

# CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENTIST

*(A National Refereed Journal - UGC Approved)*

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**Summer & Winter 2021**

**ISSN No: 2230 – 956X**



**Prof. Lalrintluanga**

*Editor in Chief*

Dean, School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University

&

Professor, Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY  
(A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)  
TANHRIL, AIZAWL – 796004  
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**About the Journal**

Contemporary Social Scientist is the journal published by the School of Social Sciences, Mizoram University. It is published twice a year-in Summer and Spring. It aims at advancing and disseminating knowledge, principles and practices in the field of Social Sciences. It encourages research, innovation and new ideas in the field of social sciences with a view to promoting human and sustainable development. Besides research-based papers, the journal also publishes Review of Books, etc. on various areas of interest in the field of Social Sciences.

**For the Contributors**

Articles are invited from authors/researchers, which must be a significant original work (either theoretical or empirical) and should be normally between 8-10 A-4 size printed pages with 1.15 line spacing and 11 point Arial font in the following manner:

- The contributors are requested to submit their articles, papers, reviews, etc. in standard format both in soft and hard copy, preferable in MS Word format.
- An abstract about 100 words should also be submitted along with the main articles/paper and the body should not be more than 2000 words.
- All non-commissioned book reviews must be submitted along with a copy of the Book for the consideration of the Editorial Board.
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- Each manuscript should be accompanied with a declaration that the material has not been published elsewhere and that has not been for publication in any other journal.
- Footnote should be listed in the appendix and not typed on the bottom of the manuscript page in which they appear.
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## Editorial



The present Volume of *Journal of Contemporary Social Scientist* consists of a wide range of thoughts of academics on various subjects covering India and beyond. The scholars contributing their research papers have touched upon various aspects of human life in the changing environment.

**T. Lianhmingsanga & Dr. Ayangbam Shyamkishor**, in their paper on *Political Culture in Mizoram: A Study of the Youth Awareness and Interest towards Politics*, have studied the awareness and interest of Mizo youths towards politics. Their finding is that, contrary to widespread belief, young people are interested in political matters, even though they may be skeptical about the system.

In their paper on *Emerging Role and Status of State Election Commissions in India - A Critical Review*, **H. Lianzela & Lalrintluanga** have explored a number of lacunae relating to the origin, Constitutional back-up, role and status of the State Election Commission (SEC) which has been vested with the powers of the superintendence, direction and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies of the State. Hence, their findings have called for probable solutions to the various lacunae relating to the powers, functions, responsibilities, etc., vested in the SECs as mandated by the 73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments.

In her paper on *Government Services to Elderly People in Bangladesh: An Analysis between Requirements and Government Responses*, **Rafia Islam Mim** has looked into the difficulties that elderly people in Bangladesh face and how the Bangladesh government responds to those problems and needs of ever-increasing number of those over the age of 60 who are considered elderly.

In their paper on *Innovative Approaches to Administration in India (Special Focus on Tribal Community Development)*, **Lalengmawii, Laltleipuia & Laltanpuui Ralte** have explored the scope for an innovative approach in reviving public administration for Tribal Community Development and suggested to promote tribal community development through an administrative approach of creating an environment that will allow tribal members to maximise their potentials.

In their paper on *Criminal Justice With Reference to Correctional Administration in Mizoram: An Analysis*, **Rebecca Lalrindiki & K.V Reddy** have analysed the functions and workings of prison or correctional institution which, as a part of criminal justice system, plays a key role in justice delivery in Mizoram. So long as prison falls under the State list, the State Government is to look after its administration. Mizoram has district jails in all the districts apart from Central Jail and a separate jail for women. Based on the latest Report of the National Crime Record Bureau, it is possible to analyse the status of prison or correctional institution as a part of criminal justice system in Mizoram.

**Angela Lalmuanpuui Varte & Babu G**, in their paper on *Community Policing During Covid-19 Pandemic in Aizawl City, Mizoram: An Assessment*, have looked into the functioning of Local Level Task Force (LLTF) in carrying on the task of community policing during the first and the second waves of Covid-19 pandemic which brought an abrupt change into the daily lives of the people in Aizawl city, the capital of the peaceful State of Mizoram. In Mizoram, community policing which exists since long time back is being carried on by the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Joint Action Committee (JAC), etc. who aid the State Police and the State Government in many ways. This paper is an attempt to provide a deeper look into its uniqueness as a voluntary body, its role, functions and challenges.



**Hilda Lalremtluangi & Srinibas Pathi**, in their paper titled, *Urban Governance Index*, have briefly highlighted the meaning, concept and aims of Urban Governance Index (UGI) including the latest UGI across the states of India given by a non-partisan organisation. India has gone through many urban challenges which need modern solutions with more advanced and fitting features to run urban governance whilst adopting new electronics and information brought by modernization. In this regard, introduction of Urban Governance Index paves the way for a transparent and accountable government for the local and grassroot democracy.

In their paper on *Implementation of Rural Housing Programme in Mizoram*, **Khuangthansanga Pakhuangte & A. Muthulakshmi** have analysed how Rural Housing Programmes, such as Indira Awaas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin and Chief Minister's Rural Housing Programme and Rural Housing Scheme have been implemented in Mizoram and also analysed the issues and challenges faced by the implementing agency. According to their findings, the major drawbacks of the implementation of these programmes are late release of the Central fund, problems of State matching share, impractical convergence of central as well as state schemes and insufficient administrative structure to accommodate convergence at the District and Block levels in the State.

In their paper on *Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Rawpuichhip Village of Mamit District, Mizoram: An Evaluation*, **Jonathan Vanlalruatdika & Babu G** have evaluated the implementation of MGNREGA for provision of reliable employment opportunities and durable assets to the rural people in the village of Rawpuichhip, Mamit district of Mizoram. Thus, MGNREGA opens up a new avenue for the rural people in Rawpuichhip village to earn their livelihood by developing road and land conditions as well as water conservation facilities instead of heavily relying on agriculture and farming throughout the year.

**Lalthantluangi Sailo & H.K. Laldinpui Fente**, in their paper on *Well-being and Levels of Group Participation among the Elderly Mizos*, have examined well-being of the elderly in relation to group participation among the Mizos. In their study, significant effects of age indicated that young-old elderly group was higher than the old-old elderly group in Emotional Well-being, Social Well-being, Overall Well-being and Levels of group Participation. Results seen in the study may be considered as providing new insights into the Well-being of elderly Mizos.

**Lalhriatpui & Zokaitluangi**, in their paper on *The Role of Resilience and Wellbeing: A Study among Female Commercial Sex Workers in Aizawl* have examined the difference between Resilience and Wellbeing among female commercial sex workers and general female in Aizawl city. Their finding has portrayed that Female Commercial Sex Workers scored lower on resilience and wellbeing than general female and this has proved the need for psychological intervention for changing their belief of the sources of their resilience leading to psychological wellbeing.

In their paper on *Somatization and Depression among Hearing Disabled: A comparative study of Hearing Disabled Children and Normal Hearing Children*, **Lanu Wanboy & Zokaitluangi** have examined somatization and depression among hearing disabled children and compared with normal-hearing children. Their findings proved that hearing disabled children were significantly higher on somatization and depression than normal-hearing children. Hence, hearing disabled children need more attention on their physical and mental health than children with normal hearing.

In their paper on *Family Functioning of Intact and Non-Intact Families: A Study among Mizo Adolescents*, **James, P.K & Fente, H. K. L.** have studied the effect of family structure (intactness vs. non-intactness) on family functioning while considering the effect of gender as well. For the sample of their study, 396 Mizo adolescents, with their age ranging between 15 to 19 years, were randomly selected from

secondary and higher secondary schools in and around Aizawl, with equal sample size ( $n = 99$ ) across each condition of gender (male and female) and family structure (intact and non-intact families). Two-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effects and interaction effect for family structure and gender on family functioning. The results are discussed in relation to caregiving in family types and significant others in cultural perspectives.

In their paper on *Health-Related Quality of Life and Perceived Social Support Among People Living With HIV/AIDS: A Study Among Mizo*, **C. Lalnunpuii & Zoengpari** have made an attempt to obtain the level of Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) and its correlation with Perceived Social Support (PSS) among people living with HIV/AIDS. The study employed 2X2 factorial design by comparing people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and non-infected persons (non-PLWHA) and gender (male and female). The result of their study shows significant difference between PLWHA and non-PLWHA in HRQoL ( $p < .01$ ) and positive correlation between HRQoL and Perceived Social Support ( $p < .01$ ) is obtained from the data collected by them for this study.

**Sanjeev Kumar Dey & K. Premjit Singh**, in their paper on *Syphilis in the Colonial Chittagong Division* have found Syphilis as one of the devastating diseases that sapped the European soldiers in the extreme tropical climate in India. The Chittagong Division also showed innumerable cases of syphilis. Before and after the findings of Fritz Schaudinn and Erich Hoffman, syphilis was seen as taking the shape of epidemic causing much suffering. When confidence on imperial medicine was almost lost, the cooperation between indigenous and imperial medicine was found effective for treating soldiers suffering from Syphilis.

In his article on A Constructive Approach on Research Publication, **K.V.Reddy** has given direction to enable one to understand a few guidelines that could be followed during the course of writing and publishing research papers. In the case of social science research, research is aimed at finding answers to some socio-economic and political issues. In various universities and research centres, research programmes have always been encouraged for promoting the research-oriented studies to advance the knowledge base. In fact, academic research is mandatory and is the most effective motivating factor in the life of research scholars and faculties in various scholastic institutions.

**Lalrinnunga Hmar**, in his article titled Evolution of the Lusei Hegemony in Mizo History, has found three reasons responsible for the success of the Lusei in dominating the Mizo History, such as better unity and maintenance of cohesion amongst themselves, formulation of the means for augmenting their strength in a village and lastly, approval and authorisation of the office of their political Chief. One important factor that helped the Luseis to dominate the Mizo History was their ability to garner strength and muster fortitude within the limits of adaptation that human intelligence.

**Lalchhanhima**, in his article on A Comparable Study on Prevalent Traditional Practices related to Death and Funerals before and after the Outbreak of Covid-19 in the Mizo Society, has the most prevalent traditional practices of the Mizo related to death and funerals as rooted in their pre-Christian society and these practices continue to be used with slight modifications after the outbreak of Covid-19. These practices are strongly embedded in their culture and tradition of the Mizos without which they would have lost their identity.

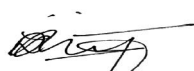
In their article on Coping and Social Support of Bereaved Families of Drug related Deaths in Aizawl, Mizoram: A Case Study, **Esther Lalrinhlui Ralte** and **C.Devendiran**, attempt to explore coping, bereavement and social support in families who have lost a member due to the increasing drug related deaths in Mizoram. Meanwhile, there are few services available for coping with the bereavement and support groups for bereaved families are virtually nonexistent.

The Editorial Board receives a large number of articles for the journal but only a limited number of articles which could pass through anti-plagiarism test and peer blind review have been included in this issue. It is the hope of the Editorial Board that the articles selected for this issue will be able to trigger further debate and discussion for generation of new knowledge.

I extend my sincere thanks to Prof.R.K.Mohanty, Head, Department of Sociology, for his immense contribution for getting this issue ready for print out.

Aizawl

Dated the 28<sup>th</sup> December 2021

  
(Prof.LALRINTLUANGA)  
Editor-in-Chief

## Political Culture in Mizoram: A Study of the Youth Awareness and Interest towards Politics

T. Lianhmingsanga\*  
Ayangbam Shyamkishor\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*The Mizo youth are more aware of political events and political institutions compared to those older than them. Higher awareness is not merely a function of the youth being more educated as compared to the rest, since even with a similar level of education, the youth rank higher on awareness compared to people of other age's groups. This paper also highlights and finds that contrary to widespread belief, young people are interested in political matters, even though they may be skeptical about the system; their concerns may lie beyond the limits of how politics is traditionally understood.*

**Keywords :** Awareness, Skeptical, Democracy, Church, AMC.

among the members of the nation (Almond & Verba, 1989).

### 1. Concept of Political Culture

Understanding the political culture is important to see the connection it can create between people and the government. The concept of political culture is used to cover an extremely wide range of political phenomena (Pateman, 1971). And when we speak of the political culture of a society, we refer to the political system as internalized in the cognitions, feelings, and evaluations of its population; people are induced into it just as they are socialized into non-political roles and social systems (Almond, 1963). The concept of political culture assumes that each individual must, in his historical context, learn and incorporate into his personality the knowledge and feelings about the politics of his people and his community; this means in turn that the political culture of a society is limited but given firm structure by the factors basic to dynamic psychology (Pye, 1969). The political culture of a nation is the particular distribution of patterns of orientation toward political objects

The study of Political Awareness among citizens in a democratic country like India is important. The culture of Indian politics can be seen as a unique case, or it can be seen as the epitome of the culture of democratic polities the world over (Nandy, 1989). Awareness refers to how much aware of the youth is in terms of politics and other political activities which occurred in the country in the recent past. Awareness in the sense is not seen in a narrow sense of just knowing the name of political representatives but relates to awareness about important political events in the country as well. Political awareness, or knowledge about political events and issues, largely tends to determine the attitude of citizens in a democracy and whether they actively participate in politics or not (Vibha Attri, 2014). Citizens in a democracy should have a minimum understanding of the political system in which they express preferences and elect representatives, as knowledge is a prerequisite to successful political engagement. Different combinations of subjective feelings of

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efficacy and trust produce decisively different political orientations which, in turn, account for whether an individual will be oriented toward either conventional or radical politics (Bockman&Gayk, 1977). And an individual's attitude toward the political system in which he lives is an especially relevant concept in democratic systems where norms urge the desirability of citizen participation in political life (Jackman, 19720. Furthermore, if citizens are not observant of what happens around them, it invariably leads to a non-participatory citizenry. Besides, young people's political subjectivities and practices signal the region's emergent trends (Vandegrift & Anna, 2015).

The strength of any democracy resides in a well-informed citizenry; informed citizens are considered to be a central pillar of democratic theory and a crucial element of democracy (Robert Dahl, 1979). In shorts, informed citizens are those citizens who are aware of the political and social events that place around them. For this reason, political awareness or knowledge is seen as a functional and indispensable element of a democracy. Due to this, the study of political awareness among citizens is important and more so in a democratic country such as India. And the level of political awareness also differs from citizens. And also, the youth are interested in political matters, even though they may be skeptical about the system and their concerns may lie beyond the limits of how traditionally understood. Conventional wisdom suggests that young people in India are cut off and alienated from politics, with many saying that this disengagement of the youth reflects a wider problem of legitimacy of the political system. (Sanjay Kumar, 2012).

## **2. A Brief Profile of Mizoram**

Mizoram is a landlocked state in the southern tip of the north-eastern region of India. The people of the state are known as Mizo. There are various sub-tribes of the Mizo namely Lusei, Ralte, Paite, Hmar, Lai, Mara, etc. Besides, Chakma is also inhabited in the southern part of the state bordering Bangladesh (Mackenzie, 2020). There are different denominational churches in Mizoram – Presbyterian

Church of Mizoram (PCM), Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM), Salvation Army, Roman Catholic, United Pentecostal, etc. The church plays a significant role in the social and political life of the people, apart from religious activities; and Mizo society revolves around the church. And Mizo society is a communitarian society- a very open society, known to each society and closely connected unlike in the metropolitan cities or urban areas.

The capital city of Mizoram-Aizawl is located in the north-central part of the state on a ridge at an elevation of about 2,950 feet. As time passes, there is an urge for proper management of Mizoram, especially in town and Aizawl areas. It is expedient and a must to provide for the administration of town areas viz., transitional areas and urban areas and to introduce municipalities in Mizoram to bring them in conformity with the purpose, substance, and direction of the Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 and to endow the municipalities with functions and powers to enable them to function as a vibrant institution of Local Self Government with greater people's participation in managing their affairs. Besides, importing certainty, continuity, and democratic content and dignity is aiming among other things at the realization of economic and social justice.

The Aizawl Municipal Corporation (AMC) is the authority of civic administration of Aizawl city. It was initiated in the year 2010 with 19 members when the Congress-ZNP party coalition was voted to power in the state legislative assembly. The AMC office is being run and administered by Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Commissioner. It consists of 19 elected members representing 19 Wards of the city and others appointed by the Governor of Mizoram. Six seats, that is, one-third of the total membership, are reserved for women and these six seats shall be rotated after every five years. The tenure of the corporation is five years. There is also an award committee in every ward that consists of a chairman, who is an elected councillor from the ward, and two members each from all the local councils within wards. 83 local councils are having a term of 5 years.



### 3. Methodology

Survey was conducted to assess the awareness and interest of the youth within the Aizawl Municipal Areas. The following table-1 presents the layout of sampling:

**Table-1: Sample Design of the Survey**

<i>District</i>	<i>Locality</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>
AIZAWL	Dawrpui	20
	Zarkawt	20
	Electric	20
	Chanmari West	18
	Vaivakawn	18
	DawrpuiVengthar	18
	Kanan	18
	Dinthar	18
	<b>8</b>	<b>150</b>

3.1. The survey was carried out to know the cognitive knowledge of the youth towards the political system. The findings of the survey are anticipated to give an understanding of the realities and assumptions of the youth which would provide instrumental for the development of efficacious awareness and indeed understanding of the political system.

3.2 The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire that consists of 150 sampled youth within Aizawl Municipal Areas. This survey method adopted simple random sampling where Dawrpui, Zarkawt, Electric, Chanmari West, Vaivakawn, DawrpuiVengthar, Kanan, Dinthar locality were chosen. The size of the sample differs from the size of the locality. Likewise, 20 samples were collected from Zarkawt, Dawrpui, and Electric where the size of the populations was in bulk. On the other hand, 18 samples were collected from Chanmari west, Vaivakawn, DawrpuiVengthar, Kanan, and Dinthar respectively.

### 4. Socio-Economic Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The following table presents the socio-economic indicators of the sampled respondents.

**Table-2: Socio-Economic Demographic Details**

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>No of respondents</i>	
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1. Gender	Male	75	50
	Female	75	50
2. Age Group	Below 18	36	27.5
	18-33	80	53.3
	Above 33	34	20.4
3.Marital Status	Unaccompanied	56	37.3
	Unmarried	90	60
	Separated/ Divorce	4	2.6
4.Social Group	ST	150	100
5.Education	Illiterate	0	0
	Primary School	10	6.6
	High School	35	23.3
	Higher Secondary School	60	40
	Graduate and above	45	30
6.Occupation	Student	30	20
	Unemployed	75	50
	Government Service	45	30

4.1. From a total of 150 respondents shown in table 1, there were 75 male 75 female respondents. The age group of 18-33 years constituted 53.3% of the total respondents. The majority of the respondents, that is, 60%, were unmarried. 100% of the respondents belonged to the ST category. This is basically because Mizoram is an ST-dominated state.

4.2. From the above table-2, it is evident that the average literacy level from the respondents was recorded at a high percentage which is directly related to the fact that the state of Mizoram has a literacy level of above 88%. There is no illiterate among the respondents. While the 81.7% literacy level was recorded, the educational qualification level of the respondents dwindled in number. Only 23% of the respondents had completed their high school level of education while the number of graduate-level degree holders stood at 30%. The percentage of respondents in possession of higher education degrees was at the top.

4.3. The survey was able to cover the respondent's occupations in various ways. 50% of the respondents were not engaged in any modes of occupation, which may or may not generate financial benefits. Out of the total number of unemployed respondents, 40% hold government jobs whereas 20% of the respondents were students. The high percentage of unemployed respondents maybe seen as a situation

where employment opportunities are less in number and the demands for jobs and the supply are highly inverse in nature.

## 5. Awareness Levels

Various awareness parameters, such as knowledge voters' day, the minimum age for registration, are used as the indicators of awareness

levels that can highlight the knowledge level of the youth with regards to the process political process. It can also bring to light the effective/ineffective outcome of the various voting and election-related awareness programs or projects which have been undertaken. The awareness level of the respondents on the electoral process is represented in the following table.

**Table-3: Awareness of the Voters**

Sl. no.	Awareness Parameters	Answers	Percentage
1	Minimum age of registration to be a voter	18 years	97
		16 years	1
		21 years	2
2..	Party system in India	Uni-Party	1
		Bi-Party	8
		Multi-Party	91
3	How many Wards are there in AMC	25	50
		19	40
		20	10
4	Terms of AMC	3	10
		4	5
		5	85
5	Did you participate in any kind of political rally or political process in the past years?	Yes	66.67
		No	33.33
6	Do you have the intention to participate in politics in the future to come?	Yes	60
		No	40

5.1. From the above table, 97% of the respondents were aware of the minimum registration age in% the electoral roll but there was a lack of clarity on the date of qualification for registration. Regarding the party system, respondents were aware that 91% respond accurately that multi-party systems are followed in India. Meanwhile, 50% of the respondents misunderstood the total number of seats in AMC with that of the number of seats in state MLA. And regarding the duration and terms of the AMC, respondents were much aware and 85% among the respondents responds accurately.

