



Learning Culture Through Play: A brief study of Nuchhungi's *Mizo Naupangte Infiamna leh a Hla Te*

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Abstract

Every culture has its own collection of children's games and songs. "These children's games and rhymes and jokes do not exist in isolation: they have echoes in history, anthropology, archeology, literature, popular culture, and art." (Lurie 189) Collectors of children's games and scholars of children's literature have found similarities or connections between games that are played in playgrounds today and customs of the pagan folks of long ago. Mizo children have a variety of singing and non-singing games which have been handed down from generation to generation. Since in the olden times there were no schools, these games were the main engagements of young children. Some of them must have been among the oldest songs of the Mizo culture.

Nuchhungi's book, "*Mizo Naupangte Infiamna leh a Hla Te*", a collection of indigenous games and their accompanying songs commonly played by Mizo children, contains more than seventy singing and non-singing games, forty three traditional children's songs, and fifteen lullabies. The songs and games collected in this book represent the popular pastimes of Mizo children at different times in history. They provide insight into the life of Mizo children of the past generations who indulged in these pastimes, of the adults' treatment of them, and of their place in the social hierarchy. Some of the games that have been collected are mimetic representations of adult activities and so inform the present generation of the folk way of life. This paper attempts to look at the ways in which folk culture has been depicted in the indigenous games and songs of Mizo children.

Keywords: Culture, Indigenous Games, Children's Songs, Play.