CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In our today’s world, it is difficult to make distinction between what is right and what is wrong. It is always the decision of the higher authority especially in the social, political and religious realms. Though there are endless arguments between the two, it is not our fault. Every country needs law and order so that its citizens will live in peace. In order to live in peace, our every action must be in accordance with law and order laid down by the country. Besides this, it is expected that every one of our actions must be virtuous. Undoubtedly, virtues play important roles in the society. As the world goes by, there might be a feeling that our society has become where evil-doer survives and good-doer does not stand a chance. But one must remember that it is because of the good-doer or say the brave-heart that the world is still revolving even though there are problems all around us.

The present day world is rent by unprecedented wars and the contemporary scenario is such that it is predominantly motivated and activated by social de-stability, moral degradation, political unrest and upheavals, religious fundamentalism, racial discrimination, linguistic fanaticism, economic inequalities etc. Due to this phenomenon man is confused and confronted with the dispute and quarrel between the well cherished and perfectly noble traits and unethical and immoral behaviour of the people. Everywhere we come across unrest and unholy, horrible, illegal activities in the rise. Hence it becomes inevitable to resist and revitalise the philosophical, moral and social issues exhibited by thinkers regarding the concept of virtue. In
this sense, an attempt has been made in this thesis to present the nature and application of virtue in the concept of Western and Indian philosophers. Special attention has been given to the knowledge and role of virtue in the Mizo tribal community in the North-Eastern part of India.

Many great thinkers try to give the exact definition and meaning of virtue, but it is still difficult to understand and practice in accordance to the true meaning of it. So, it is important to teach ourselves over and over about the moral values and learn many things from the past or the forgotten past. We can say that every culture has its own ways of teaching and practices in order to have a harmonious life with fellow beings as well as living and non-living things surrounding us if it is worth considering and worthwhile nowadays. Sometimes what was practiced long time ago should be brought out and learnt them again. There are many reasons to learn what we thought we already know because it is possible to make mistakes for balancing too much and too little of everything. For instance, a man who is afraid of everything and encounters for nothing becomes a coward and while who does not afraid of nothing at all but encounters anything becomes a fool.¹ The perspectives of others cannot be totally ignored though everyone has the freedom to follow one’s own instinct.

1.1 **THE ORIGIN, DEFINITION AND MEANING OF VIRTUE:**

Here, the aim is to avoid any possible uncertainty, doubt, puzzlement or disarray in explaining and giving the definition of virtue. The reason is that, each nation and its people have its own understanding or languages which cannot be translated as clear as their own language. The most important factor is to know and realize what virtue is, so that people in general would understand and can appreciate how valuable it is in our everyday life.
There should be more learning and training or understanding about the true meaning of virtue. This is the way for peaceful co-existence whether between human and human, human and animal or human and nature because human beings are the most rational beings on earth and the advancement of today’s technology should be in harmony with other living beings or things.

The word ‘virtue’ comes from the Latin word *virtus* and in Greek it is known as *arete*. In the wider sense, virtue is any human excellence, any excellence of character. The fundamental sense of the term is highly significant. In its primary sense, it is any quality of human character that is admired and which is something to be valued.² The way we believe in the development or evolution of man may differ in many ways while comparing with the time of Greek or medieval, but the ‘perfect’ life of an individual and its development for the need of good life remain the same. For this, the fundamental goodness in life should always be remembered without forgetting the changes of time which can also be regarded as the need for balancing the old and the new. Just like balancing the know-how and when of an action of becoming a coward or a hero, depends on the nature of reacting to the emerging situation.

Another definition is that virtue is an acquired human quality, the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to act on those that are good which purely are internal and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such good.³ The action performed must purely spring forth from the intention of a person’s choice and hoping for the best result and this will protect us from further damage to ourselves and to others also. When we talk about human quality, there are many qualities depending and varying on person to person. When we say that man is wise, it does not mean that he is perfect all in all, but we are saying that he has the attributes of virtue and that
he is praised for his worthiness. For example, in every game, it is not the most beautiful and the strongest that are crowned, but those who compete, rightly and legitimately win. The noble and the good things in life are to be practised in accordance to noble rules. The hardworking participants, with pure heart and careful approach are the strongest and the winners. And at the same time, those who are competing and win are the strongest and the most beautiful.

The teaching of Socrates with reference to virtue was essentially based on knowledge. It is true that virtue is knowledge. It can be expanded and taught in many ways. He who knows what is right does what is right which means that, through knowledge, he knows and is capable of differentiating what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, when a person is said to have knowledge about virtue, he is obliged to perform an action virtuously. Otherwise, he does not have the chance to be called as a knowledgeable man or the chance to reveal his knowledge. Here, it is not the case that virtue is totally concentrated on knowledge, but it is also about the knowing of the quality of virtue and the practice of it is the knowledge itself. Because, it is true that virtues like temperance, wisdom, courage etc are flowing from one source known as knowledge. This is the unity of virtue. This unity is very important in every sphere of life, and this is the most important teaching of Socrates about virtue. But this is a view against the Sophists, which is, virtue is different from individual to individual. It is necessary to accept what the great philosopher had already emphasized because these definitions and explanation had been discussed for many years that they have been very well adopted in almost every possible way among different cultures.

What was applicable in certain circumstances might not be applicable in another situation. Again, ancient philosopher Socrates believed that virtues are common to all people whether young or old and it should be
treated as one. This belief of Socrates was rejected by Plato in his *Meno* by saying that everyone has his own specific virtues to fulfil. Plato added three more virtues, besides wisdom or knowledge, such as courage, temperance and justice. Man has his own virtue to fulfill and so do children. In Indian philosophy, all men have been given their specific duties, and if they fulfil all their duties, they become virtuous or liberated. But there must be a balance-point between excessive and immoderate action in accordance with virtue. Though there is no much relation between the ancient Greek philosophy and Indian philosophy on comparison, they, however, have a deep connection by sharing Plato’s beliefs on specific duties for everyone. Because he said specifically that the virtue of wisdom is for the philosophers or the rulers of the country, courage is for soldiers or the protector of the nation, and temperance is for the masses and the harmonious co-operation of all these three produce justice. These are the virtues for becoming good citizen. For him, virtue is the result of healthy or harmonious soul. It is the primary tool and the most effective tool according to one’s specific duties. Therefore, virtue for Plato is innate or natural and not an established state of character. This means that everyone is born with morality or goodness in him which must be brought out by proper guidance from the elders, teachers, parents and so on.

It is commonly known that human power has its own limitation. And this limitation can be reduced by possessing as well as promoting virtues. Which means that human power is multiplied by virtue of knowledge, and the activities of human is completed by the result of virtuous action. It is an immediate perfection of power because it leads man to act in a definite way. As we have said earlier, virtue can be defined into many words, by possessing any one of them means that our life would be very wonderful and be admired without neglecting the life of balancing the defect and the excess. That is, by reason, our action must be in agreement with right desire. In order to have a right end, our will chooses the means rightly as guided by the intellect.
Therefore, virtue becomes a positive factor and our guide in choosing the means for the right ends.

Virtue is also expressed in terms of goodness, integrity, worth, dignity, excellence, morality, honesty, justice, courage, temperance, fortitude, love, faith, decency, respectability, nobility, righteousness, propriety, rectitude, worthiness, high-mindedness, incorruptibility, uprightness, strength, usefulness, innocence, purity and so on. Each one of the above can be given an endless definition but all of them can be put into one word, that is, virtue. This clearly shows the strong influences and importance of virtue in everyday life.

The perfection of our potentiality of being human and our action is also called virtue. And sometimes acting virtuously is rightly said to be well connected with the mind. Therefore, we can point out the definition given by St. Thomas Aquinas, “Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no man can make bad use, which God works in us without us.” 7 St. Thomas Aquinas had proposed Four Cardinal Virtues namely prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude, besides, he adopted the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

One of the oldest theories of virtue can be found in ancient Greek philosophy. The Four Cardinal virtues namely wisdom, justice, fortitude and temperance can be found in Plato’s Republic and Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics and also for Socrates, wisdom. Although their views are somewhat different from each other, they are the foremost philosophers who laid the foundation stone for the idea of virtue. Virtue theory was introduced into the history by many moralistic historians and philosophers. The journey of the idea of virtue appeared quite interesting, regarding the historical period and the geographical places that it had been touched. First, the Greek idea of virtue was passed on to Roman philosophy through Marcus Tullicus Cicero who was
a Roman philosopher, statesman, lawyer, orator, political theorist, Roman consul and constitutionalist. And later integrated into Christian moral theology by St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and also St. Thomas Aquinas had provided the largest consideration of virtue from a theological perspective in his *Summa Theologica* and his commentaries on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Virtue theory emphasizes Aristotle’s belief in the ancient Greek society as the highest political organization, and the role of virtues is enabling human beings to flourish in that environment. It played the key role as a shield against corruption and a means to preserve a good life.

According to ancient and the most well-known philosopher, Aristotle, virtue is a disposition to choose what is excellent and noble for its own sake and to avoid what is immoral or contemptible. That is something is clear and certain, and fulfilling on its purpose. He has divided virtue into intellectual and moral virtues. The virtues which have the intellect for their subject, or which reside in the intellect, give it facility in knowing the true, and hence they are termed as the intellectual virtues. Those virtues that reside in the will as their subject and render its various acts, loving the good, easier, and less painful and when acquired in a perfect degree, and make the will’s virtuous acts pleasant, they are termed as the moral virtues. In short, intellectual virtue requires experience and time, that is, teaching is necessary while moral virtues come as a result of habit or practice. The former involves a thorough understanding of the notion of virtue which is a pre-requisite and inevitable to enable a person to execute the idea of virtue into actuality. The latter is the result of application of the virtuous implications in actual life. Both apprehension of the quality of virtue makes one realise the significant feature of the term virtue. These two types of virtue are elaborated in the second chapter.
Though there are many difficulties involved in establishing the nature of virtue, it is certain that different people, cultures and societies have high opinions and views regarding what represent virtue. For example, Plato had given Four Cardinal virtues and Aristotle had given wider than Plato. But this does not mean that one is better than the other, but it means that there are things which make man’s life more meaningful when one practices any one of the cherished virtues. If we go further, Indian Philosophy, which is almost as old as Greek philosophy has laid down specific virtues to be followed by everyone and it is called *Puruśārtha* which includes four kinds of virtues namely *dharma* or righteousness, *artha* or wealth, *kāma* or desire and *mokṣa* or liberation. In the Indian context the term *puruśārtha* is relevant at present since it gives importance to ‘*dharma*’ as the basic requirement of life. *kāma* and *artha* are the lower virtues, though needed in empirical life, are included as virtues since wealth and instinct must be channelized through *dharma*. Then only one can contemplate on the highest virtue viz., *mokṣa* or liberation which is the culmination point of karmic life. *Mokṣa* or liberation has moral, spiritual, metaphysical and religious connotations. This development is done in the third chapter.

All the above virtues mentioned above given by Aristotle, Plato and Thomas Aquinas, are very influential among the *Mizo* tribe since Christianity was introduced and almost everyone was converted into Christian religion within a short span of time. One of the many reasons that the conversion did not take a long period of time is due to the beliefs of everyday life that is sustained by the virtues of prudence, temperance, justice and fortitude, faith, hope, charity and so on. It can be said that virtue is the most important thing in the early *Mizo* life. The difficulty and the struggle of day to day life engenders in the unity of the society. The individual cannot live alone, that is individual contribution is required in all aspects of life. The awareness of keeping peace and harmony in the society, among families, towards fellow
villagers, and towards neighbouring villages is quite understood by the people, because of this, they even prepared for special festival known as Chapchar Kut. This is the special addition for the enrichment of Mizo morality. The modesty of people is highly appreciated that it paves the way in achieving blessings from the earth itself while living and even after life. The actual lives of the Mizo are completed or provided wholesomeness by an underlying principle known as Tlawmngaihna which literally means service to others with full dedication, accompanied by charity and self denial. Without this philosophical or moral principle, the maintenance of peaceful or harmonious society would be impossible. It is the clear and distinct outcome of goodness of human beings. The prosperity and advancement in culture and civilisation of a clan, tribe or society very much depend on the perfect life-pattern of the citizens both individually and collectively. The moral, social, political, religious norms etc. are inherited from prosterity and they survive with unwritten laws which help the people to sort out the issues during the times of crisis. Even though all the people strive hard to survive peacefully, the confronting evils caused by nature, animals and fellowmen are to be faced boldly and eliminated courageously. In this process the endeavours of the Mizo tribes are really remarkable since they have properly and perfectly understood the meaning of life through their adherence to Christian missionary faith and principles. This is elaborated in the fourth chapter.

1.2 THE PROBLEM AND THE PURPOSE:

Every culture and tradition is embedded with virtues, and therefore, the purpose of this research is to rediscover the importance of virtue in the society, and exploring the various perspectives of virtue, and also to enhance
the idea of morality through the changes of time, and last but not the least, to
highlight the importance of every individual in the society. The attribute of
virtues are the purifying tools and the efficient moderators of the life of an
individual, it shapes the way for an individual’s salvation or liberation while
living and also to those who believes in the afterlife. The purpose of this
research is to give a great esteem in recognition of the individual in the society
especially in the perspective of the Mizo tribe. Thus, the thesis analyses the
following problems:

1) What is the actual contribution of virtues in the present social life
   comparing with the earlier social life?
2) What are the importance and role of the individual in the society?
3) Are there connections between the contribution of the Western and
   Indian philosophy?
4) How far the development of the concept of virtue at global perspective
   will enhance the conditions of life in the under privileged Mizo
   society?

1.3 IMPORTANCE OF VIRTUES:

The modern conception of virtue deals entirely with moral
obligations and duties which are laid down by the government, but the
difference is that moral obligations and duties which are practiced
by different people, cultures and societies are carried out from
internal disposition. It is essential to establish the need for moral
values and respect every culture’s moral values with careful
observation. The reason is that, some cultures or societies have faced rapid
transformation especially in the 20th to 21st century, whether it is technologies or sciences, some are very advanced and some are still in the state of backwardness. Even though the condition or situation of their different status, moral life or good life is the most desired, and the virtuous act might not always come along with happiness or pleasure. It is a mixture of pleasure and pain. It is pleasure that moves us to do what is even ignoble fundamental, and pain that moves us to refrain from what is even noble. And therefore, as Plato says, man needs to be so trained from his youth as to find out pleasure and pain in the right perspectives. This is what good education means. Another reason why virtue has to do with actions and passions or affections, but every passion and every act is accompanied by pleasure and pain. For example, when a child is asked to play a particular game which he or she has never heard before, he or she might not have an interest at all. But if the child had been keeping on learning how to play, he or she will gradually achieve an analytical skill and new strategy not only to win but also to become an expert in that particular game. That is why scholars insist that virtue has to be nurtured and inserted in the minds of the youth. The purpose of adhering to a life of virtue is to lead us to act more perfectly and in a distinctively human manner. The powers that we have are developed and strengthened by the steadying influence of virtues. It is important for us to realize what is right and best in our action. It flows that virtue is needed for consistency, readiness, promptness, regularity and stability in our performances so that we can enjoy our actions and this is the sign of the existence of virtue in us. We become well-conditioned through the possession of virtue.

The question is what is it that we call value in our life? Or what do we value in our life? The most preferred answer could be found in the word ‘virtue’ because it has included in our life-pattern like happiness and pleasure. By asking ourselves why do we prefer this one than the other one? It is because it makes our life happier and easier. And therefore, we evaluate this or that
thing and finally choose what we think is the best. If this is the case, then we eventually search, learn and want to follow the right way of living. This right way of living can be achieved by practicing along with the understanding of the true meaning of virtue. It has already been examined by several anthropologists that these virtues have prevailed in all cultures.

Here, keeping in mind that, it is not the final aim in talking about how each culture is built up. But only to show that all cultures have given importance to the meaning of virtue. Let us show few points about the importance of virtue in our life:

1) **For protecting ourselves from profligate:**

To speak the truth, everybody wants respect from our surrounding, whether it be our own family members, friends or fellow workers, all of us look for respect from others. In the meantime, one must always remember that there are many things behind ‘respect’. In order to achieve respect from others, one must be honest, hard-work, tough or bold and must have firmness in whatever he or she does. Generally, these can be seen in our day to day work performances. Here, there is no distinction between lower or higher labor. It can be easily seen in every place where if one had earned for a living with unfair means, the life of that individual will never find inner peace. It is the fact that when one has fairness in every work he performs, he will find satisfaction and will be fruitful, creative and successful. All the hard-work, fairness, honesty and firmness he had performed will protect him from unnecessary extravagant expenses. In order to avoid dissatisfaction
in life, one must practice virtue in life. Otherwise, it is easy to fall into the trap of hatred, for there is no gain for promoting hatred for something, it is only the torturing of oneself.¹¹

2) **For disciplining ourselves:**

There is a very good example of disciplined life, that is, a soldier or an army. The everyday life of an army man starts with obedience to his higher commander because a soldier is meant for protecting and fighting for the country and he must be ever ready for that situation, for this reason he is instructed, trained, taught and nurtured. Therefore, by practicing obedience such persons have become useful. Everyone cannot hold the same position, but everyone can practice obedience so that one may lead a meaningful life. The purpose of virtue is to induce us to act more perfectly and in a distinctively human manner. The power that we inherently possess is developed and strengthened by the consistent influence of virtue. It is important to lead a human life with perfection and peacefulness.

3) **To have a harmonious life:**

It is part of a human being to live in a society which requires relationship with other people for our own self-discipline and completion as a human being. The human being is responsible
for pursuing a harmonious life. It is impossible to live with a man who lacks virtue. Once a man is in charge of himself in the pursuit of virtue, he would make life better and would be helpful for the promotion of human welfare. Even from the smallest to biggest animals, according to the scientists, they frequently change or alter their behavior by controlling immediate selfishness in order to improve their survival fitness. If this is the case, since all the animals and plants belong to human beings, something is to be shared with them. Therefore, human beings are responsible for their own survival and for the survival of other living beings like plants and animals. The human beings must show love and kindness to them in order to live in harmony. If not, it is the human beings who will face the problem subsequently.

4) **Virtue helps us to solve problems:**

Virtue helps us to solve problems because it is the middle path. One of the famous ways of saying of the ‘middle path’ can be found in Aristotle’s teaching as well as Buddha’s preaching. Though there are many criticisms about the practice of the middle path, it is still the path which is the most relevant for the human beings on earth. The reason is that it makes perfect the puzzling life of an individual. The word ‘mean’ literally means that which is mediate or occupies the middle position between something that is deficiency and excess. This kind of mean is not something we find in mathematics which is absolute and fixed. For example, temperateness is the virtue that perfects the sensual part and
courage is the virtue that perfects the aggressive part and so on.\textsuperscript{12} This has to be expanded because it is very important especially in the life of early Mizo. All the villages had a Chief or Lal, whose position was mainly inherited, to protect the people from animal attack or war waged by the people of another village. The stability of the village fully depended on the Chief, the ministers and the patriots or chauvinists. They are the rulers, leaders, mediators, counselors, guides, governors and protectors. Since they have the quality of virtue of wisdom, courage, temperance and justice, they could become leaders among the people.

The Western notion of virtue is important for the present Mizo people imbibed because of the influence of Christianity which had been introduced by the Western missionaries. The present virtues that are mostly practiced have been imbibed taken from the Christian conception of virtues especially influenced by Thomas Aquinas who again was influenced by the Greek notion of virtue. However, Indian conception of virtue is also equally important for the Mizo. For, the traditional virtue of Mizo and Indian virtues have many common characteristics and way of practices. For example, the \textit{Varṇa Dharma} and virtues given by Plato have similarities, \textit{Aśramasastra} and \textit{Zawlbuk} also known as Bachelor’s dormitory have similar functions which was the main institution of learning good manners, obedience, discipline, courage and ways of life. Though there was no specific distinction of classes or \textit{Varṇa} among the Mizo, it has similar functions and all human beings have duties to perform in their everyday life. Greek philosophy, Indian philosophy and the Mizo tradition are inter-related through the teachings and practices of virtue. This is one of the ways that various cultures are in touch with one another and the way to stay closer for the growth of such philosophical viewpoint.
1.4 **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The methodology of the research is philosophical, historical, descriptive and comparative. Every chapter has been given a critical examination with special reference to one particular tribe that of the *Mizos.* Philosophical reasoning is given importance to the research. Since the research is about different cultures and the period of the study has a wide gap, the history of different cultures is compared based on the definition and concept of virtue.

1.5 **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Books that are available on the topic of virtue and its relation are as follows:

*Ethics (Selection from Classical and Contemporary Writers)* by Oliver A. Johnson (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1965) explains the importance of virtue as a means for balancing our action that is the medium and the protector between too much and too little. *Fundamental of Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* by Wilbur Marshal Urban (Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1958) explains the definition and origin of virtues and it also explains classification of virtues that is the intellectual and moral virtue. *Aristotle’s Ethical Theory* by W.F.R Hardle (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1968) explains that virtue is an acquired human quality that sprung from a person’s choice. *Virtue Ethics* edited by Stephen Darwall (Blackwell Publishing Press, 2nd Edition, United Kingdom, 2006) explains the classical moral theories and contemporary moral theories. It also explains the attributes of virtue and according to that man has earned his worth. *Ethics –Aristotle and Baghavadgita* by Dr. H.N.Mishra (College Publication, Kanpur, 1963) explains the classification of Aristotle’s virtue and the ethics of Baghavadgita and gives
approach morality in times of personal crisis, in decision making, and also explains individual fulfilment in the society. Kristian Nun Dan Tha by Rev.C.Lianhmingthanga (Synod Literature and Publication Board, Aizawl, 2008) explains how a true believer or follower of God should live. Mizo Hnamzia leh Khawtlang Nun Siam That by B.Lalthangliana, C.Laitanga, Lalchungnunga, J.V.Hluna, F.Lalsangliana (Synod Publication Board, Aizawl, 1988) explains the nature and origin of Mizo. It also explains the importance of revitalization of the society. Mission and Tribal Identity by Vanlalchhuanawma (Tercentenary Publication, New Delhi, 2010) explains the moral and social institution of the Mizo people and the moral principal known as Tlawmngaihna. It also explains the influences and impact of Christianity in the society. Essay on the History of the Mizos by Sangkima (Spectrum Publications, Gwahati, 2004) explains the development and expression of the moral lives and practices of the Mizo people in courses of time. It also explains the increasing importance of moral stability in the modern days. The Earlier Mizo Society by Dr. N.Chatterji (Firma KLM Private limited, Kolkata, 1975) explains status and importance of women, Chief or king. It also explains an introduction and functions of moral institution namely Zawlbuk. Mizo Pasaltha te by Lianhmingthanga (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 2004) explains the life history and endurance of the most famous 22 Mizo champions or brave men and also explains how the societies has looked up to those champions, the back bone of the society. Mizo Ethos: Changes and challenges by Rev. V.S. Lalrinawma (Mizoram Publication Board, Aizawl, 2005) explains the history of Mizo society before and after the advent of British, it also explains the fundamental concerns, to understand and identify about the depth of Mizo ethos in the past and the changes brought by the missionaries’ activities and education. Mizo Pipu Nun Hlui by F. Lianhmingthanga and B. Lalsangliana (Mizoram Board of School Education, Aizawl, 1995) explains the early Mizo general life and religious life, their institution and the introduction of
Christianity in Mizoram. *History and Ethnic Identity Formation in North-East India* Edited by J.V. Hluna (Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2013) explains the history of Mizo life in general, religious life, political life, socio-cultural history, economics and their development history, and also the history of other North-East. *Five years in Unknown Jungles* by Reginald A. Lorrain (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 2012) explains how the Missionary from the west had encountered the unknown tribal people in Lakher Land, Mizoram. *Mizo Narratives: Accounts from Mizoram* Edited by Malsawmdawngliana and Rohmingmawii (Scientific Book Centre, Guwahati, 2013) explains pre-colonial Mizo society, informal colonial encounter and encounter with the British, influence of Christianity and political activism. *The Lushais* (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1978) explains about the Lushai Chief, relationship between the British and the Lushais especially with the Chief. *Lushai Chrysalis* by Major A.G.McCall (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 2015) explain the ordeal of the British in Lushai hills, a backward tribal area of India, it also explains the necessity for fostering development of long healthy and appropriate lines, necessity for a closer link of understanding of difficulties of the people. *A Monograph on Lushai Customs and Ceremonies* by N.E. Parry (Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 2009) explains about the importance of Mizo Chief in their society, it also explains the customary law and order, punishment of criminals, funeral ceremonies, and religious activities. *Negotiating the Past: Memory, History and Culture of Mizo* by Malsawmdawngliana (Scientific Book Centre, Gwahati, 2015) explains the investigation of the cultural history of Mizo during the Pre-colonial period, it also explains the importance of myth of origin as the instrument of identity formation, how a social hierarchy is construed in Mizo society.
1.6 **AN OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS:**

The first chapter gives introduction of the thesis, world view, the concept and definition, ethical implications of the notion of virtue, meaning and importance of the term ‘virtue’. The application of virtue in the actual life is also introduced in this chapter.

The second chapter explains the Western thought of virtue from ancient to medieval with a particular selection of philosophers and how it has influenced other cultures in a span of time. It elaborates the classification of virtue given by Aristotle namely intellectual and moral virtue and it also includes Plato’s Cardinal Virtue elaborated by Aristotle, and also the Christian virtue put forth by Thomas Aquinas namely faith, hope and charity.

The third chapter explains the Indian classification of virtues, and the virtues in the context of the four *Puruśārthas*, and the hierarchy of virtues in the Indian tradition. The social institution namely the *Aśramasastra* is explained. It also includes the doctrine of *karma*, the Five Vows of Jainism, the Eight Fold Path of Buddhism, and *Yama* and *Niyama*.

The fourth chapter is the main contribution of the entire thesis. It gives a brief introduction to the history of *Mizo* culture and geographical location and economical status. It also explains the studies and practices of morality in the *Mizo* tribe, the main institution of the people for the sustenance of their moral and social life known as *Zawlbuk*, and compared with the practices of the western and the Indian thought of virtues. In the fourth chapter, the understanding of virtue towards nature or environment, towards elders, women and children were included in the beginning of the chapter and specially concentrated on the view and perspectives of the people of the olden days with the influences or effects of drastic changes in their social life.
The fifth chapter is the conclusion of the thesis. It comprises of the summary of the chapters. It also highlights the original contribution of the researcher, the future research possibilities and suggestions for further research for the benefit of the modern society in general and of the Mizo in particular. It also includes the critical evaluation of the thesis.

1.7 PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH:

There are hard faced certain problems in finding books which took the researcher huge amount of time in collecting data. The primary sources were also unable to be utilized because of the difficulty in the language provided especially in the Indian content. The main problem in fourth chapter was the limitation of the philosophical background of the Mizo which was mainly transferred through verbal from generation to generation, there was no written record of their history, the sources are purely secondary. This had caused in the authenticity of the interpretation of the philosophical background. But all these had turned into tremendous challenges for further studies.

The study of virtues is always relevant in the society. The rich and well developed philosophy like Western and Indian philosophy has never ending contribution debate, though the originality should always be cherished and maintained. The thesis will enrich the progress of Mizo culture in the contribution of its own philosophical realm. The comparison of different continent, culture and era may contribute a great deal for the interested people in the field of philosophy.

Regarding the attainment of liberation to oneself and the society as a whole, the attributes of virtue are the means. Each one of the means is deep
and wide, one can choose the specific attributes of virtue and the relevance of its application to the society.

In the modern era where there is scientific advancement and technological development, people are baffled between matter and mind, values and evils, doctrines and rituals etc. this kind of duality has paved the way for unrest in the socio-political settings in every society and nation as well. The study of virtue with its fully developed denotation and connotation with an application in a tiny tribal society will certainly be beneficial in understanding the concept of virtue and the role it plays in actual life. In this trend, study and practice of virtues would be helpful in knowing, understanding and realization of the concept of virtue.
ENDNOTES:


10. Oesterle, op.cit., p.60.

11. Ibid., p.46.