5.2. Participation in terms of a political rally, political process among the youth seems to be on the rise as compared to the past decades. 66.67 % of the respondents have experience in attending political

rallies and any kind of political process. Again 60% of the respondents didn't have the intention to engage to participate or engage in politics in the future to come. This shows that the youth were aware and interested in the political system, but then they were still cut off and alienated from politics. This disengagement and non-participation of the youth reflect a wider problem of legitimacy of the political system.

## 6. Outlook of the Youth

The outlook, opinion, and, of course, the mindset that the respondents possess is a strong determinant that portrays the overall attitude of the people and the electoral process. The following table indicates the key attributes for understanding the outlook of the Youth.

Table-4: Outlook of the Youth

Particulars		Scale	Number	Particular
a	Do you plan to vote in the coming AMC election?	Yes	145	96.6
		No	3	2
		No Idea	2	1.3
b	Does your family/friend matter your vote?	Yes	130	86.6
		No	19	12.6
		No idea	1	0.6
c	To what extent, would you describe your level of involvement in political parties?	I do a campaign for the party	15	10
		Give donations for the party	4	2.6
		Perform any task that is given by the party	6	4
		I cast my vote during elections	125	83.3
d	Do you have family talks or discussions with regards to the current political developments?	Yes we do	44	29.3
		No, we do not	105	70
		No Idea	1	0.6
e	If you were to vote for one candidate, which one of the following options do you give top importance or preference?	The family background of the candidate	10	6.6
		Party affiliations	85	56.6
		Character	50	33.3
		Religious viewpoint	5	3.3
f	Do you think casting votes is an important method for citizens in asserting their political might?	Yes	140	93.3
		No	10	6.6
		No Idea	0	0
g	From the following, which sources aides you the most when making or generating opinions?	TV/Radio/Newspaper	59	38.6
		Social Media	75	50
		Campaigners	10	6.6
		Posters/Pamphlets	6	4
h	In the last concluded election, what were your important issues or thought?	Waste segregation	13	8.6
		Food development	81	54
		Development works for the city	56	37.3
		No idea	0	0
i	Do you think the state government has given enough powers to the AMC for strengthening its work?	Yes	10	6.6
		No	140	93.3
		No idea	0	0
j	Do you read the party manifesto before casting your vote?	yes	65	43.3
		No	85	56.6
		No Idea	0	0

k	Do you support electing state-run parties in the AMC election?	Yes	135	90
		No	15	10
		No idea	0	0

6.1. Majority of the respondents i.e., 96.6% find it as obligatory to vote and are planning to vote for the coming AMC election. In Mizoram, the right to vote is one of the most common rights which have been freely enjoyed by the people. Every individual has the right to vote with his/her consent without the involvement of others including family and friends. 86.6% of the respondents respond that their voting does not matter with their family and friends.

6.2. In Mizoram, participant political culture was still low as compared to other states. The majority of the respondents i.e., 83.3% intend to cast their vote without any involvement in party politics. Besides, in Mizo society majority of the Mizo have hardly family talks and discussions regarding the whereabouts of the state politics. 70% of the respondents affirmed that they have no family talks regarding the political system of the state.

6.3. In addition to the casting of votes, the Mizo people are more and more curious about the candidate. Apart from family background, religious view and character of the candidate, 56. % of the respondents have given preference towards the party affiliation of the candidate. Moreover, as the biggest democracies in the world, citizens need to come and decide their representatives through the casting of vote. This right to vote empowers the citizens to exercise their choice and decide together who will be leading the state and carrying the burden of responsibilities that comes with the power. It is the responsibility of the elected leader to provide for the people of the country; citizens also need to do their job and correct their representatives by making sure he/she represents the right things and this can be done by electing the right candidate. 93.3% regard casting votes as an important method for citizens in asserting their political might.

6.4. Of all the various media outlets, social media, i.e., WhatsApp, Facebook, etc. is widely used by the respondents. 50% of the respondents utilized social media frequently to gain their opinions and influence

the most, followed by TV/Radio/Newspaper (38.6). And for the coming AMC election, respondents 54% feel food development as their top priority and preference, followed by development works in the city (37.3).

6.5. AMC is indeed one of the most important organs for the development of Aizawl City. Besides, its main mission and vision are to provide the basic amenities to the general public of Aizawl city. Although they have played an immense role in the development of the city, their roles and power were still regarded as not sufficient enough as it draws a very limited power to the state government. 93.3% of the respondents think the state government doesn't give enough powers to the AMC for strengthening its work.

6.6. A manifesto is generally defined as a published declaration of the intentions, motives, or views of an individual, group, political party, or government whosoever issues it. It plays a crucial role in visions of party democracy and political science analyses of party competition. Aside from the significance, 56.3 among the respondents have not gone through the manifesto of different political parties. 90% of the respondents don't feel obligated to support electing states run parties in the AMC election.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the study conducted, it can be broadly concluded that the young people in Mizoram are more aware as compared to others or those 33 years. Besides, socio-economic factors determine the youth's awareness of political institutions. It is evident from the fact that Mizoram, particularly area within AMC, is much developed in many ways. Not only the voting behaviour, but the average literacy rate of the AMC area was also much higher as compared to the past two or three decades. And the coming up of globalization brought significant changes in many ways notably the various social media. People were more and more socialized through social media and used these social media in

many ways. Furthermore, the knowledge level of the youth with regards to the process of elections and voting was refined. They were more aware and have cognitive knowledge of the state political system as compared to the decades. One of the

hindrances to the development of the political/ electoral system is that people hesitate to participate and engage in state politics. And people need to be more curious and attentive to enlarge and progress in the future to come.

## Notes & References:

### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Index of political awareness. The index was created to assess overall levels of awareness and interest about current political issues. The questions measured awareness and interest level of youth regarding various political and social state events which occurred in the years namely, Aizawl Municipal Cooperation (AMC) election, Local Council Election, demonstration and protest by youth for demanding the removal of former Mizoram Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) i.e. SB Shashank, Mizoram-Assam border issues.

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## Emerging Role and Status of State Election Commissions in India - A Critical Review

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Prof.Lalrintluanga\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*The State Election Commissions (SECs) in India are created with the mandate to conduct election to the Local Bodies at various levels. Article 243K read with 243ZA provides for the powers and responsibilities of the SEC. Basically, the SEC has been vested with the powers of the superintendence, direction and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies of the State.*

*All the SECs have taken every effort to improve the electoral administration in order not to fail the vision of those who built modern India, the vision to give power to the people through equal exercise of each one's free will. However, there are a number lacunae relating to its origin, Constitutional back-up, role and status, etc., which call for a critical analysis. This Paper attempts to explore the probable solutions to the various lacunae relating to the powers, functions, responsibilities, etc., vested in the State Election Commissions as mandated by the 73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments.*

**Keywords:** *Constitution, Welfare State, Supreme Court, High Court, State Government, Democracy, Democratic Decentralization, Panchayats, Urban Local/Municipal Bodies, Elections, State Election Commission, Election Commission of India.*

### 1. Introduction

After attaining Independence from the British Yoke on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, India became a Sovereign State on 26<sup>th</sup> January, 1950 and gave to itself a new Constitution proclaiming India as a Sovereign Democratic Republic. One of the salient features of the Indian Constitution is the effort to establish a Welfare State. The Preamble of the Constitution and the Directive Principles of State Policy make it amply clear that our goal is a Welfare and Socialist State through Democratic means. In the Nation's tryst with

destiny, the principle of universal suffrage reposing faith in the wisdom of the common Indians to elect their representatives to power positions in a democratic set-up was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India. For this, it created the Election Commission of India (ECI) under Article 324 of the Constitution of India, vesting in it the superintendence, direction and control of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures. However, there was no mention about the Constitutional provisions for elections to grassroots democratic institutions.

In the backdrop, it may be recalled that the dream of Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation, was to see that the local affairs were managed by the people of the Village themselves, i.e., at the grass-roots level, through their Panchayats. The makers of the Constitution of Independent India had included

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Article 40 as one of the Directive Principles of State Policy which provided that “the State shall take steps to organize village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.” (Basu DD, 2006). Towards this end, the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments to the Constitution of India were enacted to bring about a democratic decentralized administration through local bodies for taking administration to the doorsteps of the people to ensure economic and social justice.

In accordance with the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992, almost all the States and the Union Territories have enacted their own laws for the management of panchayats and municipal bodies, conduct of elections to these institutions, constitution of the SEC and appointment of State Election Commissioner (Sect). The above Constitutional Amendments have laid a concrete foundation for establishment, functioning and sustainability of democratically elected panchayats and urban local bodies as well as democratic institutions in the States.

As aforementioned, the SECs are mainly created with the responsibility to conduct election to the Local Bodies at various levels. Article 243K provides for the powers and responsibilities of the SEC. Basically, the SEC has been vested with the power of superintendence, direction and control of the entire process for conduct of elections to the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies of the State. Accordingly, all the SECs have taken every effort to improve the electoral administration in order not to fail the vision of those who built modern India, the vision to give power to the people through equal exercise of each one's free will. However, there are numerous lacunae relating to its origin, Constitutional back-up, role and status, etc., which call for a critical analysis. Therefore, this Paper attempts to explore the probable solutions to the baffling issues relating to the powers, functions, responsibilities, etc., vested in the SECs as mandated by the 73<sup>rd</sup> & 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments.

## 2. State Election Commission vis-à-vis Election Commission of India

It may be pointed out that the powers, functions and responsibilities vested in the SECs under Article 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution are identical to those given to the ECI under Article 324(1) for elections to Parliament and State Legislatures (Mendiratta S.K. & Rama Devi V.S, 2007). These have been reinforced time and again by High Court Judgments and most cogently by the Supreme Court of India in Case No. Appeal (Civil) 5756 of 2005 by the name of Kishansing Tomar-vrs- the Municipal Corporation of City of Ahmedabad & Ors. In this Judgment, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has unequivocally held that-

*“it is necessary for all the State Governments to recognize the significance of the State Election Commission, which is a Constitutional body and it shall abide by the directions of the Commission in the same manner in which it follows the directions of the Election Commission of India during elections for Parliament and State Legislatures. In fact, in the domain of elections to the Panchayats and Municipal Bodies under Part IX & Part IX-A of the Constitution for conduct of elections to these bodies, they enjoy the same status as the Election Commission of India. In terms of Article 243K and Article 243ZA (1), the same powers are vested in the State Election Commission as the Election Commission of India under Article 324.”* (Supreme Court Judgment dated 19/10/2006).

The Hon'ble Supreme Court further observed that the powers of the SEC in respect of conduct of elections are no less than that of the ECI in their respective domains. Notwithstanding the above clear-cut directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the ground realities pertaining to the functioning of the SECs are very different from those of ECI.

There is no denying the fact that, while the SECs had a similar role to play with regard to elections of

urban and rural local bodies with the ECI, they possessed neither the same degree of authority nor the same kind of resources that were available to the ECI. In the absence of adequate support and resources, the ability of the SECs to ensure free and fair elections to the rural and the urban local bodies has become severely restricted and more arduous. In reality, the functions of the SEC are more complex and difficult than that of the ECI as a large number of persons are required to be elected to local bodies as against the limited number of candidates to be elected either as members of the Parliament or the State Legislature. Moreover, the SEC has to function in a familiar environment which makes its functioning more delicate and difficult. For example, unlike the Representation of the People Acts 1950 and 1951 which are the guiding laws for Assembly and Parliamentary Elections, there is no single comprehensive law for covering both rural and urban local bodies.

### 3. Power and Functions of the State Election Commissions

The SECs are to function independently of the State Government concerned in the matter of their powers of superintendence, direction and control of all elections and preparation of electoral rolls for and the conduct of all elections to the Panchayats and Municipalities as provided under Article 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution. The important role of the State Election Commissions has been reinforced time and again by the High Courts and the Supreme Court of India as narrated. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) in its Sixth Report on Local Governance (2007) also had observed as under:-

*“3.2.2.1 Given the common functions of the State Election Commissions with regard to local bodies’ elections, it is necessary to examine how the system has functioned and what improvements to that system, if any, are required. The State Election Commission performs functions similar to that of the Election Commission of India. The number of elected representatives of the people has enormously increased over the years and the*

*conduct of elections to the local bodies is indeed a gigantic task. The institution is not yet two decades old, but holds the key to a highly representative system of democratic governance in the country. It is, therefore, essential that the machinery for organizing local elections is adequately supported”* (Para 3.2.2 of 2nd ARC Report, 2007).

However, due to inadequate administrative and financial provisions under the Constitution, several SECs face enormous constraints in conducting free and fair elections. Even though the SECs are parallel organizations of the ECI exclusively responsible for holding elections to the most diverse, vast and complex segment of representative democracy in the country- the Panchayati Raj/Rural Local Bodies and Urban Local Bodies, they are hamstrung in their day to day functioning on account of the fact that most of the State Governments would like to “control” their independence by needling them on petty day to day administrative and financial issues, presuming that they are subordinate to the State Government, or part of one of its departments. Unfortunately, most of the State Governments do not give the SECs the priority of attention they legitimately need and deserve for ensuring a free and equitable pattern of democracy. On top of that, the SECs are hardly given adequate funding for infrastructure development and better management.

Moreover, a lot of election related jurisprudence has evolved in India especially in the context of Parliamentary and State Legislature elections. This jurisprudence is, *mutatis mutandis* applicable to elections to local bodies as well. Despite this, the SECs do not have the ability to handle legal work for want of in-house legal personnel, law officers and libraries. Such being the case, the jurisprudence related to elections to local bodies has also not been put to use due to the incapacity of State Election Commissioners to handle legal issues and assert them in Courts and absence of an institutional mechanism for compilation of the jurisprudence. Above that, many SECs have not been provided adequate staff by the State Governments as per the provisions under Article 243K (3).

#### 4. Status and Service Conditions of State Election Commissioners

Clause (1) & (2) of Article 243K specifies certain Constitutional safeguards pertaining to condition of service of the State Election Commissioner. Since the SECs are to function independently of the State Government concerned, the State Election Commissioner cannot be removed from office except in like manner and on like ground as a Judge of a High Court. In the backdrop of the said provisions, majority of the States have followed the spirit of the Constitution and out of 28 States, in 20 States the status of the State Election Commissioner is that of a Judge of a High Court, in 5 States the status is that of Chief Secretary to the

State Government and in others of Secretary/ Additional Secretary, or even not properly defined. The status of the State Election Commissioner is extremely an important issue as it empowers the State Election Commissioner to insist on procedures being followed and full co-operation from the State Government is forthcoming. The tenure of the State Election Commissioner also varies from State to State. In some States, the term of the State Election Commissioner is less than 5 years, so that a State Election Commissioner may complete his/her term without even conducting any elections. The Status and Service Conditions of the State Election Commissioners in India as in 2014 may be shown as below:-

S/N	Name of State/ UT	Status	Pay Scale/ Grade/ Salary	Tenure/ Age Limit
1	Andhra Pradesh	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
2	Arunachal Pradesh	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
3	Assam	High Court Judge & Chairman, Assam Public Service Commission	80,000/-	04 yrs/ 62 yrs
4	Bihar	Chief Secretary	80,000/-	05 yrs/NA
5	Chhattisgarh	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
6	Delhi	Status not clearly defined	80,000/-	03 yrs/ 65 yrs
7	Gujarat	Addl.Chief Secretary	80,000/-	05 yrs/NA
8	Goa	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
9	Haryana	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
10	Himachal Pradesh	Salary of the High Court Judge. Status not defined.	80,000/-	05 yrs/NA
11	Jammu & Kashmir	High Court Judge	80,000/-	NA
12	Jharkhand	High Court Judge	80,000/-	03 yrs/ 64 yrs
13	Kerala	Chief Secretary	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
14	Karnataka	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/NA
15	Maharashtra	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/NA
16	Madhya Pradesh	High Court Judge	80,000/-	06 yrs/ 66 yrs
17	Manipur	Not available	80,000/-	03 yrs/ 62 yrs
18	Mizoram	Chief Secretary	80,000/-	05 yrs/65 yrs
19	Nagaland	Chief Secretary	80,000/-	03 yrs/NA
20	Orissa	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
21	Punjab	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
22	Rajasthan	Chief Secretary	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
23	Sikkim	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 67 yrs
24	Tamil Nadu	High Court Judge	80,000/-	02 yrs/ age no limit

25	Tripura	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 62 yrs
26	Uttar Pradesh	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
27	Uttarakhand	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05 yrs/ 65 yrs
28	West Bengal	High Court Judge	80,000/-	05yrs/ 66 yrs

As can be seen from the above Table, there are wide disparities against the intent of the Constitution as to the Status and Service Conditions of State Election Commissioners in India. This has created several difficulties for the SECs in conducting free and fair elections time and again. These situations do not conform to the impartiality and independence of the SECs as envisaged under Articles 243K and 243ZA of the Constitution (Lianzela. H, 2014).

### 5. Objectivity and transparency in the electoral process

In fact, an efficient electoral system has become an integral part of democracy and a good electoral system is the bed rock of genuine representative government. There are certain conditions for the successful working of an electoral system in a democratic country like India. One of the most important conditions is an independent, honest, competent and non-partisan election machinery to conduct elections. In the development of genuine electoral administration, there is an increasing need for administrative machinery capable of conducting elections with impartiality and without confusion. Unless public elections are conducted with accuracy and efficiency in a democratic country like India, not only the public services are discredited but the whole democratic system is endangered. In other words, if the electoral machinery of the country or a particular State is defective or is not efficient or is manned by people whose integrity cannot be depended upon, democracy will be poisoned at the source.

The election machineries for elections to the local bodies have also stood the test of time during the last two decades to strengthen the elements of objectivity and transparency in the electoral process. However, they could not satisfactorily match the scale of stakeholders' expectation to become dynamic and responsive. Hence, the need for fine-tuned electoral reforms and management as a predicament/

instrument for stability to our democratic institutions does arise till today.

### 6. Suggestions for improvement

In the light of the aforementioned discussions and observations, the following suggestions may be made to give legitimate and long overdue status to the State Election Commissions across the country:-

- 6.1. The State Election Commissioner must be a full-time post with a tenure of five years or upto 65 years of age, whichever is earlier. All the State Election Commissioners must also have a status of a High Court Judge regardless of the size and population of their State. Towards this end, a comprehensive law for the functioning of the State Election Commission and broad conditions of service of the State Election Commissioner need to be laid down in the Constitution itself and his stature and the autonomy should be of no lesser degree than the Election Commissioners of India. It is also essential that all protections afforded to the Election Commission of India should also be made available to the State Election Commissions in the Constitution itself by assigning a new Article or by amending the existing Articles.
- 6.2. The State Election Commission may be made a three-member body like ECI as a single State Election Commissioner could be more vulnerable to pressure by the State Government and other groups from time to time.
- 6.3. The State Election Commissioner may be appointed by the Governor on the recommendation of a Collegium consisting of Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition and Speaker, etc. It may also be made mandatory for the appointed State Election Commissioners to take oath before assumption of office.



- 6.4. The State Election Commissioners may be empowered with the powers of a Civil Court to deal with election related cases under the appropriate laws.
- 6.5. In order to ensure its independence and sanctity, every State Election Commission should have its own building.
- 6.6. There should be an institutional mechanism to bring the Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissions on a common platform for coordination by learning from each other's experiences and sharing of resources.

## 7. Conclusion

The SEC, being a Constitutional authority, functioning outside the ambit of Government, cannot

be publicly perceived as cozying up to the Government in power, for seeking administrative support and financial favours time and again. This can seriously compromise with the true autonomy and independence of the State Election Commissioners who have to fulfil their Constitutional responsibility of holding free, transparent and fair elections without fear or favour. In the circumstances, it is desirable to see any dramatic transformation in the functioning of the State Election Commission, somewhat on the pattern of Election Commission of India, so that it gets its legitimate and long overdue stature and respect in the eyes of the common man who wishes to see a cleaner, truly representative and honest grass-root democracy so essential for sustainable development at all levels and welfare state in our country.

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## Government Services to Elderly People in Bangladesh: An Analysis between Requirements and Government Responses

Rafiea Islam Mim\*

### ABSTRACT

*Throughout the world, and particularly in developing countries, aging has become a significant national issue. The elderly, who are lonely for various reasons requiring particular treatment, are recognized as one of the socio-economic challenges. The two most important parts of this anxiety are medical care and financial stability. Elderly individuals require care from family, community and the government at this point of their lives. In Bangladesh, those over the age of 60 are considered elderly. Bangladesh's constitution regards medical care as a basic need (Article 15.1), and recognizes nourishment and improved healthcare for all inhabitants as the state's major responsibilities (Article 18.1). Bangladesh, a lower middle-income country, has roughly 10 million senior persons. By 2050, the population aged 60 and above will account for 20% of the overall population, a fourfold increase from today. To meet the issues of this ageing generation, the government has a number of programs in place, such as old allowance and pension schemes for retired government personnel. The purpose of this article is to look into the difficulties that elderly people in Bangladesh face and how the government responds to those problems and needs.*

**Keywords:** *Demography, Elderly (Ageing), Old Allowance, Health Care, Financial Solvency, Public Policy.*

### Introduction

Aging is a natural phenomenon. It is virtually an inevitable process. Medical treatment, health care and continual innovation in medical science may linger our life span but no one can finally escape from ageing (Islam, 2018). Due to the advancement of medical science child mortality has reduced one hand and the numbers of aged people are gradually increasing on the other hand. Due to their physical weaknesses the elderly people cannot move properly and cannot earn their livelihoods through hard works. As a result, they have to lead their lives depending on others, which demands more care for them.

Bangladesh, a traditional agricultural society has been practicing joint family culture from very primitive age. Family is a classical institution in the context of Bangladesh. Elderly people received services and helps from the family members. Moreover, the experience of elderly people had a special value in the family as well as society. But due to changes in mode of production, society and culture, the elderly people are not valued as before. The joint families are broken down rapidly. However, the rate of becoming nuclear family is manifold higher in urban than rural areas. In this situation, the elderly people are losing respect and sympathy on them and facing ignorance and exploitation from family and society as well. Thus, ageing is acknowledged as one of the socio-economic problems as the elderly feel lonely demand special treatments. Medical care and

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financial solvency are the two vital aspects of this concern. The rural elderly people are sitting on the fence in this regard because they have limited scope for earning money and afford medical expenses. At this stage of life elderly people are in want of caring from family, society as well as government. The government of Bangladesh has already taken some initiatives to face the challenges of elderly people by reducing vulnerabilities. But there is a huge gap between the expectation of elderly people and the government supplies.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The main objective of the study is to find the government services to the elderly people and the gaps between the requirements and demand. The other objectives includes-

- a) To know about the demography of the older population in Bangladesh.
- b) To know about the socio-economic problems of elderly people.

### **Methodology of the Study**

The study is both qualitative in nature. Data for the study have been collected from secondary sources such as books, journals and newspapers. Data have also been collected from published and unpublished research reports, record and documents of relevant agencies, a national online portal and several websites.

### **Demography of Elderly in Bangladesh**

The latest population census of Bangladesh (2011) showed that 7.4 percent of its population is elderly. This percentage of elderly population is projected to increase 8 percent in 2020, 11.9 percent in 2035 and 17 percent in 2050. By the beginning of the next century, Bangladesh is projected to have one of the world's 15 largest elderly populations (Kalache 1996). In absolute numbers, this amounts to more than 10 million people. It is projected that by year 2025, the elderly population will exceed 17.5 million. The upsurge in the elderly population in Bangladesh between the years 2000 and 2025 is

expected to be high in both absolute and relative terms. The rate of increase during this period is projected to be much greater than for the total population (United Nations 1986).

In Bangladesh, statistical data shows that, from 1979 to 2001, the number of aged population has increased from 1.98 million to 6.05 million; at present, the number of older persons is 10 million which represents 7 per cent of the total population (Population Census 2011). The growth rate of the elderly population also increased from 1.6 per cent in 1950-1955 to 2.9 per cent in 2000-2005 and would increase to 3.1 per cent by 2045-2050. Whereas the total growth rate was 2.1 per cent in 2000-2005, it would come down to 0.7 per cent by 2045-2050 (World Population Ageing 1950-2050). Also life expectancy has increased from 36.6 years in 1950 to 61 years in 2000; at present, it is about 68 years (Population Census, 2011).

### **Literature Review**

For older individuals, the traditional source of family support is dwindling. The elderly used to live a good and honourable life in traditional joint families. Because of their experiences, they held a special place in the family. In nuclear households, however, the elderly are frequently subjected to emotional neglect and denied family support. The people of Bangladesh have seen significant increases in their life expectancy. However, it begs the question of whether we can provide additional services for the extra years in order to relieve the load on the elderly. Except for the old age allowance of Tk. 250 per month, the government has no social safety net program. There are no solutions to the challenges that the elderly face, and there is no law in place to defend their rights (Islam & Fatema, 2011).

Despite the fact that ageing is a relatively new demographic phenomenon in Bangladesh, analysts predict it will have a significant impact on the economy, politics, and society. Retirement, pensions, and other permissible social benefits tend to extend over longer periods of time as more individuals live longer lives (Kalam & Khan, 2006). The writers seek to investigate the different sorts of illnesses that older

people in Bangladesh face, as well as the factors that influence their health.

Hossen (2010) investigates the experiences of older women in rural Bangladesh who seek health care in this study, "*Bringing Medicine to the Hamlet: Exploring the Experiences of Older Women in Rural Bangladesh Who Seek Health Care*." The findings show that the health of their moms has a significant impact on the social and cultural roles of older women. Reduced use of health services is caused by health system constraints such as perceived high costs of health services, geographic distance, a lack of female health workers, understaffing, insufficient drug supply, and discrimination and disrespectful treatment based on class, age, and gender. According to the findings, increasing funding for public health care services would make them more accessible to older women.

The study, "*The Demography of Aging in Bangladesh: A Scenario Analysis of the Consequences*", looked at the demographics of aging in Bangladesh. The conventional support structure in Bangladesh is rapidly shifting downstairs, according to Khan, T.A. Hafiz, and Leeson, W.George (2006), and older people are seeking alternative financial and health care support from the government. People should be encouraged to support and accommodate their elderly parents or relatives as if they were regular family members. To cover the large majority of impoverished people living in rural areas, the government should implement an acceptable pension system and health insurance policy. Poor elderly individuals face a variety of health, financial, and psychological issues. Physical weakness is the most generally reported health issue that can be a cause or a symptom of other issues (Alam, 2000). Negative stereotypes about aging are at the root of a lot of age discrimination. For example, all older people are intellectually and physically frail, stubborn, out of touch, unable to learn, severely ill, and, in general, a drain on society. It's hardly surprise that older people are treated poorly in work, banking and other critical services, and in having their views and choices respected when a society accepts these descriptors. The rights of the elderly are frequently

violated. Because they are unable to work, they are abused and ignored by their family and community (Islam, 2012). Modernization, urbanization, rapid migration, professionalization, and other factors are causing a gap in the services provided by elderly people in traditional family structures (Hossain, Yeasmin, Nahar, Haider, and Rahman, 2013).

### Services for the Elderly in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, older people have restricted access to services. Public initiatives have made some insufficient efforts to improve the plight of the elderly in the country. In Bangladesh, there are two types of aged care and support systems: traditional or indigenous and modern. Traditional services include family or relative care, charitable or almsgiving, and permission to live in religious buildings like mosques or cemeteries. Allowances, old home services, and other modern services are provided by both governmental and non-governmental efforts.

### Government Initiatives

The number of elderly persons is growing at an alarming rate. It will be more complex and fatalistic if we do not take action. The planet is undergoing an aging quake, according to the United Nations. Every month, a million people turn 60 years old. Following independence, the Bangladesh government established programs for retired government officials and employees, including pensions, gratuities, welfare funds, group insurance, and provident funds. Because 83 percent of Bangladesh's population lives in rural areas, statutory pensions cover just a small percentage of the total older population. Steps taken by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the older persons are-

#### A. Pension and other Financial Policies for the Retired Government Employee:

The government has had a pension system for its retired employees since British administration in 1924. Government employees must now retire at the age of 57. However, in some autonomous entities as well as specialized bodies such as judicial

agencies, educational institutions, and so on, the retirement age is greater. Following the end of British control in 1952, pension rules were changed, and after Bangladesh's independence in 1971, they were changed again in 1972, 1974, 1977, 1982, 1985, 1988, 1989, 1991, and 1994 (Mohiudin, M. and Islam, M.N. 2002). After retiring or dying in the tenth, fifteenth, twentieth, or twenty-fifth years of service, a government employee receives 32, 48, 64, and 80 percent of his or her base pay as a pension, accordingly. Compensation pensions, invalid pensions, retirement pensions, optional pensions, and family pensions are among the several forms of pensions (Rahman, M.H., and Parveen, F.R., 1999).

### **B. Constitution of the Country**

In accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, every citizen, regardless of age, caste, creed, or religion, is entitled to the most fundamental of rights. As stated in Article 15.1 of the Bangladeshi constitution, medical care is regarded as a fundamental necessity, and the provision of improved nutrition and healthcare for all individuals is recognized as the primary responsibility of the state (Article 18.1).

### **C. National Policy on Ageing**

For a long time, persons and organizations concerned with the care of the aged have called for the establishment of a National Policy on Ageing (NPA). The NPA has been developed in accordance with the policy of the MIPAA (Country Report of Bangladesh, 2007). Finally, the National Policy for the Elderly-2013 was authorized by the government in order to ensure the wellbeing of the elderly. According to this legislation, people over the age of 60 are considered to be the senior citizens of the country. The main objectives of this policy are:

- i) To ensure the dignity of the elderly people in the society,
- ii) To identify the problems of the elderly people and address those.
- iii) To change the attitude of the mass people towards the elderly people.

- iv) To take new programs to address the needs of the elderly people for their socio-economic development.
- v) To develop special measures to help the elderly peoples during emergency like natural calamities, cyclone, earthquake etc.
- vi) To ensure social security, health care, employment and rehabilitation.
- vii) To implement the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing

### **D. National Committee on Ageing**

In 1982, following the adoption of the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing, the first national Committee on Ageing was established in the United Kingdom. President and Vice President of the committee were the Minister of Social Welfare and the Secretary of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, respectively. The committee was one of the first government initiatives to deal with the issue of aging in a formal manner, and the President and Vice President were both women. When it came to giving cash to organizations like the Bangladesh Association of the Aged and the Institute for Geriatric Medicine, the committee played an important role (BAAIGM).

### **E. Old Age allowance program**

This old allowance program for the destitute elderly was launched by the country's then-Prime Minister on May 31st, 1998, as part of the country's Fifth Five-Year Plan. At the outset, TK125 million was set aside for this project. Each ward of a union in the country was given a monthly payment of Taka100 for the 10 aged poor, at least 5 of whom should be women. Later, in eleven successive fiscal strategies of following governments, the coverage and amount of money were raised. Despite major coverage increases, just 23% of the elderly in the United States are currently receiving this benefit. Every selected senior individual now receives \$7.22 each month. This initiative was discovered to have enormous multifaceted positive effects on the recipients, their families, and rural society as a whole (Majumdar, P. Pal, and Sharifa B., 2001).

## F. *National Health Policy*

In the government's national health policy 2013, the government mentions the emergence of concerns affecting the elderly as a looming challenge. In order to fulfil the aims of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this policy will place a strong emphasis on the health status of every individual. National health policy, in conjunction with economic and social emancipation of marginalized groups, aimed to achieve long-term improvements in health, nutrition, and family well-being for all people, with a particular emphasis on the poor and most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and the elderly.

## G. *Five Year Plans*

The government's third five-year plan (1985–1990) included the first provision for Bangladesh's aged poor. The Fourth Five-Year Plan (1990–1995) then took some significant steps to improve the wellbeing of the elderly. More centers for older persons were envisaged in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997–2002), including facilities such as light economic/income-generating activities and geriatric medical and social welfare services for disadvantaged older people. The Old Age Allowance Program (Boyoshko Bhata Karmaschuchi), Bangladesh's most fundamental and innovative policy for the destitute old, was created in this fifth five-year plan (1997–2002). As part of the social safety net policy, the 7th Five-Year Plan has set aside a large amount for the aged.

## H. *Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Vulnerable Group Feeding and Widow Allowance:*

Through the Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programs, the government provides services to the elderly, largely women. Rural impoverished widows are also given a lump sum monthly stipend.

## Gap between the Services and Requirements

- i. Though the policy has been approved to refer to adults over the age of 60 as "senior citizens," there are still other tasks remaining. The guideline is so ambiguous that an aged person cannot sue in any scenario involving a breach of his or her rights.
- ii. During the fiscal year 2018-2019, the government allotted Tk 2100 corer for this purpose. A total of 3.5 million people will benefit from this. Beneficiaries receive Tk. 500 per head each month, which is paid out every six months to the beneficiaries. However, 500 taka is insufficient for the elderly to cover all of their expenses, which include food and medical treatment.
- iii. Another issue with the government's old-age allowance program is that it is not progressive enough. One of the provisions of disqualification is that elderly adults over the age of 65 who work as day labourers, beggars, or vagrants will not be eligible for this assistance because of their circumstances. Even in the absence of specific arrangements for them, these individuals find themselves in this predicament due to either great poverty or neglect on the part of their family members or other loved ones. It is evident that the government is attempting to categorize these individuals as "invisible."
- iv. Apart from the old age payment, there are no additional government-sponsored programs for the elderly.
- v. The elderly in Bangladesh are generally afflicted with a variety of complex physical conditions, and their numbers are growing by the day, however the services offered by government hospitals are insufficient in contrast to their needs. Furthermore, aged people require a unique type of care (known in medical science as "Geriatrics") that is not available in our nation, and we have yet to see any government attempt to promote this treatment.
- vi. Furthermore, health issues affecting the elderly are not addressed in the government's health programs and strategies.



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vii. During different natural calamities the elderly are badly affected. But there are no special policies for them regarding the issue.</li> <li>viii. The issues of elderly have not been included in the Millennium Development Goal 2015.</li> <li>ix. There is no specific department which can investigate the violation of the rights of elderly people.</li> <li>x. There are no separate ticket counters for the elderly in the bus/ train station, no special arrangements in the bus, train, public toilet or any other public transports.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>easily work and earn as well as their dignity will be ensured by themselves. This is called active ageing.</li> <li>vi. It is also important to introduce more effective data collection on ageing issue.</li> <li>vii. Elderly people should be engaged in decision-making.</li> <li>viii. It is government's duty to ensure the health rights and responds to the health needs of the senior citizens.</li> </ul> |
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### Recommendations

There are some policy recommendations regarding to this issue. These are provided below:

- i. Government should include all vulnerable elderly people under its old-age allowance policy.
- ii. The amount of old-age allowance is insufficient enough to adjust with the increasing inflation. It should be increased to Tk 2,000 from the present Tk 500.
- iii. Government should take some programs in making their involvement and to use their inner potentialities that would be helpful to reduce their mental sufferings created from loneliness and isolation.
- iv. It is also needed to upsurge awareness about the ageing issue so that everyone becomes conscious about the rights of the elderly.
- v. Government can inspire the senior citizens in involving them in such activities where they can

### Conclusion

Elderly folks suffer greatly as a result of their advanced age. They are ostracized by their own relatives. In contrast, Article 19(1) of our constitution states that "the state shall seek to ensure equality of opportunity to all people." A clear distinction may be seen between concern for the individual and his or her family versus concern for the social and economic well-being of the community. The services that are currently available are woefully inadequate and insufficient. Aside from service disorganization, our social myths and prejudices as well as social structures and systems, negative attitudes toward the elderly, and value conflict, all of these factors contribute to the elderly's difficulties becoming more severe. In case of failure on the part of the government to focus on the interests of elderly, a major portion of Bangladesh's population will become elderly in the near future. If special attention is not paid to these ageing folks, the bulky demography would be changed into demographic burden. It is, therefore, necessary for all the youths in Bangladesh to work in collaboration with the government to create an elderly-friendly atmosphere in Bangladesh.

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## Innovative Approaches to Administration in India (Special Focus on Tribal Community Development)

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Dr. Laltanpuui Ralte\*\*

### **Abstract:**

*Adivasi in India (8.6%) of the total population needs a special and rejuvenated treatise with the academic and practical resources available in the endeavour for their development looking at the scenario and situational analysis of our country, whilst exploring our country's response and achievements to the much global priority of human rights such as the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous communities and meticulously articulating the scope for an innovative approach in reviving public administration for this sector, which is judiciously done on this paper. Hence, this paper came into being, fully cognizant of the current situation of the country and the target community, administration scenario, programmes and policies of the government on tribal community development, and the road ahead from a public administrative point of view.*

**Keywords:** development, Adivasi, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Welfare and public administration, rejuvenation, tribal areas, NE Region, impact and benefit, outcome, strategic component.

### **Introduction**

India is a country with unparalleled biodiversity and cultures. Wing Commander J.Lalhmingliana the Principal Consultant, Civil Aviation, Government of Mizoram mentioned that if we travel every 100 km, the language dialect will change, if we travel every 500km there is a change in the way people live, and if we travel every 200 km there is a change in food habits. In India, there are more than a thousand languages and multiple religions. Therefore, the people's thoughts and ways of living and livelihood systems are widely different and dispersed. Hence, once under the British colonial empire, India became a Democratic Republic nation with a present

population of 1.3 billion and a geographical area of 3,287,263 km square with a density of 408 km sq. having 28 states and 8 Union territories, the challenges in realizing a progressive and dynamic public administration can never be too big. Across the country, it has become a herculean challenge of developing tribal communities which accounted for almost 10% (8.6% to be revised) of the total population and have specific, unique, and complicated challenges on their own before and after the British regime and the post-Independence and even till today.

The tribes of India constitute 194.2 million people of the total population. It is no doubt that our country has the largest number of tribes as compared to any other country. There are several tribes. According to the Anthropological Survey of India, there are 550 tribal communities in India. In actuality, this data was re-validated by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the different States Tribal Research institute which found

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out that along with the sub-group, there are more than 950 different tribal communities in India. The administration would become easier if there was some sort of commonly shared ethnicity and cultural element. However, there is a difference in such parameters as we look upon the social and economic structures of the country. So, the challenges in administration are strangled at different levels, sectors, and strategies. In other words, the socio-economic and cultural diversity in the country makes administration more challenging, especially for the lowest caste people, known as the Adivasi group.

Thus, in a country like India, with one of the most holistic constitutions in the world, tribal community development remains a sustaining challenge which the Union Government is tackling till today so that they are at par or proximity in development with the mainland society of the country. The tribal communities in India belong to several linguistic and social groups and are scattered all over the country. They have various levels of socio-cultural and economic development, and most of them live in remote, hilly, and forest areas and are at a low level of technological development.

### ***Common Features of Tribal Groups in India***

The common features that characterise the tribal groups in India are that they usually dwell away from the civilised world in the inaccessible parts of the forest and hills, using the same dialect and literature system. Animism was common; however, a belief in a higher power was observed (Lalthangliana B, "A Brief History and Culture of Mizo" published in 1993). Primitive occupations such as gleaning, hunting, and gathering of farm produce are common. In farming, Jhum cultivation is common, especially among the hilly tribes. They are usually non-vegetarian, and hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities such as festivals for post-harvesting and pre-harvesting, offerings to the deities for blessings, and the same to the so-called evil spirits are common among the tribal people. They usually have a definite and specific public administrative system that is also related to their culture and religion (Girase 2016, p. 7924).

However, during the last six decades, under the impact of various developmental and promotional measures initiated to secure their integration into the mainstream of national social and economic life, the tribal scene has undergone a visible change with a gigantic leap since the 12th Plan, increasing the Union Government's investment in tribal socio-economic alleviation through Article 275 and various schemes. Without any separate and objectivistic study, the pace of development in the tribal states of the NER Region in the country can be used as an example. Moreover, the presence of NEC, and the Ministry of DoNER, though still miles away from reaching its goal, has made substantial progress.

### ***Classification of Tribal Communities in India***

In India, the tribal population is widely spread. As a result, researchers are concerned about arranging tribes along certain areas. There is no one, clear, and appropriate manner of categorizing the tribes' inhabited areas. Based on the present studies, the tribal communities can be classified as follows (Singh, 2018, pp. 1-2):

- a) Tribal communities that are still confined to the aboriginal forest habitats and follow the old pattern of life.
- b) Semi-tribal populations that have mostly lived in rural areas and turned to agriculture and other related activities.
- c) Cultured tribal communities who have migrated to urban areas and are engaged in modern industries and vocations and have adopted modern cultural traits.
- d) Tribal communities that are completely assimilated into the Indian population.
- e) Tribal communities that are well educated and even fight for independence.

### ***Challenges of Tribal Communities Development***

The Indian Tribal Communities has faced various problems and challenges for uplifting their socio, economic, and political status. Some problems emerged from cultural-related issues, some from

their age-old social and economic practices. Tribal peoples' issues range in severity because they are at various social, political, economic, and ecological levels. These distinctions can be evident between hill tribes and plainsmen, between those engaged in forest-based economic activities and those working as established agriculturists, or between those who are Hindus or converted to Christianity and those who adhere to a pure tribal way of life. Christianity; and those who are adhering to an unadulterated tribal way of life (Sharma, 2008). Despite these distinctions, some common problems of the tribal people are:

1. Poverty and exploitation.
2. Economic and technological backwardness.
3. Socio-cultural handicaps.
4. Problems of assimilation with the non-tribal population.

Among these challenges, the socio-economic problems were one of the major tasks of tribal development. The tribal areas are predominantly agricultural but with crude technology and are not eco-friendly, despite their rich plethora of natural resources and forestry. This is proven by the fact that the current agricultural and allied schemes and projects focus heavily on mechanization and improvement. Inadequate irrigation, the most essential input for improving agricultural productivity, is a serious issue in tribal agriculture. Irrigation is exceedingly low in tribal places, with less than 1% in a tribal state like Mizoram (0.8 percent). When big and medium irrigation projects are planned, most tribal villages in the upper reaches of rivers and streams are excluded from the regions that would benefit. This furthermore is supported by the Union Government's scaled-up allocation of resources such as the Rural Infrastructure Fund allocation is being hiked from 30,000 crore to 40,000 crores. The Micro Irrigation Fund's corpus is being doubled to <sup>1</sup> 10,000 crores. Many tribal communities have been associated with forests. During the off-seasons, these tribes depend upon minor forest produce. Credit and marketing facilities in the tribal areas are being inadequately strengthened and though they are quite well protected by legislation, quotas, and relaxation

schemes by the government, the practise of bondage labour and indebtedness are still strongly prevalent.

### ***The Fundamental Principles of Jawaharlal Nehru on Tribal Development***

The first Prime Minister of Independent India Jawaharlal Nehru laid down the fundamental principles of tribal development and it became the guiding force of the administration of Tribal Development till today. These Principles were (Padhi, 2005, p.72&73):

1. Tribal people should develop along the lines of their genus and we should avoid imposing anything on them. We should attempt to support their traditional arts and culture in whatever manner we can. Tribal people's rights in the land forest should be respected.
2. We should try to train and build up a team of their own people to do the work of administration and development. Some technical personnel from outside will no doubt be needed especially in the beginning. However, we should avoid bringing in too many outsiders into a tribal territory and,
3. We should not over-administer these areas or overwhelm them with a multiplicity of schemes. We should rather work through and not in rivalry with our own social and cultural institutions.

### ***Administrative Measures for Tribal Development in India***

The Government has deployed many strategies regarding tribal development. The following were the administrative measures for Tribal development:

#### ***Five Year Plan and Tribal Development***

The Government of India has laid a great emphasis on the development of Tribal Communities in India since Independence. During the Second Five Year Plan, has started an opening of forty-three Special Multi-purpose Tribal Block, this was later called as Tribal Development Blocks (TDBs), each having about 25000 people as against 65000 in a normal block. 489 Tribal Development Blocks had

come into existence in the Fourth Five Year Plan and about Rs.75 crores were spent by the Union Govt. for the implementation of Tribal Development programmes during the plan period. Several Tribal colonies were established through land colonization schemes. Cooperative Farming Societies had been introduced and many concessions were offered to the tribal people by Forest excises. The Fifth Five Year Plan marked a shift in the approach when the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) based on the integrated area development approach for the direct benefit of the tribal communities was launched. It was intended to channel the flow of outlays and gains from the general sectors into the plans of the states and union territories (UTs) and central ministries in proportion to their population, both physically and financially. During the sixth plan, Modified Area Development Approach was adopted to cover smaller areas of tribal concentration aims at development for tribals staying outside the integrated tribal development areas. In the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90), there was a substantial increase in the flow of funds for the development of Scheduled Tribes, resulting in the expansion of infrastructural facilities and enlargement of coverage. The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED), established in 1987 as the apex organisation for State Tribal Development Cooperative Corporations, and the National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Commission (NSTC) Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) in 1989 were established. The former was envisaged to provide a remunerative price for the Forest and Agriculture Produce of tribal while the latter was intended to provide credit support for employment generation (Suresh, 2014, p.798).

The Eight Plan not only stressed the abolition of exploitation, but it also addressed the specific issues

of rights repression, land alienation, non-payment of minimum wages, and limits on the right to gather minor forest output, among other things. Priority was maintained to be given to the socioeconomic upliftment of Scheduled Tribes. The Ninth Five Year Plan's major goal was to increase efforts to bridge the gap between Scheduled Tribes and the rest of the population. The Tenth Plan adopts eradication of deprivation/exploitation of tribes as the centre-point in its approach while pursuing simultaneously the Ninth Plan commitment of empowering the tribes. The Eleventh Plan has experienced a paradigm shift concerning the overall empowerment of the tribal people, keeping the issues related to governance at the centre. During this plan period, the operational imperatives of the Fifth Schedule, Tribal Sub Plan 1976, Panchayat ESA 1996, RFRA 2006; the desirability of a tribal-centric, tribal-participative, and tribal-managed development process; and the need for a conscious departure from reliance on a largely ineffective official delivery system were kept in mind.

### **Constitutional Provisions and Act of the Parliament on the safeguarding of Tribal Development**

In terms of tribal development, the Indian Constitution provides for statutory recognition, proportional representation in the legislature, the right to use their own language for education and other purposes, the right to practice their own faith, and the right to pursue development in accordance with their own genius. (Xaxa, 2008, p.6.). The key provisions for the social and economic development of Tribal communities were mostly contained in articles 46, 244, 330, 332, 334, 335, 338, 339, 342, scheduled V, and scheduled VI of the Constitution of India. The Constitution also permits for change in-laws, according to the tribal situation of the concerned area.

#### **Constitutional Provisions Relating to STs**

Sl.No.	Article	Title/Theme
		<b>Definition and Specification of STs</b>
1	342	Scheduled Tribe
2	366	Definition

<b>Education, Economic, and Public Employment- Related safeguards</b>		
3	15	Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.
4	16	Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment
5	19	Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech, etc.
6	46	Promotion of Educational and Economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections.
7	335	Claims of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to services and posts.
<b>Political Safeguards</b>		
8	330	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People.
9	332	Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Legislative Assemblies of the States.
10	334	Reservation of seats and special representation to cease after sixty years.
11	243D	Reservation of seats (in Panchayats).
12	243T	Reservation of seats.
<b>Agency for monitoring safeguards</b>		
13	338A	National Commission for Scheduled Tribe

Source: [https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/CLM/CLM\\_Const/2.pdf](https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/CLM/CLM_Const/2.pdf).

The Government of India also provides grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution for raising the level of infrastructure in Scheduled Areas and economic development of Scheduled Tribes to that of the general population. It is also implementing various Centrally-sponsored programmes in which financial assistance is given to States and UTs for the construction of hostels and coaching of ST students for competitive examinations, merit enhancement, and research. The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation (TRIFED) was established by the government in 1987 with the primary goal of providing marketing assistance and remunerative prices to tribal for their minor forest produce and surplus agricultural produce, as well as saving them from exploitative middlemen. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act of 2006 acknowledges and vests forest rights and occupation of forest land in forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been lived in such forest.

### Ministry of Tribal Affairs

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs was formed in 1999, following the division of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, to provide a more organised and planned approach to the integrated socioeconomic development of the Scheduled Tribes (the most underprivileged section of Indian Society). Tribal issues were handled by several Ministries at various times prior to the creation of the Ministry. This is the Nodal Ministry for policies and programmes aimed at improving indigenous people's well-being. As a result, the Ministry has undertaken operations controlled by the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, and subsequent revisions. The following subjects have been assigned to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (GOI Allocation of Business Rules: 1961, 2007, p146):

It encompasses all indigenous people and all regions with tribal populations across the country. Social security and social insurance to the Scheduled Tribes are:

- Tribal Welfare: Planning, project formulation, research, evaluation, statistics, and training
- Promotion and development of voluntary efforts on tribal welfare
- Development of Scheduled Tribes
- Scheduled Areas
- Monitoring of ST Welfare Grants, based on the framework and mechanism designed by NITI Aayog
- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
  1. Commission to report on the administration of Scheduled Areas and the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes; and
  2. Issue of directions regarding the drawing up and execution of schemes essential for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in any State.
- Implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, excluding administration of criminal justice in regard to offences in so far as they relate to Scheduled Tribes.

The Ministry's programmes and schemes are intended to supplement, primarily through financial assistance, the efforts of other Central Ministries, State Governments, and some voluntary organizations and to fill critical gaps within institutions and programs, taking into consideration the situation of STs. It is the responsibility of all Central Ministries to promote the interests of Scheduled Tribes.

### **Tribes Advisory Council**

A Tribes Advisory Council is envisaged in the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. It shall be established in each State having Scheduled Areas within their territory. Additionally, the President may direct any state that has Scheduled Tribes but no Scheduled Areas to create a Tribes Advisory Council consisting of not more than twenty members, of whom three-fourths shall be State representatives representing the Scheduled Tribes. The Tribes

Advisory Council shall advise the Governor on matters pertaining to the welfare and advancement of Scheduled Tribes in the State. In the Scheduled Area States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, and Telangana, Tribes Advisory Councils (TAC) has been formed. Despite the fact that Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal do not have any scheduled areas, they have formed TAC.

### **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**

In 2003, the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act created the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) through the amendment of Article 338 and the insertion of a new Article 338A. Through this amendment, the existing National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) with effect from 19 February 2004. The term of office of the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and each of the members is three years from the date they assume their responsibilities. Chairperson has been given the rank of Union Cabinet Minister, Vice-Chairperson that of a Minister of State and the other members have the ranks of a Secretary to the Government of India.

Under the original provisions of Art.338 of the Constitution, Special Officer (Commissioner) for SC&ST appointed was assigned the duty to investigate all matters relating to the Safeguards for SCs and STs in various Statutes and to report to the President upon the working of these Safeguards. To facilitate the working of the Commissioner for (SCs&STs), 17 Regional Offices were set up in different parts of the Country. Under Clause 5 of Article 388A, the functions of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes include (NCST HandBook, 2016, p. 9-10):

1. To investigate and monitor matters relating to safeguards provided for STs under the Constitution, under other laws, or Government legislation. An Order to evaluate the efficacy of such Safeguards.



2. To inquire into specific complaints relating to the Rights and Safeguards of STs.
3. To provide advice and participation in the processes associated with the socio-economic development of STs and to evaluate the progress of their development within the Union and any State.
4. Prepare and submit a report to the President annually and as may be deemed necessary by the Commission on working of the Safeguards, Measures required for effective implementation of Welfare Programs and Socio-economic Development of ST communities.
5. To discharge such other functions in relation to STs as the President may, subject to the provisions of any law made by Parliament, by rule specify.

### **Tribal Educational Development Programmes**

The Union and the states have spent substantial sums of money on education for tribal youths, but the results are gradually improving. A commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has asserted that unless exploitation is combated and eliminated through education, no progress will be made toward improving tribal welfare (Manipal, 1985). Therefore, the Government of India has given priority to the education of Scheduled Tribes. The following are some of the programs and schemes launched to promote education among this disadvantaged population.

1. The Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme has been in operation since 1944-45. Its purpose is to provide financial assistance to Scheduled Tribes students studying post-matriculation and post-secondary levels in order to help them complete their education.
2. During the Third Plan period, a scheme for constructing ST Girls' Hostel was started. 1989-90 saw the launch of a separate programme for the construction of ST Boys' hostels. During the 10th Five Year Plan, both schemes were merged into one. The programme aims to promote literacy among tribal students by providing hostel accommodation to such ST students who would not otherwise be able to complete their education given their poor economic conditions and the remote location of their villages.
3. The scheme of upgrading merits, which existed earlier, has been merged into the scheme of Post-Matric scholarships under the tenth five-year plan. Through this scheme, Scheduled Tribe and other underprivileged students in classes 11th and 12th are provided with opportunities for all-round development in residential schools, in order to compete for admission to higher education courses and senior administrative and technical positions with other students.
4. The students of ST are entitled to funds under the Book Bank scheme to purchase books, which will help reduce their drop-out rate from both the professional institutes and universities. For the States/UT Administration to set up a Books Bank, funding can only be provided to the extent of the following ceiling or the actual cost of the set.
5. The National Overseas Scholarship Program has been operating since 1954-55. It was a Non-Plan Scheme until 2007-2008, where it became a Plan Scheme. The aim of the scheme is to help ST students pursuing higher education (Masters, Doctorates, and Post Doctorates) abroad in certain specified fields of Engineering, Technology, or Science.
6. The Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship scheme was launched in 2005-2006, and now it is known as the National Fellowship Scheme for Higher Education of ST Students. The purpose of this fellowship scheme is to assist students belonging to the ST group in pursuing higher education such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. All Universities/ Institutions recognized by the UGC under section 2(f) of the UGC Act are included in this scheme. As amended from time to time, Junior Research Fellow (JRF) and Senior Research Fellow (SRF) fellowships are at the same rate as the UGC Fellowship.

7. Vocational Training Centres for Tribal Areas were introduced in 1992-93 and are still in operation. Through this scheme, ST youths are designed to develop job and self-employment skills and to improve their socio-economic conditions by increasing income. A 100% grant is provided to the States, UTs, and other non-profits that implement the scheme.
8. There are 26 Tribal Research Institutes (TRIs) supported by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India. The Institutes are state-based research organizations for the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. TRIs focus on their core responsibilities as a body of knowledge & research. The institution provides inputs to States for evidence-based planning, appropriate legislation, capacity building of tribal and persons/institutions associated with tribal affairs, disclosure of information, and creation of awareness related to tribal development and the preservation of tribal cultural heritage.

### ***Concluding Observation of Tribal Development Administration in India***

Under the fifth and sixth schedules of the Indian Constitution, tribal community development is a constitutional mandate for the union and state governments. The government has taken a number of public policy initiatives to mainstream and develop tribal communities in the country since the first five-year plan. Many of these communities remain unaddressed or unanswered in terms of socio-cultural and politico-administrative issues. In the past twenty years, globalization has radically changed the human condition, the economy, politics, and society in general to a great extent. There is a great deal of difficulty in deciding if the Indian tribal communities should be modernised or should they preserve their traditional culture?

Socio-economic conditions for tribal communities are extremely uneven across different parts of the country, and can even vary wildly within the same region. The wide variety of situations makes it impossible to determine a specific formula or guideline to follow in tribal development. Earlier

efforts to develop tribal communities in our country greatly erred in this area. Every tribal group has its own unique matrix, depending on its socio-economic situation, its resources, as well as the quality of its interaction with other groups. The content and pace of development and its direction have to be defined specifically in each case by the promoters of State induced development process.

It was the Constitution's approach to tribal affairs that gave birth to the first attempt to integrate this exceptionally talented but suppressed and exploited community into the vast community of Indians. Governments backed by the popular vote were assigned the task. By providing resources and providing the necessary institutional apparatus, the Constitution ensures that the basic framework of government is adequate. Initially, some tribal safeguards were only to last for ten years. As a result of fixing this period, the Constitution envisaged an effective follow-up programme that obviated the need for their continuance. However, this hope did not materialize, and the period for extending the period has been adjusted. This is not due to any deficiencies contained in the Constitution itself, but to a deficiency in performance.

Through programmes aimed at addressing education, infrastructure, and livelihood gaps for Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has continued to expand efforts towards socio-economic development. According to the Government's Allocation of Business Rules (ABR), this Ministry is responsible for monitoring tribal sub-plan funds (now known as scheduled tribe component funds) of the Central Ministries in accordance with the structure and process proposed by NITI Aayog. As part of continuing public service improvement, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs constantly reviews various schemes, including rationalization of scholarship schemes and their enrolment on the Direct Benefit Transfer platform and online portal for NGO grants (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Year-End Reviews, 2018). However, there are still problems with direct benefit transfer in the tribal areas due to poor mobile connectivity; the operation should be improved with the help of "universal service obligation" funds.

Providing connectivity to all habitations requires huge amounts of resources due to the rough terrain and difficult area of tribal locations. Since their profit margins are decreasing, contractors are not taking up work. Additionally, because most tribal habitations are located in the forest, clearing the forest remains a bottleneck for establishing connectivity. It is also difficult to connect to the internet through telecom lines. As a result, digital literacy is unable to penetrate typical tribal areas. It is essential to effectively monitor the funds earmarked for tribal development activities. The tribal youth have a bright future thanks to comprehensive skill development programmes that are tailored to the tribal markets and local consumers. Through a targeted approach, informal education in tribal areas should be intensified through village

institutions and Self-Help Groups. Programs for tribal entrepreneurship should be designed so as to accommodate the primitive skills of the tribe. The tribal youth must have easy access to career and livelihood information at their district's tribal resource information centre.

The state government and the central government provide funds for tribal welfare through a number of programmes and schemes. However, the major challenges have remained access to basic services like health and education along with employment and livelihood. Therefore, the best way to promote tribal community development will be through an administrative approach of creating an environment that will allow tribal members to maximise their potential.

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## Criminal Justice With Reference to Correctional Administration in Mizoram: An Analysis

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### **Abstract:**

*Prison or correctional institution forms part of the criminal justice system and plays a key role in justice delivery. As prison falls under the State list, it becomes very important on the part of state to look after its administration. The National Crime Record Bureau's latest report on prison statistics shows the status of various jails. From the prison statistics laid down in the report, the status of correctional institution can be analysed and calculated. Mizoram has had district jails in all the districts apart from Central Jail. It is also important to mention that there is a separate jail for women. The objective of this paper is to analyse the functions and workings of prison as correctional institution in Mizoram as it has been a part of criminal justice system.*

**Keywords:** Criminal Justice system, Prison reforms, District Jails, Mizoram Prisoners

### **Prison System in India**

In India, a well organised system of prisons is known to have existed from the ancient times. At that time, greater emphasis was laid on the spiritual aspect of human life and therefore prisons were so modelled as to provide sufficient opportunity for penance and remonstrance<sup>2</sup>. During the British colonial rule radical changes were introduced in the then existing prison system where the Prison Enquiry committee took adequate steps to eradicate corruption among the prison staffs and concern for insanitary conditions of the jail that was made and led to the formation of new laws for Prison administration.

After the Indian Independence, the Constitution of India placed the 'Prisons'<sup>3</sup> along with Police<sup>4</sup> and law and order<sup>5</sup> in the State list of the Seventh schedule and makes the Union government free from the responsibility of modernising and improving it under its administration. Some of the committees that were responsible for ensuring jail reforms are the following:

### **Introduction**

A prison as a correction mechanism forms an important element of the criminal justice system besides the police and the judiciary. By imprisonment we mean, confining and detaining a person or a system of punishment, and it is a sort of institutional placement of under-trials and suspects during the period of trial in various courts. Efficiency in the system or administration of prison can greatly help in reforming the morals of prisoners and therefore becomes an important part of criminal justice system. In India, according to the 2011 census<sup>1</sup>, there are more than 1.2 billion people and in a population like this over one million criminal cases are reported every year. Since there cannot be a society without crimes and criminals, the institution of prisons is indispensable for every country. This clearly shows the needs of existence of criminal justice system in the form of correction mechanisms or prisons.

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**A) The Mulla Committee or All India Committee on Jail Reforms 1980-83:** In the year 1980, the government of India set up Mulla committee which deals with jail reforms under the chairmanship of Justice A. N Mulla. The basic objective of the Committee was to review the laws, rules and regulations keeping in view the overall objective of protecting society and rehabilitating offenders.

**B) The Krishna Iyer Committee:** In the year 1987, the Krishna Iyer Committee was formed under the chairmanship of Justice V.R.Krishna Iyer, which was mainly for reforming the conditions of women prisoners. This committee has recommended induction of more women into the police force in view of their special role in tackling women and child offenders.

According to the National Crime Record Bureau report 2019, the following are the prison statistics in India.<sup>61</sup>

Number and Capacity of Jails in India	Male	Female	Total
1) Total Number of Jails in India	-	-	1350
2) Total Capacity of Jails in India	376036	27703	403739
3) Total number of Jail inmates as on 31.12.2019	458687	19913	478600

#### Jail Occupancy rate

Sl No	Type	No. of Jails	Capacity	Population of inmates	Occupancy Rates
1	Central Jail	144	177618	220021	123.87
2	District Jail	410	158986	206217	129.71
3	Sub jail	617	45071	38030	84.38
4	Special jail	41	7262	5612	77.28
5	Open Jail	86	6113	4320	70.67
6	Women Jail	31	6511	3652	56.09
7	Borstal School	19	1615	597	36.97
8	Others	2	563	151	26.82
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1350</b>	<b>403739</b>	<b>478600</b>	<b>118.54</b>

#### Types of Prisoners and statistics<sup>8</sup>

Year	No of Convict	No of Undertrial prisoners	No of detenues	No of other inmates	Total no of prisoners
2019	1,44,125	3,30,487	3223	765	4,78,600

From the latest observation of the National Crime Record Bureau Report on Prison 2019, one can find that the total capacity of jails in India is higher for male than female and that the number of male jail inmates greatly exceeds the available capacity in the country while female still can fit in the available capacity and does not occupy the entire available capacity.

The overall occupancy rate in all jails at national level was 118.5% whereas the occupancy rate for male and female were 122.0% and 71.9% respectively. That the number of undertrial prisoners is greatly high, which led to the overcrowding of prisons. This has greatly hampered their life of enjoying the normal healthy situation, which can be of great concern violating the basic human right of the prisoners.

## Prison Administration and Its Functioning In Mizoram

In Mizoram, the first Jail was started on 25th June 1899 at Jail veng, Dawrpui (now, Millennium centre) where convicts and under trial prisoners (U.T.P.) were held under the custody. This Jail was called District Jail and was one of the Jails under the Assam State Government. The correctional administration in Mizoram is carried out under the following ways:

**1. Prison Directorate Building:** Under Prison Department, there is a Directorate which was set up in the year 1973. It was headed by I.G Prisons. The IG along with DIG, AIG, Superintendent and other subordinate staff are working to look after the state jail administration from this Headquarters office building since 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1999.<sup>9</sup> The prison directorate building is located near Aizawl Police Station at Babutlang. Earlier, private buildings were hired for office of Prison Directorate under full time Inspector General's from 14<sup>th</sup> October 1982 to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1990.

**2. Central Jail, Aizawl:** The Central jail was established and commissioned on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1986. It is located at 12 kms distance from Aizawl Court, D.C Complex, between Tanhril and Sakawrtuichhun Village, (now within City area). It has four walls of 800 mtrs long with capacity of accommodation for 480 males. This is the only Central Jail in the State where life convicts and other long term and habitual convicts besides undertrials are admitted.

**3. Women Jail:** A separate women jail under the Special Superintendent, mainly looks after by one Jailer, but guarded and looked after round the clock exclusively by female warders, was inaugurated in the year 2019. Children up to 6yrs old with mothers are also admitted. The capacity of accommodation is 98 females.

**4. District Jail, Aizawl:** The Aizawl District Jail is located at Armed Veng South and was previously called New Jail which has been regularly functioning since 1972. It has a capacity of accommodating 113 inmates and mainly used for lodging of adolescent

male prisoners only with Drugs and such related cases since 31.3.1990. It does not provide any space for female inmates.

The jail has facilities such as volleyball, table tennis, carom, draught, chess, and radios, guitars for recreation. There is a separate Conference Hall for lectures, Sermons, counselling etc. There are functionaries like the Jail Superintendent, Jailer, Assistant Jailors, LDC, Guarding Staff (Warder). And, 67% of staff has been provided with family quarters within jail complex.

**5. District Jail, Lunglei:** The Lunglei district jail was established on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 1977 at Sazaikawn which is around 3 kms from the main town. It has a capacity of accommodating 130 males and 10 females, totalling 140 inmates altogether. There is a jail Superintendent who heads the staff of 62 jail employees who look after this jail.

The jail has facilities such as volleyball, table tennis, carom, draught, chess, and radios, guitars for recreation. There is a separate Conference Hall for lectures, Sermons, counselling etc. It is pertinent to mention that 75% of the staffs are provided with staff quarters in the jail complex.

**6. District Jail, Siaha:** The Siaha District Jail was established and commissioned on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1977 and has a capacity of accommodating 85 males and 10 females, totalling 95 inmates altogether. For outdoor and indoor, volleyball, table tennis, Carom, Chess, Draught board are available. Guitars, T.V and Radios are also provided. There are 27 jail employees headed by Jail Superintendent to look after this jail. 90% of the staffs have been provided with staff quarters in the jail complex.

**7. District Jail, Champhai:** This jail was established and commissioned on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, 1990. It has a capacity of accommodating 112 males and 24 females, i.e 136 inmates altogether All Jail employees headed by Jail Superintendent look after this jail. 76% of them are provided with staff quarters in the jail complex. Indoor Games and outdoor games are provided for recreation.

**8. District Jail, Kolasib:** This jail was established and commissioned on 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1990 and has

a capacity of accommodating 146 prisoners i.e. 130 males and 16 females. All Jail employees headed by Jail Superintendent look after this jail. 90% of them are provided with staff quarters in the jail complex. Indoor and Outdoor items are available inside the Jail.

**9. District Jail, Lawngtlai:** This jail was established and commissioned on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011. It has a capacity of accommodating 136 prisoners i.e. 96 males and 40 females. Jail Superintendent looks after this jail. 90% of them are provided with staff quarters in the jail complex. Indoor and Outdoor items are available inside the Jail.

**10. District Jail, Serchhip:** This jail was established in the year 2016 and is located at Chhiahtlang Village. It has a capacity of accommodating 165 prisoners, i.e. 125 males and 40

females. All Jail employees headed by Jail Superintendent look after this jail. 90% of them are provided with staff quarters in the jail complex. Indoor and Outdoor items are available inside the Jail.

**11. District Jail, Mamit:** This jail was established and commissioned on 2016. It is located at Sabual Village. It has a capacity of accommodating 114 prisoners i.e. 70 Males and 44 Females. All Jail employees headed by Jail Superintendent look after this jail. 90% of them are provided with staff quarters in the jail complex. Indoor and Outdoor items are available inside the Jail.

#### Prison Statistics in Mizoram<sup>10</sup>

List of Jails in Mizoram Indicating the Capacity and Number of Inmates<sup>11</sup>

Sl no	Name of Jails	Official Capacity		Actual Capacity		Actual Occupancy(as on	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1	Central Jail, Aizawl	480	-	328	-	589	-
2	Separate Women Jail, Aizawl	-	98	-	98	-	59
3	District Jail, Aizawl	113	-	70	-	103	-
4	District Jail, Lunglei	130	10	84	10	113	17
5	District Jail, Siahla	85	10	50	10	54	6
6	District Jail, Kolasib	130	16	120	14	120	14
7	District Jail, Champhai	112	24	83	20	88	9
8	District Jail, Lawngtlai	96	40	68	30	26	1
9	District Jail, Serchhip	125	40	86	40	35	10
10	District Jail, Mamit	70	44	60	18	48	5
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1341</b>	<b>282</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>1176</b>	<b>121</b>

From the above statistics, it is clear that the official capacity is much higher than the actual capacity of inmates. However, in some jails, the inmate population exceeds the inmate capacity which clearly shows that there is overcrowding of rooms for the prisoners. Especially in the Central Jail Aizawl,

Aizawl District Jail and Lunglei district Jail the occupancy of prisoners are larger than the actual capacity which is of grave concern for the delivery of justice. The jail population comprises of the undertrial prisoners and the convicts both male and female as below:

Jails	Male		Female		Children		Total		Grand Total	Capacity
	UTP	Convict	UTP	Convict	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Central Jail	226	244	20	13		4	470	37	507	557
District Jail Aizawl	27	15					42	0	42	113
District Jail Lunglei	62	34	6	3			96	9	105	183
District Jail Champhai	84	15	12				99	12	111	130



District Jail Siaha	11	16	1	1			27	2	29	95
District Jail Kolasib	56	16	3	1	2		74	4	78	114
District Jail Lawngtlai	8	10	1				18	1	19	136
District Jail Serchhip	15	7	5				22	5	27	165
District Jail Mamit	27	3	3				30	3	33	114
<b>Total</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>1607</b>

From the above table, it is found that the number of under trial prisoners is greater than the number of convicts. In all these it is found that both in the convict and undertrial prisoners the most common offences committed falls under the Special and Local Laws<sup>13</sup>. The most common offence falls under the Narcotic and Psychotropic substances Act (NDPS), Excise Act and Prohibition Act.

Strength of Staffs: According to the 2019 report, it is found that the sanctioned strength of the staffs is 430 whereas the actual strength of the staffs is 305, which means around 125 posts lie vacant. Among these staffs, Mizoram prison is one among few States who do not have correctional staffs. It is calculated that the number of inmates per staffs is 5.

### Rehabilitation and Welfare of Prisoners

As one of the main aims is reformation and rehabilitation of prisoners, the States has also taken steps for rehabilitation of prisoners in various ways. Adult education and higher education are imparted and few vocational courses as well.

### Conclusion

Prison as correctional administration plays an important role in criminal justice system. The statistics and data of prison in Mizoram gives a broad picture of the implementation of the justice delivery system in Mizoram and India at large. The different district jails are equipped with authorities and staffs and functions smoothly for carrying out justice delivery. However, being correctional institution and its aim is to reduce the level of criminality in the society and punish and rehabilitate the offenders, the prison or jail suffers from underfunding and understaffing which hampers the justice delivery system. The greater number of undertrial prisoners than convicts is also of great concern. At the same time it is a great achievement to have a separate women jail in the state which greatly adds to the achievement of the justice delivery system. The National Committee on Women Prisoners 1987 has examined and pointed out the importance of paying respect and concern for women in correctional institutions. This has become a great milestone in the justice delivery system of Mizoram.

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> <https://censusindia.gov.in/2011-Common/CensusInfo.html> visited on 3rd October 2021 at 11:00p.m

<sup>2</sup> Paranjape N.V (2011). *Criminology, Penology with Victimology*. Central Law Publication.

<sup>3</sup> Entry 4 of the State list (List II) of the Constitution of India.

<sup>4</sup> Entry 2 of the State list (List II) of the Constitution of India.

<sup>5</sup> Entry 1 of the State list (List II) of the Constitution of India.

<sup>6</sup> Prison statistics India 2019, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs.

<sup>7</sup> Supra 6 at xi (Chapter 1)

<sup>8</sup> <https://prisons.mizoram.gov.in/page/welcome-to-mizoramprisons> visited on 1/10/2021 at 11:53p.m, Aizawl.

<sup>9</sup> Prison statistics in India 2019 published by National Crime Record Bureau 2019

<sup>10</sup> Minutes of the High Powered Committee for the State of Mizoram held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at residence of Hon'ble Justice Micheal Zothankhuma, Judge Gauhati High Court Chaltlang, Aizawl.

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<sup>13</sup> Supra note 9 at 229.

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## Community Policing During Covid-19 Pandemic in Aizawl City, Mizoram: An Assessment

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### ABSTRACT

*The novel corona virus also known as Covid-19 has brought about an abrupt change into our daily lives for about a year and a half and with the virus mutating frequently, the government of the world is still trying to keep up its changing nature. It has reached almost all corners of the world including the far north-eastern corner of India, in the state of Mizoram. The state is currently going through a third wave hit of the pandemic with increases cases in children, teenagers and young adult. Mizoram is a state where peace and harmony exist, it has once been dubbed one of the most peaceful states in India. In Mizoram, community policing exists since long time back, and carried on by the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Joint Action Committee (JAC), etc. who aid the state police department and the state government in many ways. With the advent of the pandemic, the erstwhile task of community policing has been taken up by the Local Level Task Force (LLTF) who are government recognized volunteer bodies. These LLTF has been bestowed with wide range of powers and authority which have been both a boon and a curse for both the LLTF and the people in the community. There has been several writings and research on Community Policing, but as its form, structure and functions differ from one place to another and as such results are more often than not inconclusive. This article aims to take a closer look into the functioning of these LLTF in the capital city of Mizoram, Aizawl. It tries to provide a deeper look into its uniqueness as a voluntary body like no other and closer look into its role, functions and challenges.*

**Keywords:** *Community, policing, collective efficiency, task force, covid-19, pandemic.*

### Introduction

Community Oriented Policing (COP) or Community Policing is not a new phenomenon, it started to gain attention during the 1900's, however it gained popularity in countries like the United States during the 1970's and 1980's, during which, the work carried out by the state police department was felt inadequate and that it does not cater the need of the people in

the community with the increasing crime rate. Community policing include a variety of philosophical and separational partnerships to address neighbourhood conditions that give rise to public safety concerns, including crime, disorder and fear of crime. Empirical studies have shown that community-oriented policing and problem-oriented policing can reduce crime and disorder (Reisig 2010). American criminologist and legal scholar Herman Goldstein even propose for the closer linking between policing and the community (Swanson, Territo& Taylor, 2017).

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Greater interaction is required in order to gain the trust of the people and to receive coordination from the people. Community Policing is defined as a system of allocation police officers to particular area so that they become familiar with the local inhabitants. A great example is the setting up of police stations in major towns, cities and localities and beats on other populated and large public areas. The general public has a preconceived notion of distrust and fear against the police. This is not a new phenomenon. However, with the pandemic surging through the country, people have noticed a change in the role and nature of policing recently (Attri 2021). During mid-June, the second wave of the pandemic hits India hard, with medical infrastructure on the blink of collapsing, and the whole country was in utter chaos, a major change in the functioning of many armed personnel was seen, many policemen were seen performing humanitarian work in different parts of the country, from taking covid patients to the hospitals, to carrying oxygen tanks and helping out at burial places who were already overwhelm with bodies to cremate. This was a fresh new sight for policing in India where the face of the police department has been riddled with mystery, fear, corruption, abuse, misconduct, etc.

Amidst the raging pandemic, in the north eastern part of India, in the state of Mizoram, police are aided by group of government recognised volunteer bodies known as the Local Level Task Force who are formed in each locality in the municipal area who patrol the cities where police duty is not available and who perform their duties earnestly and without expecting anything in return. Even before the surge of Covid-19, the state police department had been facing the problem of shortage of personnel. With the advent of the pandemic Covid-19, the roles of the police and other government servants and NGOs change. With lockdowns and curfews imposed in most of the cities and towns where the pandemic hits, and most government school and offices operate from home and most business places shut down and movement of people and vehicles restricted to a maximum, the state police are over burden with covid related duties, investigations, patrolling etc. besides their normal day to day duties and also including border duty in Mizoram's border with Assam and Myanmar. As

such, in the state of Mizoram, the Government devise a plan where the government servants are on patrol duty making sure people are not roaming the cities uselessly, making sure Covid Protocols are being followed, imposed fines to persons not following covid 19 protocols, etc. Furthermore, the Local Council in the Municipal area and the Village Council in collaboration with the Young Mizo Association (YMA), churches and other NGO and the Government of Mizoram formed Local Task Force and Village Task Force.

### Review of Literature

Community policing in itself is not static, it is multi-dimensional. Its scope, role and functioning differ from one place to another. As such, although there have been numerous researches done in the field, the results have been inclusive as it is a much-debatable topic. U.S Department of Justice (2009) gives that, "Community Policing is a philosophy that promotes organisational strategies, which support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques. To proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder and fear of crime". American criminologist and legal scholar Herman Goldstein even propose for the closer linkage between policing and the community (Swanson, Territo & Taylor, 2017). Anupam Sharma and Razit Sharma (2015) in their book 'Police Administration in India' wrote on the many mishaps that had occurred within the police custody. They wrote that the policing in India had been greatly influenced by colonial administration where the task of the police was to suppress and be violent towards the people rather than helping, aiding and doing actual police functioning (Sharma and Sharma, 2015). In modern day policing it has been realised that there is a need for greater interaction between the people and the police in order to gain the trust of the people and to receive coordination from the people. Community Policing is defined as a system of allocation police officers to particular area so that they become familiar with the local inhabitants. Julio Ribeiro (2019) in his autobiography 'Bullet for Bullet- My Life as A Police Officer' wrote on this area stating that in service to

the people as an IPS office, his most important ideology is that the truth should always be kept first and that the people should always be kept informed on what so ever is going on and also, he stressed on the need to have a greater interaction with the people within the community he serves (Ribeiro. 2019). Based on his writings, one could easily assume the importance he gives to community policing in the discharge his duty and function as a police officer. Vibha Attri (2021) wrote on his article, "How pandemic changed nature of police work, relations with public" the changing nature of policing during the pandemic where intensive research is done on the working of the police during this period and on further research and analysis finds out that the people actually saw a change in the nature of policing (Attri, 2021). This show to a great extent that on trying times, even the nature of work changes for government servants as well. However, there are still records of police abuse and misconduct during this period. SN Shrivastava (2021) in his article, "During Covid, an image makeover opportunity for police", wrote on how the people's perceptive of the police change during the pandemic. He himself is a Commissioner of Police, New Delhi, and has firsthand experience on how the police conduct themselves during the lockdown. He wrote in his article the due to the lockdowns and curfews imposed on many places in the country, people are forced to stay indoors and the police had to give blood, acquire oxygen for citizens in need, etc. They shifted their text book policing work to community policing work (Shrivastava, 2021). Michael D. Reisig (2010) in his journal article, 'Community and Problem Oriented Policing' writes about the evolution of community policing and the different theories surrounding community policing and in particular, the collective efficiency concept which is a branch of social disorganisation theory. Social disorganisation theory can be traced back to the community crime prevention movement. According to him, in this concept, neighbourhood social controls are most effective when trust among area residents is high. Research has shown that collective efficiency is a strong predictor of neighbourhood crime and disorder (Reisig, 2010). This concept goes in hand with the practice of Local Task Force in the state of

Mizoram. Their similarity and suitability lie in the fact that this concept is not restricted to indigenous neighbourhood resources but also draws on services and assistance from public agencies such as the police, to achieve and maintain social order.

From the reviews and other writings, it can be concluded that writings on community police is limited and though several research have been conducted on community policing, the results always ended up inconclusive, subjected to debate, or are limited. Hence further research on community policing is required to have a closer understanding between crimes, disorder, community participation and policing. Furthermore, the difficulty in conducting a thorough and efficient research in community policing is that, its types and forms are many. Its role and function vary from one area to another, so to have a systematic comparison and conclusive result on such dynamic model proof to be a challenge for researchers and scholars. However, it must be stated that, for a Community Policing model as practiced in Mizoram, the theory of Collective Efficiency seems to best suit the model. However, in order to test this theory much more intensive research is required.

### **Objective of the Article**

Community policing is meant to provide an intimate and closer relationship and interaction between the people and the police force. It works in close contact with the people in crime prone areas to minimize crime and disorder as well as to have a closer linkage between the police and the people. As such, there is a need for further in-depth and insightful research in the relationship between community policing and the community. Here are some of the important objectives of the study-

- To analyse the role and function of Local Level Task Force (LLTF) on Covid 19
- To study their merits and demerits
- To evaluate their impact during Covid-19 Pandemic

In order to have a better understanding of the functioning of the Local Level Task Force, it is essential to have a brief insight on the state of

Mizoram. Mizoram is a state in the North-Eastern part of India which received its statehood in 20<sup>th</sup> February 1987<sup>1</sup>, it is a young state with a mere 10, 97,206 (as per the 2011 census)<sup>2</sup> population. Mizoram shares international boundary with Myanmar and Bangladesh and interstate boundary with Assam, Tripura and Manipur. It often shares boundary disputes with the state of Assam as recent as 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 when fires were shot from both sides resulting in the loss of lives and injury on both sides. These border areas are infested with drug trafficking sites and other illegal trade activities. As such, with the coming of the pandemic, besides police taking up border issue duty, there arises a need to increase the strength duty personnel in these interstate border to stop movement of people from both sides to stop the spread of the virus. It is notable to mention here that, with government disruption taking place in the neighbour state of Myanmar, Mizoram became the host for many refugees who have fled their country all the while during this pandemic.

### Role and Functions

The Local Task Force play a huge role in fighting the pandemic in the municipal area of Aizawl even before the first covid case in 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 at present there has been 109972 (as of 8<sup>th</sup> February 2021) covid cases in the Aizawl district alone. The Prime Minister of India announced the first national lockdown 'Janata Curfew' on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, living millions of migrant workers 'Guest Labours' (Pathi, 2021)<sup>3</sup> who fled the urban areas and return to their native states. Many more lockdowns, partial lockdowns and curfews were to follow. With the imposition of the lockdown comes a halt in the economy of the state. As all shops and business are closed down, many people lose their source of income and livelihood. And for a small state like Mizoram where the GSDP of the State is estimated to be <sup>1</sup> 26,502.56 crore during 2019-20 and <sup>1</sup> 31,653.99 crore in 2020-21<sup>4</sup>, where much of the rural population is still dependent on agricultural produce, these lockdowns and curfews soon became lost of means of livelihood. The major role of these Task Force on covid-19 comes into action as the lockdown started. They see to it that the people in their respective

jurisdictions are not starving or are in need by providing food and that shopkeeper and vegetable vendors get to open their shops under their watchful surveillance and also provide financial assistance from money received from generous donors and from the government. The Government of Mizoram has vested in them wide range of autonomy within their respective jurisdiction, from giving movement permission slip, maintaining a covid care centre and community covid care centres, contact tracing, power to give home isolation order, etc. including reporting to the District Magistrate the need for further measure to contain an area which has rapid surge of covid positive cases within a stipulated period of time. On 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2022, the capital city of Aizawl alone has had 8147 active covid-19 cases with cumulative 109972 cases, which means that the positivity rate is 171 per 1000 people and with a death rate of 56 per 100000 person (as per 2011 census)<sup>5</sup>. In order to isolate covid patients from the general masses almost all locality has their own Covid Care Centre (3C) which is aided by the government and Community Covid Care Centre (4C) which is managed by the local people. Here, non-emergent covid cases and asymptomatic patients who are not in position for home isolation are placed here, however it must be noted here that both these places are monitored and supervised by a medical practitioner who provide medical advice when needed and monitor the health of these patients.

Besides these, the Government has three Dedicated Covid Health Centres (hospitals) who take only covid patients at the moment, these patients are usually symptomatic patients in need of special care like oxygen, ventilators, etc. Another noteworthy here is that, in the 3C and 4C, the task of daily duty lies in the hands of the Local Task Force. If the patients are in need of anything, the task force sees to it that it gets to them on time. Besides looking after the covid care centres, the local task force also keeps a close eye on the many people who are in home isolation due to various reasons, they see to it that their needs are also met. Whenever there are persons who have had a close contact with a covid positive patient, and that person requires covid test, the local task force make necessary arrangements for them.

During the many lockdowns and curfews that had taken place since the beginning of the pandemic, this task force has been active in full swing, on duty day and night without any remuneration or pay from the government. As stated earlier, the Government has vested in them wide range of power and responsible, from the authority to give permission for the movement of people and vehicles in and outside their jurisdiction, to imposing fines and other punishment upon person/persons who does not follow the protocol given by the government. All in all, they perform all the duties of a police, medical personnel, care-giver, a local head, etc. Having played such a vital role in fighting the pandemic and serving as one of the main agencies to look after the people, the Government of Mizoram too realise the enormous role they play so in-return, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Mizoram announced that if any member of the Local Task Force fall victim to the virus, then all the medical expenses will be paid by the Government. In order for these to happen, every task force member has been registered into the system and as of present more than 2500 members has been registered. In addition, as per the Government of Mizoram Notification No.G.17011/14/2016-F.AP in pursuance of the decisions made by the Council of Minister, the Government of Mizoram will provide a payment of Rs. 20 lakhs to Local Level Task Force/ Village Level Task Force volunteer for the loss of life due to Covid-19, under the scheme Ex-Gratia Lump Sum Compensation Scheme (LLTF/VLTF COVID-19 SCHEME).<sup>6</sup> This is an applaudable initiation on the part of the state government in times of hardship where the people are in desperate need of a moral boost, which these acts truly is, it shows how much the government appreciate all the hard work and dedication they put in and recognise all the efforts they have given toward the need of the people. It puts them and recognises them at par with the medical front line workers.

### **Merits and Demerits**

The Local Level Task Force has almost complete autonomy with little government intervention

in the administration within their respective jurisdiction. This is both a blessing and a curse. It enables them to formulate their own rules and regulations to best suit their area/jurisdiction, one locality may be more adhere to larger rules and regulations as compared to another locality in terms of movement of people, contact tracing, home isolation procedures etc. As such, it has brought about misunderstanding and even to a point of physical altercation with the local people in certain reason arising from a dispute. Having been bestowed with such power and authority, without the necessary guidelines to limit those powers and prevent misuse of power, something like this was bound to happen. This has put a strain and a black spot on the already good name of the Local Level Task Force. With such power and the state police department facing shortage of personnel to put on patrol duty in each and every locality, the task then again falls on the shoulders of the LLTF. This can lead of a feeling of being and acting like actual police personnel and misuse and take advantage of their powers. However, it much be noted here that such incidents are rare and are often quickly resolved. In contrary, this much autonomy without clear cut rules and regulations to prevent misconduct also cause a dilemma for the LLTF as it becomes difficult for them to distinguish their power, responsibility and the areas which were to be left in the hands of the government authority. Take for instance, during the covid lockdown, since there are lesser movement of people and police duty, it has given opportunity for drug peddlers to carry on their illegal activities in the absence of police authority, this is a dilemma on the part of the LLTF in a way that the movement of such persons such be prohibited and put to police custody, but since they are on covid-19 duty, the question comes to play if it is in their area of responsibility. As such, as of present, it seems the pandemic is not going away anytime soon, and that the role of the LLTF is still to be in play in the months to come, therefore, there is a need to set proper rules and regulation on the power and authority of the LLTF for future reference.

### **Evaluation**

The distinct model of Community Policing as applied and practiced in Mizoram is unique in its own

way. It follows to a large extent the 'Collective Efficacy' theory as put forward by Albert Bandura, a psychologist at Stanford University in the 1970's. The idea is that when a group of people in a community believe that their collective effort can lead to a smaller number of crimes in the area. Such is the case in Mizoram where Local Level Task Force on Covid-19, where a group of individual form a voluntary body to help the people in the community in its fight against covid-19 and to ensure that the Government's protocols are being followed in their respective jurisdiction all around Mizoram. Where Local Level Task Force is not present, there is Village Level Task Force in the rural areas. They perform all the duties as the Local Level Task Force plus for villages with bordering other states, they are on border duty as both as duty on covid as well as on narcotic duties. They ensure that the financial incentives received from the government as well as other donations reach the people who truly need them so that there is no corruption or misappropriation of funds. They make sure that the spread of the virus is swiftly contained in areas where that are high positivity rate. Keeping in mind that these are voluntary body without are financial remuneration from the state government. They see to it that the needs of the people are quickly met. As stated earlier, though there is a need for their regulation to certain extent, the role and function that they do play during this pandemic for the people of the state is truly commendable.

## Conclusion

The Task Force on Covid-19 are essential elements in the governments and the people's fight against the pandemic. They gave a new meaning to the concept of Community Policing. They ensure that the people receive proper care in trying times. They

are knights in shining armour when the government is desperately trying to keep up with the ever-spreading covid-19. They perform the duty of a police officer, medical personnel, a local representative, protector and provider to the people. Such a body of person are rare to be found in any place in the world. However, being a powerful body as well with wide range of functions, there is a must and a need to provide a regulation to check and regulate their functioning as several instances of misconduct and misuse of authority has been reported occasionally. When the entire state is crumbling with shortage of food supply and other necessity, they provide. They provide aid to the government when many police personnel were deployed to its border due to border conflict with its neighbouring state of Assam. And in addition, since many of the police personnel were deployed on duty in and outside the state, many of them fall ill to the virus, leaving many of the police personnel on medical leave, and in a state where there is insufficiency of police personnel even before the pandemic and border issue, there was bigger insufficiency problem now. The Local Task Force on Covid-19 came to the rescue, they aided the over burden police force who were on night patrol duties since the beginning of the pandemic with only 2/3 personnel deployed for duty in the various locality in the state capital of Aizawl. Furthermore, it is important to mention here that, though the state medical teams with doctor, nurses and other primary health care workers performed a splendid and outstanding work in taking care of the covid patients, many of their works would not have been possible without the help of these Local Task Force who gather these patients for their samples to be collected, take care of them in 4Cs, look after those in home isolation, etc. They are truly 'Knights in Shining Armour' for the Government of Mizoram and the people of the state.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> For further read: <https://mizoram.nic.in/about/history.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2020

<sup>3</sup> A concept coined by Prof. Srinibas Pathi to indicated the labour forces who come together to a particular area in search of work leaving their original place of residing.



- <sup>4</sup> Macro-Economic Framework Statement, Government of Mizoram 2021-2022
- <sup>5</sup> Data as available at Department of I&PR, Government of Mizoram, 2021.
- <sup>6</sup> Data as available at Finance Department, Government of Mizoram, 2021.

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## Urban Governance Index

Hilda Lalremtluangi\*  
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### ABSTRACT

*Governance in simple terms means an act or process of overseeing the control and direction of something such as a country or organization. It deals with the structure and processes that are designed to ensure accountability, transparency, responsiveness, rule of law, stability, equity and inclusiveness, empowerment, and broad-based participation which may be represented with the norms, values and game applied to the management of the public affairs. Governance is not a single activity but rather a system and a process. India is a densely populated country. Despite heavily populated, throughout the years India has gone through many challenges and has survived countless of times. In the past, urbanisation and its associated challenges required low priority in national political discourse. The urban areas have been ushering in rural migrations in search of better livelihoods, employments and other factors. This has created a need for modern solutions with more advanced and fitting features to run the urban governance whilst adopting new electronics and information brought by modernization. The introduction of Urban Governance Index has paved a more transparent and accountable government for the local and grassroot democracy. As the urban governance index use has grown, there are yet little writings on its topic. This article highlights a brief look on the meaning, concept and aims of Urban Governance and Urban Governance Index (UGI). It also shows the latest UGI across the states of India given by a non-partisan organisation.*

**Keywords:** *Urban governance, urban governance index, local self-government, 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Act, empowerment, urban local bodies, PrajaFoundation Mumbai 2022*

### 1. Introduction

Urban Governance refers to the functioning and working of a government (local, regional and national) and stakeholders on how they decide to plan, finance and manage the towns and cities. Urban governance involves a lot of actors and institutions playing major roles in contributing to the welfare and progression

of the urban areas. The government is primarily concerned with the processes organized in the urban area as well as the relationship between the state agencies and civil societies (UNESCAP & UN-Habitat, 2010: 211–12; 2015). Urban Governance is part of the State list under the Constitution so the administrative framework and regulation of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) varies across different states in the country. The main aim is to provide a stable and proper working environment for the urban population while seeing over the urban institutions and organizations with the government's main role is

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decision making and implementation processes. Hence, there is a sense of political activity influencing the activities and decisions made towards uplifting the urban poor and weaker sections of the society. It also oversees the economic and social factors, institutions and relationships including labour markets, goods and services; household, kin and social relationships; and basic infrastructure, land, services and public safety.

Urban governance is thus concerned with the following

- urban politics
- democratic representation
- urban sustainability
- economic competitiveness
- privatisation
- social control(Raco, 2020)<sup>1</sup>

Although the city government is considered to be the largest and most visible urban governance actor, yet most of its contribution has little effect on the urban poor since the livelihoods of urban poor is affected from outside the controls of the city administrations like the markets and private business, central state agencies and collective voluntary action of civil society. These are the primary factors that determine the daily livelihoods and experiences of the urban dwellers at a more impactful rate(GSDRC, 2022)<sup>2</sup>. Thus, urban governance plays a crucial role in structuring the physical and social character of urban regions, influencing the quantity and quality of local services and efficiency of delivery, determining the sharing of costs and distributing resources among different groups that affects residents' ability to access local government and engage in decision-making, influence local government accountability and responsiveness to citizen demands.(Singh, 2022)<sup>3</sup>

Ever since independence, India has been growing at a rapid pace. There are now 28 states and nine Union Territories (Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act 2019)<sup>4</sup>, 4000 cities and towns in India where around 300 cities have population over 1, 00,000 and seven cities have more than 3 million. Greater Mumbai continues to be the most populated

city (Non Resident Indians Online, 2022)<sup>5</sup>. From this, there is clear evidence of growth in different areas. The population of India has increased tremendously particularly with development and advancements, it has attracted an increase in rural migration to urban areas, creating a vast number of challenges for the government. Therefore, the main aim is to deliver better quality livelihoods and lifestyles for the urban residents and to generate an investment environment suitable to sustain the rapid growth.

There is a need for planned urbanization for industry and service sectors and also for rural rejuvenation as the lack of empowerment of cities constraints their ability to implement the urban development agendas. An article from Urban governance in India by Isher Judge Ahluwalia emphasizes the importance of bridging the urban infrastructure deficit and argues that institutional reforms are crucial for reaching out to the private sector for sharing the financing burden and ensuring that it results in improved service delivery. It also highlights experiences of the national urban missions on their importance in strengthening reforms and their capacity for planning and management at the local level. Though the Government of India plays a crucial role, the state governments will be the principal players.

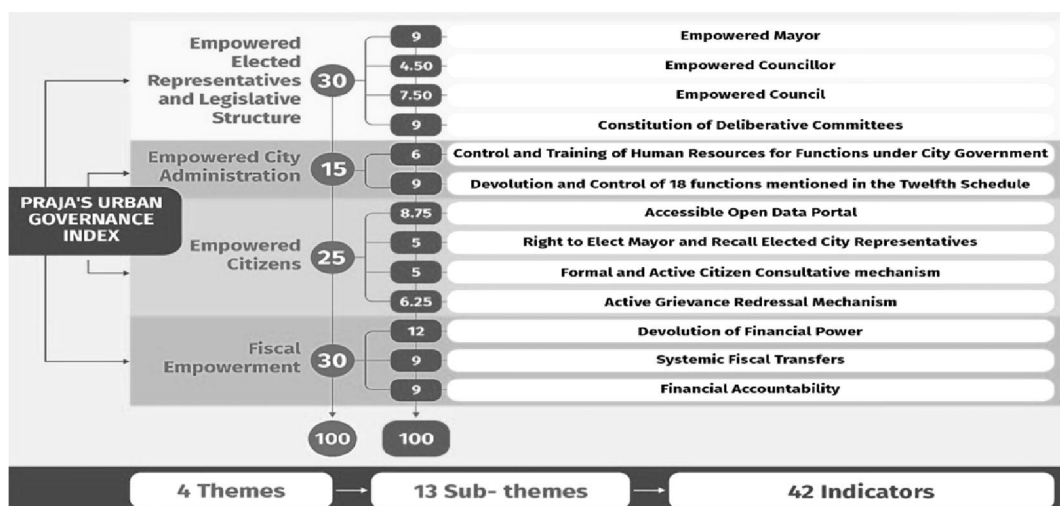
## 2. Urban Governance Index

The Urban Governance Index is an advocacy and capacity-building tool to assist cities in improving local governance of cities and countries in monitoring the quality of urban governance. It is envisaged to be a measure of good governance and inclusiveness in cities which is enforced by the State Government. It ranks cities to show their standpoints in terms of empowered grassroot democracy and local self-government (UN HABITAT, 2022). <sup>6</sup> As a whole, Urban Governance Index (UGI) is primarily a mapping technique stretching across cities, based on themes in empowering democracy and accountability and monitoring the implementations of urban policies regarding with urban governance for better engagements between the citizens and governments.

The UGI has four themes which are as follows:

- i) Empowered city elected representatives and legislative structure
- ii) Empowered city administration
- iii) Empowered citizens
- iv) Fiscal empowerment

These themes act as bedrocks to achieving empowered urban governance. They are significant to enable the functioning of democratic and empowered urban governance. These themes are further divided into 13 sub-themes and comprise a total of 42 indicators.



Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

The primary focus is on

- The structural aspects of urban governance entailing the decentralisation of powers from state government to city government and
- The mechanisms of accountability of the city government to the citizens of the city.

The source for the indicators range from primary data through interviews with stakeholders and secondary sources through relevant official documents. The main idea for establishing a UGI is to understand the extent of decentralisation of urban governance framework and devolution of powers to the city governments of the states in the country. The report then distinctly highlights the gaps found and the necessary reforms to improve with respect to each state as well as evaluating their urban governance systems, identifying the required reforms and actions to improve the corrupted systems prevalent. As stated above the many actors including administrators, stakeholders from civil societies, academia, experts from the sector, media and most importantly the elected representatives play their roles and can access the index reports to monitor

implementations, and can further collaborate towards advocating for reform actions included in the UGI for their respective state.

### 3. Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

The Praja Foundation which is a non-partisan organisation established in the year 1997 has since been advancing its motives in bringing about an accountable governance throughout the country. Prajahas noticed the crumbling urban governance and urban administration that prevails in India. Thus, it has evolved due to the growing concern of urban issues and lack of proper urban governance service deliveries brought about by the shortfall of grassroots democracy where the local elected representatives local governments are not empowered enough or unresponsive towards the citizens. Praja undertakes data driven research in identifying the problems and challenges and suggesting the best practical solutions. It oversees the impact and extent on the implementation of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment. (Praja Foundation, 2022)<sup>77</sup>. Their vision is to improve quality of life for all and their mission is to simplify

people's lives, create tools for better governance and make democracy work.

In the past, PrajaFoundation Mumbai 2022 has teamed up the Mumbai Corporation of Mumbai regarding its Citizen Charter to revamp their Citizens Complaint Grievances Mechanism. They have also taken up many activities regarding the urban governance index across the states of India.

**Table 1: Below are the lists of states and cities in India covered under the Urban Governance Index**

Sl. No	States	Cities
1	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
2	Arunachal Pradesh	Itanagar
3	Assam	Guwahati
4	Bihar	Patna
5	Chhatisgarh	Rajpur
6	Delhi	South Delhi Municipal Corporation
7	Goa	Panaji
8	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
9	Haryana	Gurugram
10	Himachal Pradesh	Dharamshala
11	Jharkhand	Ranchi
12	Karantaka	Mangaluru
13	Kerala	Kochi
14	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
15	Maharashtra	Mumbai
16	Manipur	Imphal
17	Meghalaya	Shillong
18	Mizoram	Aizawl
19	Nagaland	Kohima
20	Odisha	Bhubaneshwar
21	Punjab	Amritsar
22	Rajasthan	Udaipur
23	Sikkim	Gangtok
24	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
25	Telanaga	Warangal
26	Tripura	Agartala
27	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
28	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
29	West Bengal	Kolkata

Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022 has taken up research in many fields based on the indicative UGI

themes. These data can help understand better the current scenario of our local governance and the extent to how true empowerment lies with the actors and stakeholders. It also shows the accountability that lies with them and implementation of the urban policies. One of the recent report published by Praja Foundation stated that Odisha has topped all Indian states in urban governance with a score of 56% and Maharashtra coming in second with a score of 55% while Nagaland ranked at the bottom with 13%. The study for this UGI spanned for three years i.e 2017-2020 in 40 cities across 28 states including the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi. The ranking are relative ranking but if taken a closer look, none of the states have scored more than 60% indicating that there is a need for urban governance reforms and empowerment of city governments across India.

**Table 2: Top 5 and Mizoram Urban Governance Index Ranking 2020**

Rank	States	Score
1	Odisha	56.86
2	Maharashtra	55.15
3	Chattisgarh	49.68
4	Kerala	48.77
5	Madhya Pradesh	45.94
8	Mizoram	38.85

Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

According to the Theme 1 of the UGI indicator 'Empowered City Elected Representatives and Legislative Structure', Kerala tops with 18.63 score out of 30 and Mizoram ranking in 8<sup>th</sup> with 13.53 score.

**Table 3: Top 5 and Mizoram Ranking in Empowered City Elected Representatives and Legislative Structure out of 30**

Rank	States	Score
1	Kerala	18.63
2	Chhattisgarh	18.03
3	Odisha	15.83
4	Tripura	15.11
5	Madhya Pradesh	14.66
8	Mizoram	13.53

Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

According to the Theme 2 of the UGI indicator 'Empowered city administration' Tamil Nadu tops with 5.83 score out of 15 and Mizoram ranks 9<sup>th</sup> with score of 9.73.

**Table 4: Top 5 and Mizoram Ranking in Empowered City Administration out of 15**

Rank	States	Score
1	Tamil Nadu	5.83
2	Maharashtra	5.4
3	Odisha	5.1
4	Arunachal Pradesh	4
5	Goa	4.82
9	Mizoram	3.73

Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

According to the Theme 3 of the UGI indicator 'Empowered citizens' Odisha tops again with a score of 19.50 out of 25 and Mizoram ranks at 8<sup>th</sup> with a score of 5.75.

**Table 5: Top 5 and Mizoram Ranking in Empowered Citizens out of 25**

Rank	States	Score
1	Odisha	19.50
2	Maharashtra	17
3	Chhattisgarh	16.5
4	Madhya Pradesh	8.25
4	Gujarat	8.25
8	Mizoram	5.75

Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

According to the Theme 4 of the UGI indicator 'Fiscal empowerment' Maharashtra and Kerala shares the highest score of 21.15 out of 30 and Mizoram ranking in 8<sup>th</sup> with a score of 15.84.

**Table 6: Top 5 and Mizoram Ranking in Fiscal Empowerment out of 30**

Rank	States	Score
1	Maharashtra	21.15
1	Kerala	21.15
2	Madhya Pradesh	18.99
3	Tamil Nadu	18.54
4	Gujarat	16.92
8	Mizoram	15.84

Source: Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022

#### 4. Evaluation

From the above tables, areas at large still require heavy empowerment and reforms for more effective urban governance. Empowerment is a big term that the Government of India (GOI) uses in order to develop the urban areas and the grassroots democracy. Despite the GOI introducing the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 that provided for the establishment of urban local bodies (ULBs) (including municipal corporations) as institutions of local self-government yet it still faces challenges as they are not fully devolved with autonomous powers in spite of the inclusion of devolution of powers from the state governments to the ULBs. Even though the GOI has adopted many urban governance schemes, no state has devolved all the municipal functions and municipal bodies or ULBs remain dependent on the state government for its funds and decisions in many areas. None of the states have provisions for the City Government budget to include budget allocated by parastatal agencies in the city. There are still two states that do not have the provision for conducting external audit and only nine states have mandatory provisions to publish the budget and accounts in public domain. Hence, Indian ULBs have the weakest fiscal autonomy and limited devolution of Revenue. Praja Foundation Mumbai 2022 has also analysed that there are no states providing training for Councillors, no state having independent authority to frame bye-laws, no states having privileges and immunity against all statements made/acts done in the course of their duty. The Mayor is also granted little executive authority over commissioner and only Kerala has provision for Mayor to write annual confidential report of the commissioner. Only a few city administrations have the authority of sanctioning recruitments and only two states have provisions for conducting trainings for some municipal officials. There is also a poor relation between the city governments and the citizens regarding citizen empowerment as only three cities have established a data portal, direct election of mayor prevails only in five city governments, only 4 city governments have published Minutes of their Meetings in their websites and no state has provision of recalling a Councillor.

## 5. Conclusion

It is inevitable that rural migrations will cease as it is a natural phenomenon due to many better reasons like livelihoods, opportunities, employments etc. India has for a long time emphasized particularly on the challenges and development of the rural areas and neglected on supervising the urban areas and its government especially in a modern world like today. It is inevitable. The big challenge that policy planners and makers of India still face to this day is how to improve the quality of life in urban areas so that they may continue to accommodate future growth while

ensuring preferable and healthier living conditions for the citizens and collaborative development with the rural sector. It is eminent that the top tier government recognises the three major hurdles of local governance which are unempowered federal framework of the third tiered government that has been amended, the missing link in the institutional framework for metropolitan planning and governance and a political system that is heavily biased toward the rural sector. Empowerment is key and it is high time that the state government devolves the designated authority to the ULBs to ensure faster and an all round development.

## Endnotes:

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## Implementation of Rural Housing Programme in Mizoram

Khuangthansanga Pakhuangte\*

A. Muthulakshmi\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*The Government of Mizoram has implemented the Rural Housing Programme of Indira Awaas Yojana since 1985. At present, the Rural Housing Programme of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin, Chief Minister's Rural Housing Programme and Rural Housing Scheme (Provision of G.I Sheet) was implemented in the state of Mizoram. But, the major drawback of the implementation of these programmes in Mizoram is lately released of the Central fund and problems of State share. Moreover, the convergence of central as well as state schemes is impractical. Because, the administrative structure is not sufficient to accommodate convergence theory for the state. There is no planning body at the District and Block level nor have independent evaluation and monitoring agency. With this backdrop, the present paper is an attempt to analyze how this programme has been implemented and what are the issues and challenges faced by the implementing agency. Accordingly this paper tries to recommend that the state government should release funds immediately after the release of the central fund and also provide state matching share promptly. The state government should be constituted District and Block level Planning Committee/ Board for Planning, monitoring and evaluation of all developmental programmes within the state.*

**Keywords:** Rural, housing, village, scheme, Programme, government, Yojana, beneficiaries etc.

### Introduction

Hierarchies of three human basic needs are food, cloth and shelter. The shelter is a fundamental requirement for human survival as well as for the dignity of life. House is a dwelling place where we live during our lifetime. It provides security for the owner supports livelihoods, psychological satisfaction, promotes self-esteem, confidence, and enables access to different facilities based on its location. The owner of a dwelling house gives a sense of ownership and identity. It contributes social position of the owner's

and economic development. A good home would be in harmony with the natural environment and protect the household from extreme weather, provide warmth in winter, cool in summer and dry during the rainy seasons. It is a place for taking rest and carrying on their occupational activities. It is one of the important indicators of quality of life. A House gives shelter for human beings as well as animals. It is a profound influence on human health, education, social behavior, employment, productivity, and awareness on development opportunity, safety and general wellbeing.

Rural housing is one of the subjects of state government as well as the Panchayati Raj Institutions

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under clause (3) of Article 246 and 243G of the Constitution of India. India is a signatory of the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlement in June 1996 recognizing thereby the need for access to safe and healthy shelter and basic services, essential for a person's physical, psychological, social and economic wellbeing. The object of the habitat approach is to achieve adequate shelter for all, especially the deprived urban and rural poor through an enabling approach leading to development and improvements in access to basic facilities like infrastructure, safe drinking water, sanitation and electricity etc.

A housing programme for the rehabilitation of refugees was taken up immediately after the partition of India. In 1957, as a part of the Community Development Movement (CDM), a Village Housing Programme (VHP) was introduced by providing loans to individuals and cooperatives up to Rs. 5,000/- per unit. The Government of India introduced a new housing programme called House Sites-cum-Construction Assistance Scheme (HSCAS) which began as a central scheme on 1.4.1974. The construction of houses was permitted under the wage employment programmes of the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) in 1980 and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) in 1983. However, no common norms have been prescribed. It was in June 1985 that Indira Awaas Yojana was launched as a sub-scheme of RLEGP by earmarking a part of the fund for the construction of houses for SCs/STs and freed bonded labourers. When Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was launched in April 1985, 6 percent of the funds was allocated for housing for the Scheduled Castes (SCs)/ Schedule Tribes (STs) and freed bonded labourers. Indira Awaas Yojana was made an independent scheme by the Ministry of Rural Development from 1<sup>st</sup> January 1996 as a part of the larger strategy of rural poverty eradication and to provide the poor households to enable them to access different rural development programmes. The Programme has been renamed Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana -Gramin on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 till date.

Housing shortage in India was calculated by a Working Group on Rural Housing for the 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year plan works out to be 474.3 lakh houses during the period 2007-2012. The calculation method which was adopted by the Working Group has been calculated the rural housing shortage may be 436.7 lakhs during 2016-2017. However, the target number of houses to be constructed under PMAY-G is 295.0 lakhs in rural areas that are houseless or living in kutcha/dilapidated houses and enable the construction of quality houses by the beneficiaries using local materials, designs and trained masons before the year 2021-22.

At present, there are 11 Districts in Mizoram viz. Kolasib, Mamit, Aizawl, Saitual, Khawzawl, Champhai, Serchhip, Hnahthial, Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Siaha. However, the newly created Districts are not fully functioning at the time of this present study; therefore, summarize eight districts in this study. Village Councils functioning at the grassroots level is elected by adult franchises. A district is headed by a Deputy Commissioner who is overall in charge of administration and performs the triple function of Deputy Commissioner, District Magistrate and the Collector. Mizoram has a total of 23 sub-divisions, which are further divided into 26 Rural Development Blocks. There are 809 Nos. of Village Councils including three Autonomous Districts.

There is no provision of state own fund New Construction of Rural Housing Schemes in Mizoram before New Economic Policy (Comprehensive Growth Strategy for Mizoram) implemented by the Government of Mizoram in March 2016. However, the Rural Housing Support (GI Sheet) Scheme was implemented in 2009-10 is to provide GI sheet roof only to the beneficiaries. A Central scheme of Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) under sub-Component of Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) was the first Rural Housing Programme implemented in Mizoram since 1985. Department of Rural Development, Government of Mizoram is the Nodal Agency for implementing Rural Housing Programmes in Mizoram. In 2017, the Department of Rural Development bags 'Gold Award' from the Government of India for its impressive performance on IAY/PMAY -Gramin.

The Government of Mizoram has implemented the Rural Housing Programme of Indira Awaas Yojana since 1985. At present, the Rural Housing Programmes of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin, Chief Minister's Rural Housing Programme and Rural Housing Scheme (Provision of G.I Sheet) was implemented in Mizoram. The major drawback of the implementation of these programmes in Mizoram is lately released of Central fund and problems of State share. Moreover, the convergence of central as well as state schemes is impractical. Because the administrative structure is not sufficient to accommodate convergence theory for the state. There is no planning body at the District and Block level nor have independent evaluation and monitoring agency. With this backdrop, the present paper is an attempt to analyze how this programme has been implemented and what are the issues and challenges faced by the implementing agency. Based on these, the following objectives were formulated which are as follows:

### Objectives of the study

- (i) To study the implementation process of rural housing and also to study the role of officials, elected representatives and Non-Governmental organizations in solving the problems of rural housing in Mizoram and
- (ii) To study the problems, issues and challenges while implementing rural housing programmes in Mizoram and to find out remedial measures for further improvement.

### Research Questions

- i. What is the implementation process of rural housing programmes in the state of Mizoram?
- ii. What are the roles played by officials, elected representatives and NGO's in the implementation of the rural housing programmes in Mizoram?
- iii. What is the status of fund flow in the process of implementation of rural housing programmes in Mizoram?

- iv. What are the problems, issues and challenges faced by the implementing agencies while implementing rural housing programmes in Mizoram?

### Methodology

The present study is descriptive design and cross sectional in nature. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used for the present study. Mixed method approach was adopted to collect data from the key officials as well as from the selected beneficiaries at the field level. Focus Group Discussion was conducted for village council members to get information within short period of time. Personal interviews were conducted with state officials in the Secretariat and Directorate of Rural Development Department, Block Development Officers of Rural Development Department, officials from District Rural Development Agency and leaders from Non-Governmental Organizations within the selected districts were selected for the present study. Questionnaire also was distributed to the officials to get information. Primary sources of data were collected through the use of interview-schedule conducted during the year 2019 – 2021.

### Multi –phase Sampling Method

Mizoram is divided into eight districts. Out of eight districts four districts such as Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Serchhip and Kolasib were selected on the basis of the performance (Highest, middle and low performance districts) of the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) in Mizoram. Out of four (4) selected districts, two (2) blocks were selected in each district that is Bilkhawthlir and Thingdawl block in Kolasib District, East Lungdai and Serchhip block in Serchhip District, Lungsen and Hnahthial block in Lunglei District, Lawngtlai and Sangau block in Lawngtlai District. Below table 1 indicates the performance of PMAY-G during 2015-16 which the present study was selected to conduct interview from the study area. Secondary data were collected from published and unpublished documents of the Central and State Governments, Books, Magazines, Articles, Journals and Internet sources.

## **Implementing Agency of Rural Housing in Mizoram**

The Rural Development Department, Government of Mizoram is the implementing agency of Rural Housing Programmes in Mizoram. Rural Development implies both economic betterment of the people and ensuring a better quality of life. India lives in its villages and, therefore, the development of rural areas has been among the central concerns of development planning since its inception. In the 2011 Census, there are 5, 29,037 people living in a rural area that is 48.49 percent of the total population. There are as many as 830 villages and out of which, 704 villages are inhabited and 126 villages are uninhabited. There are 23 Notified Towns and it increased by one after the 2021 Census. The endeavour of the Rural Development Department has been apart from promoting infrastructure for improving productivity and social development in rural areas, to reach out by a frontal attack on rural poverty through programmes of asset creations, income generation, self-employment, rural housing and wage employment.

The origin of the Rural Development Department in Mizoram may be traced back to when India attained independence in 1947. The Community Development Programme in the First Five Year Plan was initiated which culminated in the birth of Community Development Blocks in 1953 all over the country. Several Community Development (C.D) Blocks also came into existence in Mizoram, then known as the Lushai Hills District which was a part of the State of Assam. Each C.D Block was headed by a Project Executive Officer. These C.D Blocks were engaged in a wide range of developmental works and the 'Community Development' programmes envisaged development in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, public health, social education, cooperation, communications etc. in selected areas. During that time, seven C.D blocks were established. In 1972, Mizoram attained the status of Union Territory; thirteen Community Development Blocks were again created. During the time of Union Territory in Mizoram, many works under Community Development Project were re-

allocated amongst newly created Departments. Community Development Project, then under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner of Aizawl. Lunglei and Saiha District, the C.D Blocks were under the administrative control at the Union Territory Headquarters at Aizawl, a new Directorate of Community Development. The Community Development was changed to Rural Development Department in 1983-1984. Mizoram attained Statehood in 1986; six additional Rural Development Blocks were created. At present, there are 26 (twenty-six) Rural Development Blocks in Mizoram.

## **Implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin in Mizoram**

The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana–Gramin was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. At the time of the implementation process, there are in-complete 57 houses and incomplete houses that can be completed are 28 Houses in Mizoram from Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) in 2016. The reason for incomplete houses is that they are ongoing houses; the order sheet cannot be generated as the scheme cannot be selected in the order sheet generation tab in the AwaasSoft, online reporting software. There is also Rs. 21.75 lakhs available balance from the IAY scheme sanction by the Ministry which was carried over for PMAY-G.

The key features of the PMAY-G are (i) to provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all houseless households and households living in kutcha and dilapidated houses in rural areas by 2022. (ii) It has to be providing enhancement of unit assistance Rs. 1.20 lakh in plains area and 1.30 lakh in hilly states, difficult areas. (iii) The cost of unit (house) assistance is to be shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North-Eastern and 3 Himalayan States. (iv) Provision of assistance @ Rs.12, 000/- per unit for toilets through convergence with Swachh Bharat Mission - Gramin (SBM-G), MGNREGS or any other dedicated source of funding. (V) Provision of 90/95 person-days of un-skilled labour wage under MGNREGA for construction of the house, over and above the unit assistance. (vi).The beneficiary can be avail loan of up to Rs.70, 000/- from Financial

Institutions. (vii) The minimum unit (house) size is 25 sq.m including a dedicated area for hygienic cooking. (viii) Identification and selection of beneficiaries will be based on the housing deficiency and other social deprivation parameters in SECC-2011 data and verified by the Gram Sabhas. (ix) Setting up of Agency at the Central and state level to provide technical support in achieving the target set under the programme. The beneficiaries are advised to hire trained persons for the construction of the house. (x) Convergence with other Government schemes for

the provision of basic amenities viz., toilet, drinking water, electricity, clean and efficient cooking fuel, treatment of social and liquid waste etc. (xi) Payments to the beneficiary should be made electronically to their Bank/Post office accounts that are linked to Aadhaar with consent. (xii) The beneficiaries are advised to use local materials, appropriate designs and trained masons when constructing quality houses by the beneficiaries. (xiv) Adoption of saturation approach using Gram Panchayat, Block or District as a unit, wherever possible.

**Table 1 Performance of PMAY-G in Mizoram since inception till date (2021)**

Sl. No.	Year	Target		Achievement		Remarks
		Phy.	Fin.	Phy.	Fin.	
1	2015-16	0	0	0	0	PMAY-G has not yet commenced.
2	2016-17	4806	6497.4	4431	6497.4	
3	2017-18	1794	1795.8	429	1794.4	
4	2018-19	0	0	0	0	MoRD does not allocate the target to the State.
5	2019-20	1500	0	0	0	Fund for the respective FY not sanctioned by the MoRD
6	2020-21	5432	0	0	0	Fund for the respective FY not sanctioned by the MoRD

**Source:** Rural Development Department, Government of Mizoram Dt. 11.8.2021.

### Chief Minister Rural Housing Scheme

The above table 1 shows that there are many States that own housing programmes in India, Karnataka implementing Chief Minister's Model Town Housing Program. The Government of Mizoram is implementing Chief Minister Rural Housing Scheme during 2016-19. The Rural Development Department is the implementing agency

under New Economic Policy which was sanctioned on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016. The below table 2 shows that Chief Minister Rural Housing Scheme (CM's RHS) was first introduced in three Pilot Districts namely, Serchhip, Lawngtlai and Saiha District with the allocation of beneficiaries. Fund amounting to Rs. 600.00 lakh was allocated for implementation of the scheme as shown in the below table 2.

**Table 2 Allocation of Fund for CMRHS during 2016-17**

Sl. No.	Name of District	Allocated fund	No. of Beneficiary
1	Serchhip	100 lakhs	200
2	Lawngtlai	250 lakhs	500
3	Saiha	250 lakhs	500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>600 lakhs</b>	<b>1200</b>

**Source:** Achievement under NEDP. R.D Department.

The below table 3 indicates that the scheme has been extended to the remaining 5 (five) districts in Mizoram Viz- Aizawl, Kolasib, Lunglei, Champhai and Mamit in Financial Year 2017-2018.

Fund amounting to Rs. 1000.00 lakhs was proposed for implementation of the Scheme as tabulated District-wise/Block-wise allocation below:

**Table 3 Allocation of Fund for CMRHS during 2017-18**

S/No.	Name of District	Unit	Rate	Amount released (in lakh)
1	Aizawl	499	Rs.50,000/-	249.5
2	Lunglei	619	Rs.50,000/-	309.5
3	Champhai	415	Rs.50,000/-	207.5
4	Kolasib	167	Rs.50,000/-	83.5
5	Mamit	300	Rs.50,000/-	150
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>1000</b>

**Source:** Achievement under NEDP. R.D Department

The below table 4 shows that again in 2018–19, the Scheme has been continuing and the total Fund allocation is Rs. 1,000.00 lakhs for the construction

of 1970 houses. In this allocation, Rs. 15 lakhs were used for monitoring the cost of the project. The available fund for construction is Rs. 985 lakhs.

**Table 4 Allocation of Fund for CMRHS during 2018-19**

S/No.	Name of District	Allocation of housing unit		Allocation for 1.5% monitoring fund	Total fund allocation
		No. of Beneficiaries	Amount (in lakh)		
1	AIZAWL	315	157.5	1.6	159.1
2	CHAMPHAI	256	128	1.4	129.4
3	LUNGLEI	374	187	2	189
4	KOLASIB	100	50	0.6	50.6
5	MAMIT	177	88.5	1	89.5
6	SIAHA	315	157.5	1.6	159.1
7	LAWNGTLAI	315	157.5	1.6	159.1
8	SERCHHIP	118	59	0.7	59.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1970</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>995.5</b>
9	State	-	-	4.5	4.5
<b>G. TOTAL</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Source:** Achievement under NEDP. R.D Department during 2019-2020.

The above table 4 that there is no fund available from 2019 onward due to the present government discontinuing the scheme to date. The main objective of this Scheme is to bring about a qualitative improvement in the housing status of the poor by providing them with a housing grant. This will result in achieving the status of a “Shelterless and Kutcha House Free State”. A Kutcha house has a roof made up of Chitra, Siru, Tarpaulin or Drum sheet etc. that will be a change in semi-pucca or pucca house. The Chief Minister Rural Housing

Scheme will be limited to the economically weaker families who do not have proper shelter and those that are not received under the then Indira Awaas Yojana/Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (G) or any other Rural Housing Scheme.

The total cost of the construction of a house under the Chief Minister Rural Housing Scheme is Rs. 50,000/- for one unit. After utilizing 60percent of the available funds, the concerned Block can request for release of the next installment. This request has to be accompanied by a Utilization Certificate and

Monthly Progress Report. There is an Implementation and Monitoring Committee at the Village level headed by the concerned Village Council President, another member was selected among the Political party and Civil Society Organization within the village. At the Block level, the Block Rural Housing Construction Committee (BRHC) was constituted under the chairmanship of the concerned Block Development Officer other members who were drawn from recognized NGO's, Line Department officials, Engineers and selected Village Council President within the Block. At the District level, District Level Selection Committee under the Deputy Commissioner will approve the eligible list of beneficiaries.

### Rural Housing Scheme (GI SHEET)

The below table 5 shows that the Government of Mizoram, Rural Development Department is implementing Rural Housing Scheme to provide Galvanized Corrugated Iron Sheet (Rangva) to those who cannot provide Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) and Chief Minister Rural Housing Programme. The scheme is a State own housing programme to provide roof of the house only. There was no assistance for constructions materials to the beneficiaries. The selected beneficiaries were provided 4 bundles of GI sheets that were selected by the Block Development Officers after the recommendation of the state government. The scheme has been implemented during the 2009 – 2019 period only.

**Table 5 Physical and Financial achievement of Rural Housing Scheme (GI Sheet)**

Sl. No	Year	Budgetary allocation (Rs. in lakhs)	Purchase of GCI sheets		Transportation charges (Rs. in lakhs)	Remarks
			Quantity (in bundles)	Amount		
1	2009-2010	400	NIL	NIL	NIL	lapsed
2	2010-2011	400	12582	399.99	NIL	
3	2011-2012	100	3194	100	NIL	
4	2012-2013	400	12545	380	20	
5	2013-2014	50	1175	45	5	
6	2015-2016	200	4998.5	190	10	
7	2016-2017	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	No sanction
8	2017-2018	500	10930	499.99	30	
9	2018-19	200	3523	185	15	

**Source:** Rural Development Department, Mizoram.

### Results and Discussions

As discussed above, there is only one centrally Sponsored Rural Housing Scheme of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin is functioning. The below table 6 shows that a study has been concentrated on the PMAY-G in Mizoram. A field study has been

conducted during 2019 – 21 in four selected districts of Kolasib, Serchhip, Lunglei and Lawngtlai within Mizoram randomly selected 150 beneficiaries. A semi-structured interview schedule has been drawn up. The result has been present in the following paras.

**Table 6 District wise Respondent**

		Value	Count	Percent
Valid Values	Kolasib		24	16
	Lawngtlai		58	38.7
	Lunglei		37	24.7
	Serchhip	N 150	31	20.7

**Source:** Field study conducted from 2019 to 2021.

### 1. Identification and selection of beneficiaries under PMAY-G

Fairness and transparency in the identification and selection of beneficiaries is the cornerstone for

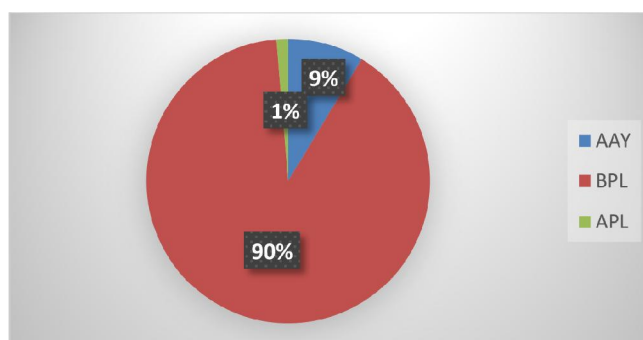
realizing the goal of the rural housing programme of PMAY-G. The housing deprivation parameters in the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data has been used for identifying households and then verified by the Gram Sabhas. But, SECC data is collected in 2011 that would not be up to date and also not count many families within the state; some villages are left behind wholly. This hampered fairness and transparency in the identification of the selection of beneficiaries in the state. However, selections of beneficiaries within the parameter of SECC data counted eligible beneficiaries have conducted the interview and the response was present in the following paras.

**Table 7 Status of fairness in the selection of beneficiaries**

		Value	Count	Percent
Standard Attributes	Position	23		
	Label	Do you think the process of PMAY-G beneficiary's selection is fair?		
	Type	String		
	Format	A9		
	Measurement	Nominal		
	Role	Input		
Valid Values	Fair		97	64.7
	Not fair		1	0.7
	Very fair		52	34.7

**Source:** Field study conducted during 2019 to 20 21.

In the above table 7, only 0.67 percent gave the answer of 'Not Fair' in the selection process of the beneficiaries. Hence, it can be concluded that it is fair enough.

**Chart 1 Economic status of the beneficiaries of PMAY-G**

**Source:** Field study conducted during the period of 2019 to 2021.



The above chart1 depicted the economic status of the beneficiaries of PMAY-G in Mizoram. Only 1 percent of the selected beneficiaries who are Above the Poverty Line (APL) these persons may be selected inclusion of SECC data 2011, but not deleted in the Gram Sabha. All others crossed the Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) beneficiaries. The AAY is poorer than BPL.

The below table 8 indicates that the majority of the beneficiaries are depending on agriculture-related work, their Annual income was less than Rs. 50,000/-. As perceived from the field data, there is only two regular salaried working in the State government temporarily (Muster Roll). Therefore, the studies proved that 99percent of the selected beneficiaries of PMAY-G are economically backward.

**Table 8 Main occupation of beneficiaries**

		Count	Percent
Valid Values	Agri-Labourer	42	28
	Agriculture	87	58
	Artisan	2	1.3
	Labourer	13	8.7
	Regular employee	2	1.3
	Small Business	3	2
	Unemployed	1	0.7

**Source:** Field study conducted from 2019 to 2021.

## 2. Funding pattern and sanction

The funding pattern of PMAY-G in Mizoram is 90:10. The Central government borne 90 percent of all expenditure including 4percent percent of administrative costs. The state government has borne another 10 percent of the cost as per Para 3.1.1 of the Framework for implementation of PMAY-G enunciated. The Empowered Committee under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India with the concerned state officials to discuss the Annual Action Plan. After approval, the Central Government sanctions the First Installment to the State Nodal Account (SNA. This account is in Fund Transfer Order (FTO) mode. The FTO will have to be digitally signed. The transfer of the assistance to the beneficiaries shall be done on his / her registered bank account through digitally signed FTO. The installment of Fund release as per the state government decision is 30percent as the first installment, 40percent as the second installment and 30percent as the third installment and final installment. Release of Central share and State share as shown below:

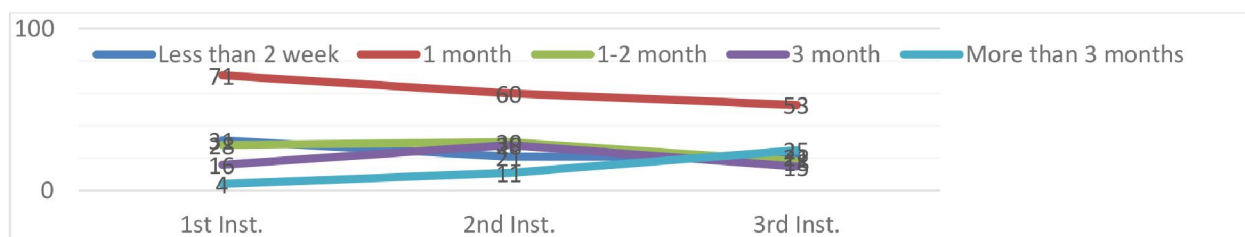
**Table 9 Fund release of Central and State Share**

Year	Date of Release of Central share	Date of Release of State share	Gap of fund release (in months)
2016	5 <sup>th</sup> October 2016	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2017	5
2017	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2017	4
2017	27 <sup>th</sup> April 2017	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	6
2019	27 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2019	3
2020	3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2020	5
2021	24 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Not release till date (i.e 11 <sup>th</sup> September 2021)	

**Source:** Rural Development Department. Mizoram on 11.8.2021.

The above table 9 shows that the State government has been released after 3-6 months a gap from the Central government fund. This hampered the implementation process heavily.

**Chart 2 Time taken of Fund received of beneficiaries in each installment**



**Source:** Field study conducted during the period from 2019 – 21.

The above Chart 2 shows that the majority of beneficiaries received funds within a month after sanction from the first installment; it is delayed slowly till the final installment is received. It has to be noticed that the third installment is released slower than others. The study proves that the slow release of funds adverse impact on the implementation of the schemes.

### 3. Construction of house

The National Housing and Habitat Policy emphasize the importance of propagating cost-

effective environmentally friendly technology, design and construction materials. No housing design is available at the state level till 2020. A study is conducted by the state government with the help of the State Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Mizoram, a prototype housing design will be available soon. The state government is instructed to make a housing design in each district; however, in-ground reality, the majority of the beneficiaries have been constructed their design and style.

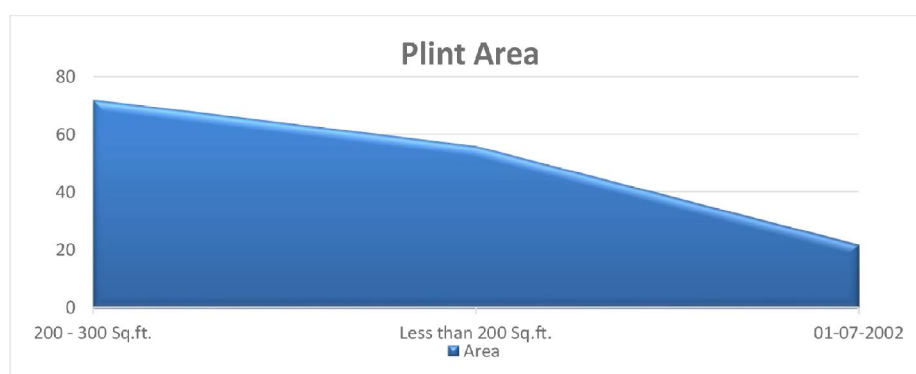
**Table 10 Possession of House**

		Value	Count	Percent
	Label	How can you possess the location of the house?		
Valid Values	Govt. allot		3	2
	Inherit		41	27.3
	Lend		3	2
	Purchase		9	6
	VC allot		94	62.7

**Source:** Field study 2019 – 21.

The above table 10 indicates that Village Council is a strong democratic institution that elected adult suffrage for a term of five years. There are 3 - 9 Village Council members in each Village. The Village Council has powers to allot the House site under sub

section (3) of section 21 of the Mizoram (Land Revenue) Act. 2013 within their village. Table 10 shows that 62.7 percent of the beneficiaries were allotted a House site by the Village Council in their respective village.

**Chart 3 Plinth area of the construction of Houses under PMAY-G**

**Source:** *Field study 2019 – 21.*

The above chart 3 shows that an area of housing to be constructed under PMAY-G should be 25 Sq.m (269.09 Sq.ft). In the field study report, 48.0percent of the beneficiaries were constructed their houses at the size of the recommended area and 14.7percent of

the beneficiaries are constructed bigger than the norms. As such, 70 percent of the beneficiaries have a ‘self-design and 19.3percent of the beneficiaries used the government design means design provided by District officials which was shown in Table 11 below.

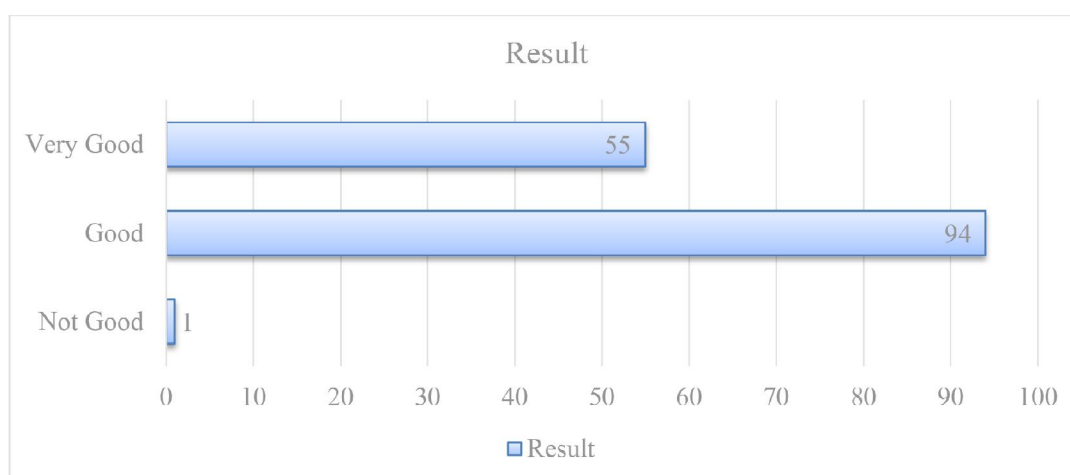
**Table 11 Housing design of PMAY-G houses**

		Value	Count	Percent
	Label	Who make Housing design		
Valid Values	Govt. design		29	19.3
	No design		16	10.7
	Self		105	70

**Source:** *Field study 2019 – 21.*

Before the issue of the Sanction Order from the Block office, the field functionaries (who are Village level, Administrative Assistants, under MG-NREG Staff) capture geo-tagged photographs of the land on which the beneficiary proposes to construct the house and upload it in Awaas Soft through the mobile application “AwaasApp”. After completion of this exercise, the Block Development Officer (BDO) issued a release order. The house is constructed by the beneficiary himself/herself; no contractor is engaged by the State

in the construction of houses. The Mizos are a closed knit society, if a person needs help; the villagers help at free of cost to the needy. The Village Council is also authorized to call ‘Hnatlang’ whenever it is necessary. “Hnatlang” means a common service for the common good of the villagers which the residents of the village are to render. The perception of the quality of the house as shown in Chart 5 below shows the quality of the construction of house who give their satisfactory measures.

**Chart 4 Perception of the quality of Construction by beneficiaries**

**Source:** Field study 2019 – 21

The above chart 4 shows that a mandatory provision of the construction of house under PMAY-G is included a Smokeless chulha, Toilet and bathing area in or outside the house. It was found that Toilet has been constructed inside

their house or near the house. However, Smokeless Chulha has not been constructed more due to the majority of the beneficiaries using Natural Gas for cooking instead of Fire Wood.

**Chart 5 Constructions of Toilet and Smokeless Chulha**

**Source:** Field study conducted during 2019 – 21

The above chart 5 and table 12 reveals that at the time of field visit, 90percent of the construction of House under PMAY-G beneficiaries were constructed in their house a mixer of Wood Plank as the structure, GI Sheet as the roof and Asbestos as the wall, it is called it 'Assam type'. However, from

the respondent side, they said that only 42.7percent of the beneficiaries have to construct Assam Type' house, the majority is 'Semi-RCC' which means the plinth level is constructed in Reinforced Cement Concrete with a mixer of Wood Timber, GI Sheet as the roof and Asbestos/brick as the wall.

**Table 12 Type of houses**

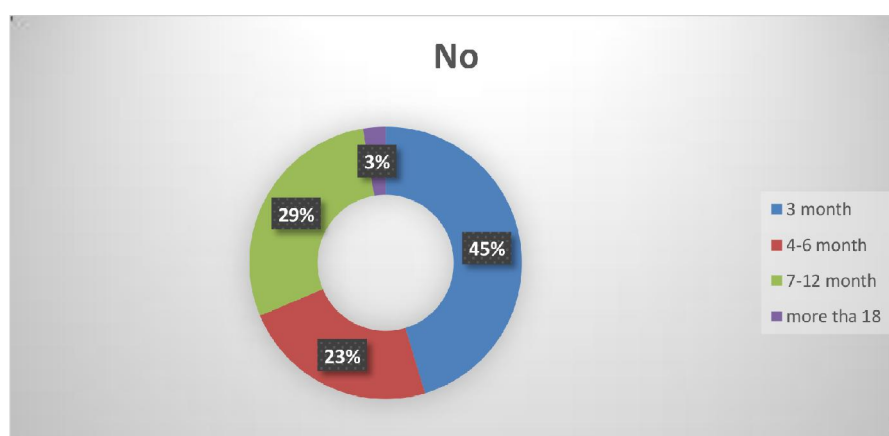
		Value	Count	Percent
	Label	What is the major material did you used in the construction of the house?		
Valid Values	Assam type		64	42.7
	RCC		8	5.3
	Semi RCC		77	51.3
	Wooden		1	0.7

**Source:** Field study conducted during 2019 – 21.

#### 4. Beneficiaries support and convergence

The below chart 7 shows that to ensure timely completion of quality houses within the available resources, in addition to providing financial assistance to the beneficiaries for house construction is the main

objective of PMAY-G. Therefore, as perceived from the beneficiaries, an average time taken for construction of the house is 3 months, but 3percent of the respondents say that they constructed more than 18 months.

**Chart 7 an average time taken for construction of house per unit**

**Source:** Field study conducted during 2019 – 21.

The below table 13 shows that in the converge programme, inter-departmental convergence is very difficult in practice. The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) which is to be provided Toilet for PMAY-G house, the Public Health Department is the implementing agency in the state. Therefore, intra-departmental convergence was done for Individual Household Latrine under MGNREGA which has been provided Rs. 12,000/- per unit. The wages rate in Mizoram has been amended from time to time, the present (2020-21) wages rate in Mizoram is Rs. 233/- per day per person. Likewise, there are 60 – 70 man-days in a financial year to provide unskilled labourer portion to the beneficiary. Convergence with

Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) previously named Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) a rural electrification programme of the Ministry of Power, Government of India shall be providing electricity connection to a PMAY-G beneficiary. No recoded has been kept separately from those who provide free electricity to the PMAY-G beneficiaries. As Department recorded, 100 percent of the BPL families in Mizoram were provided free electric connection. The beneficiaries are entitled to avail of a loan at the minimum interest rate up to Rs 70,000/-, however, respondents say that only 9 persons apply for the loan; but no one received a loan till date.

**Table 13 Status of applying for borrowing Bank Loan/Subsidy**

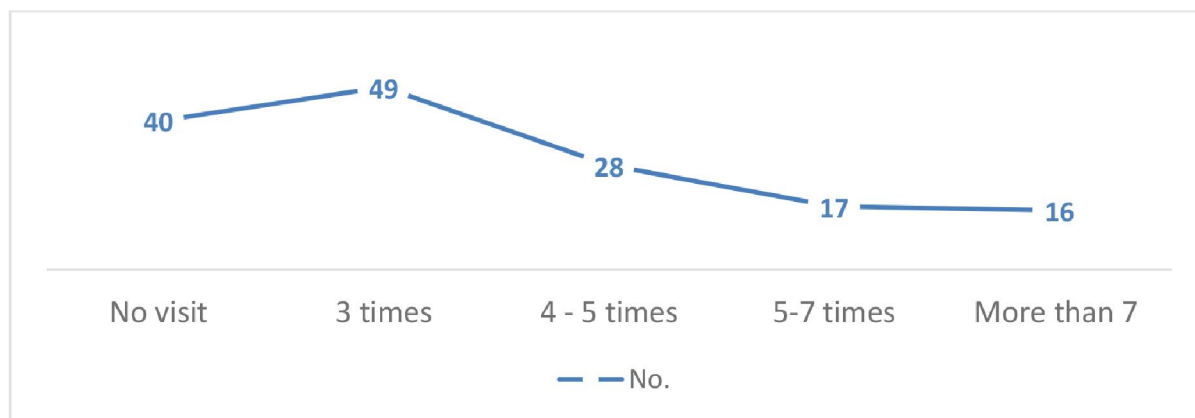
		Value	Count	Percent
	Label	Did you apply for a borrowing Bank loan & another subsidy?		
Valid	No		141	94
Values	Yes		9	6

**Source:** Field study conducted during 2019 – 21.

## 5. Monitoring

A performance monitoring is done through real-time capture of progress using workflow-enabled transactional data in AwaasSoft. The data generated from the transactions in AwaasSoft are collated as system generated reports for monitoring different pre-determined parameters of performance. For process monitoring mechanisms, like an inspection by central teams (Area Officers and NLM), monitoring by District Development Coordination and Monitoring (DISHA) Committee headed by Member of Parliament, Social Audit and through State Level

PMU are adopted. The Programme Management Unit (PMU) in the Secretariat of Rural Development Department monitoring scheme implementation and quality supervision. The state government is instructed Block Development Officers or his/her representatives at the Block level should be inspected at least 10 percent of the houses during construction. The Project Director, DRDA or his representatives at the District level is suggested to inspect 2percent of the houses during construction. As perceived from the field data, the officials of Blok and District level visited '3 times' is the highest, second by 'No Visit' and 'More than 7 times' is the lowest.

**Chart 7 Numbers visit performed by officials at the Block and District level**

**Source:** Field study conducted during 2019 – 21

## 5. Grievances redressal

There is a grievance redressal mechanism set up at the state level. The Block-Level Grievance Redressal

Cell has been established and the concerned Block Development Officer for receiving implementation of IAY within the block and District Grievance Redressal Cell was also constituted.

**Table 14 Physical target and achievement of PMAY-G in Mizoram**

Sl. No	Year	Target	
		Phy.	Fin.
1	2015-16	0	0
2	2016 -17	4806	6497.4
3	2017-18	1794	1795.79
3	2018-19	0	0
4	2019-20	1500	0
5	2020-21	5432	0

**Source:** Rural Development Department,  
Mizoram

### Conclusion and Recommendations

There are three Rural Housing Programmes we have seen during the study period, but only Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin is the major programme that was still functioning. It is a centrally sponsored programme and the sharing pattern is 90:10. The available fund under PMAY-G during 2016 – 2021 is Rs. 8,293.193 lakhs including Rs. 7,463.874 lakhs as a Central release and Rs. 829.319 lakhs as state share. All the funds have been released for the construction of 4,860 houses out of 13,532 total target houses for the first and second phase of the 'Housing for All- Rural' programme and administrative cost.

From the discussion, the present study found out that the major drawback of the implementation of the programme in Mizoram is the late release of the Central fund and problems of State share. Secondly, the SECC, 2011 data is not corrected and not available

in all villages within Mizoram, some households were not counted in this Census which hampered the selection process. Thirdly, some bureaucrats and politicians involved at the grassroots level for the selection of beneficiaries especially the list of priority has been discouraging fairness in the selection procedure. Fourthly, the uncertain release of funds from the state government for construction of the house has been delayed which shows the incomplete house in the MIS-Awaasoft, adversely affected by the release of funds from the Central government. Fifthly, the Convergence of Central, as well as state scheme, is impractical. Because the administrative structure is not sufficient to accommodate convergence theory for the state. There is no planning body at the District and Block level nor have independent evaluation and monitoring agency. Sixthly, the cost norm for construction of the house is less in rural areas. A materials cost is very high, so there will not be constructed permanent structure (RCC) in most of Mizoram. Therefore, it may be concluded that the state government should release funds immediately after the release of the Central fund and also provide state matching share promptly. The Central Government may rectify the SECC Database for the selection of beneficiaries; it should be allowed a Gram Sabha for the selection process instead of SECC data. The state government should be constituted District and Block level Planning Committee/Board for Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation of all developmental programmes within the state. The cost norm of construction of a house may be increased up to Rs. 2 lakhs per unit.

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## Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Rawpuichhip Village of Mamit District, Mizoram: An Evaluation

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Dr. Babu G.

### ABSTRACT

*Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has carried out reasonable transition among the life of rural people of India by providing and ensuring their livelihood in a moderate scale. MGNREG gives employment opportunities to the rural people to earn their livelihood and helps in developing road and land conditions as well as water conservation facilities in rural areas of India. In addition, MGNREGA provides means of reliable employment opportunities and durable assets to a large set of weaker sections of the Indian society for developing their villages and also a chance to make a living on their own feet. In Mizoram, population concentration in rural areas indicates the existence of large number of agricultural and farmland workers. In that line, MGNREGA opens up a new avenue for the rural people of Mizoram by generating employment opportunities towards convenient and effective ways of living instead of heavily relying on agriculture and farming throughout the year. In Rawpuichhip under study, MGNREGA has evidently changed the way of life of many villagers who were once farmers, working throughout the year at their fields and harvesting them once a year. Positively now they are earning money on monthly basis and making a good living. Towards that end, this paper attempts evaluate the implementation of MGNREGA in the village of Rawpuichhip, