional. But the depiction of the theme of
suffering by the two novelists is vastly different. While Nongrum’s women characters did suffer in their quest for love yet their suffering was lighter and did not last long. Jyrwa’s women characters, on the other hand suffered intensely whether as a mother or as a lover and their suffering left a lasting scar in their lives.

Chapter IV is a very important chapter because the selected novels taken for analysis are written by major Khasi novelists. Novelists in this chapter portray the suffering of their women characters in a more comprehensive manner, depicting them as they struggle to find fulfillment in their lives.

Three of L.H. Pde’s novel were taken for analysis in this chapter. In *U Raimon Bad Ka Dashisha*, Pde reveals the difficulties that a woman faces when male relatives who are supposed to protect and to help her, instead took advantage of their position in the family. The widow Jngen trusted her brother Arbor to help take care of her property but found out that he had betrayed her trust and had secretly sold off portions of her land. In a state of shock, she tried to reach the refuge of her home, but she unfortunately met with a fatal car accident. She died leaving her daughter an orphan in the world. Arbor then turned on his young niece, Dashisha and even hired a sorcerer to make her go insane. Dashisha had to literally fight against her uncle and had to resist all his attempts to even get her killed. Thus, women’s suffering in this novel is caused mainly by a greedy and evil male relative who was supposed to help and protect them.

Pde’s other novel, *Tang Ma Phi Khun Baieid* reveals the corrupt life style of the people of urban Shillong. Balari, the central character of this novel was secretly madly in love with her friend’s husband, Bianglang. She murdered his wife Melamon with the help of the villainous Dr. Pradip Das in the hope of winning Bianglang’s love.

However, Balari’s guilty conscience did not give her any peace at all. While she was in Bianglang’s arms, she suddenly saw the dead Melamon stepping down from the wedding photograph. She screamed with terror and fainted. Later on, Balari was in a quandary as Pradip had her letter of confession to her crime in his custody. He heartlessly used her letter to blackmail her and to put pressure on her to give in to his lustful desire.
A guilty conscience and a cruel blackmailer pushed Balari to total despair. In bitter suffering she committed suicide by consuming the remaining poison with which she killed Melamon.

In the novel *U Mooiong*, Pde depicts the suffering of his woman character, Dianghun which was due to negligence of her parents and her exploitation by the men in her life. The poor young girl did not get love nor affection from her parents. She had a disastrous relationship with a non-Khasi labourer who left her with a son. Later on in the novel, she met and married Raplang, and she was happy for a while. Once again, the poor woman had to suffer much sadness and pain because of the intoxicating effects of the ‘black-gold’ (coal) on Raplang’s life-style. He did not have much time for his young wife whom he looked down as an illiterate rustic villager while he enjoyed the company of bright and sophisticated men and women in Shillong city.

The second novelist whose works are taken for analysis in the chapter is W. Tiewsoh. In *Kam Kalbut* the main female character, Noli had to go through painful suffering especially because of the pride and arrogance of her father, Along. Noli met and fell in love with Melkhan and the relationship between the pair of lovers grew stronger but Along intensely disliked Mel. His pride and ego were wounded when his candidate in the Wadar election lost and he blamed Melkhan for that. Noli left her house and went to stay with Mel as his wife, an act which was against the wish of her father.

The conflict between Mel and Noli’s father especially during the Second World War when each family had to carry head-load along the steep hills and slopes of Ri War area tragically affected Noli and her family. Since Mel was very sick, Noli pleaded with her father to defer her family’s duty for carrying head-load for the army but he refused to pay any heed to her request. In forcing herself to carry the head-load after she had just given birth to her third child, Noli immediately fell ill during her journey back from Cherrapunjee. In a very short while, her condition became critical and then she died, tragically leaving her husband and her small children in great distress.
In the novel *Ka Jingkwah U Kpa* the novelist depicts the short-lived life of the unhappy Nilima as she died in a plane crash while she was on the way to Silchar. Her suffering was caused mainly by her love and loyalty to the family before she met her death. She had to forgo any chance of happiness with Sonny the man she loved because it was her father’s wish that she should take care of her younger sisters before she could think of settling down in marriage.

In the novel *La Bakla*, Tiewsoh’s skilfully portrays a very sensitive social issue prevailing among the Khasis, that is the conflict of religious convictions in the lives of his character and how this brought about much suffering to the woman character of the novel, Shondra.

The main cause of her suffering was the opposition of Prophulo, her beloved Lambor’s father, to their relationship. His dislike of Shondra made him try all he could to harass and trouble her in order to make her end her relationship with his son. Shondra had to face a harrowing experience when she was kidnapped and taken to a brothel in Bhutan where she was sold to serve in a house of ill-fame. After being rescued from the house of ill-fame, she was shattered and in despair when she realized that there could be no future between her and Lambor because his father, Prophulo was still very much against her relationship with his son. She also painfully realized the shame of being looked at askance by many in the society. Unable to bear her suffering any longer, she ended her life by jumping into the cold waters of ‘Nanpolok’.

D.T. Laloo’s novel *Ka Lasubon* depicts the suffering of the central character, Lasubon, where traditional beliefs and practices as well as contemporary social issues are integrated in the story. Lasubon faced many unusual obstacles and difficulties in her life because her mother was *Ka Nongri thlen* (thlen keeper).

The tragedy of Lasubon was that she tried all she could to escape the pervading evil presence of *U Thlen* in her life but was unable to do so. The futile attempts of Rymphang to save her failed and she died a horrible and painful death in a burning house.
H.W. Sten’s novel, *Ka Samla Nongkyndong* was a transcreated work from the book of Ruth in the *Holly Bible*. In this novel, H.W. Sten creatively depicted the suffering of his women characters Naomi and Ruth due to the tragic death of all the menfolk in their family. The women characters were made to face much heartache and bitterness to such an extent that Naomi (meaning ‘pleasant’) asked to be called Mara (meaning ‘bitter’).

K.K. Kharlukhi’s novel, *Ka Melody* is named after the main character, Melody. She suffered intense anguish and grief because of the prejudice usually faced by the disabled in society. She tried all she could to lead an independent life even though she failed to win the approval of Kit’s mother as his choice of a bride. She died trying to protect Kitlang from being stabbed to death by a deranged woman, Kiki.

It has been stated in Chapter I that the theme of suffering projected by some of the novelists is influenced by that found in folktales. Some novelists have incorporated the idea of suffering as projected in Khasi traditional belief while some others are deeply influenced by Biblical teachings on suffering.

B.C. Jyrwa’s perception of suffering in one of his novels almost mirrors that found in the folktale *Ka Sohlyngngem*. The tale as documented by Rabon Singh was about *Ka Sohlyngngem* and *U Rynñiaw* a pair of lovers who deeply loved each other. The two came from families of different backgrounds in terms of wealth. The folktale depicts the suffering of a love-lorn maiden who had to part with her lover because their parents were opposed to their relationship. She thus lived to groan and cry in the depths of jungles for *U Rynñiaw*. B.C. Jyrwa, in his novel *U Khaiñ Bad Ka Ngen* clearly focused on the suffering of Ngen. Khaiñ and Ngen came from different backgrounds where wealth and property are concerned in the same way that Rynñiaw and Sohlyngngem also did. They met and fell in love with each other. After professing their love for each other, they pledged that they would always remain faithful to each other. However, both sets of parents disapproved of their relationship. Like ‘Ka Sohlyngngem’, Ngen obeyed her parents and gave up her beloved Khaiñ. She knew she would never get over her lover come what may in the future. She was left a heartbroken woman who chose to suffer alone and in silence through her life.
D. T. Laloo's *Ka Lasubon* is focused on the pervading evil influence of U Thlen on the life of the main women characters. The keepers of U Thlen have to perform the evil acts of human sacrifice to appease U Thlen. They usually hire Nongshohnoh to find victims to be offered to the evil spirit. The novelist vividly portrays the suffering of Lasubon because her mother was the keeper of U Thlen. Lasubon, on one occasion, had a nightmare-like experience, which she recounted to Rymphang. Almost in a hallucination, she saw a snake licking her feet. The burning sensation was so painful that she screamed out aloud. Her mother then got up and went inside the special room and prayed for her daughter. Immediately, the pain in her feet disappeared.

This episode reflects the traditional belief where U Thlen sucks the life out of a keeper's family member if they fail to appease him with human sacrifice.

Lasubon was, therefore, slowly being destroyed by that evil spirit. She tried to find solace and comfort in Rymphang's love but did not really understand the danger she was in. Rymphang who still practiced the traditional religion was immediately suspicious of the true state of affairs in Lasubon's family. He was already aware of the significance of the dark room in the middle of the house. When Lasubon recounted to him the incident of the snake licking the soles of her feet, he understood at once that Lasubon's mother was the keeper of U Thlen and Lasubon would be its victim. Both she and her mother did in fact die when their hired Nongshohnoh turned on them for revenge.

It was very clear that some novelists were deeply influenced by Christian beliefs regarding human suffering. In Christian faith, suffering may be caused by human sin. The Bible says that suffering was brought into the world as a consequence of the sinful action of Adam and Eve. The view here is that each individual is rewarded or punished according to his or her own deeds and that in fact "the soul who sins is the one who will die". Balari's suffering in L.H. Pde's novel, *Tang Ma Phi Khun Baieid* was not undeserving. She was madly in love with a married man, Bianglang, that too the husband of her friend Melamon. This in itself was contrary to Christian teaching which views such feelings as sinful. But Balari did not stop at that, she went to the extent of murdering Melamon by poisoning her. This evil and wilful
act of murdering an innocent woman bought terrible repercussions on Balari. Her guilty conscience troubled her constantly and she was greatly tormented when she saw the dead Melamon stepping off the photograph into the room while she was in Bianglang’s arms. It is also said that ‘old sins cast long shadows’ and Balari’s crime of murder could never go away because Pradip had in his possession her letter confessing to her crime of murder. The unscrupulous villain used the letter to blackmail her. Her mental and emotional suffering ultimately led her to an act of self-destruction. She reaped what she sowed when she, in the end, consumed the remaining portion of the poison she killed Melamon with.

H.W. Sten’s *Ka Samla Nongkyndong* was fully interspersed with Christian teachings, not surprisingly, since this novel was transcreated from the Biblical story of “Ka Ruth”. As discussed in Chapter I of this study, in Christian faith, the suffering of a righteous person is seen to lead to some greater good. As terrible as it may seem at the time of the suffering of the main characters Naomi and Ruth, the story of God’s divine and holy plan is for the good of the two women as well as for the whole Jewish nation. Naomi’s cup of grief and suffering was filled to the brim at the loss of her husband and both her sons. In fact, she felt it was worthless to carry on living. Ruth’s suffering was caused by the early loss of her beloved husband, yet her faithfulness and loyalty towards her mother-in-law led her to find happiness again in the later part of her life. In fact, Ruth’s and Naomi’s suffering led them to experience happiness and prosperity once again. More importantly, their suffering was for the good of the whole nation of Israel because Ruth later married her dead husband’s kinsman Boaz and had a son named Obed. Obed became the father of Jesse and Jesse was the father of David the greatest king of Israel. In the New Testament of the Bible, Jesus Christ the Messiah was born in the house of Joseph the carpenter whose lineage can be traced back to Ruth and Boaz.

In conclusion, one may say that the novelists’ portrayal of the suffering woman projects their own understanding of the importance of suffering as part of the total human experience in life.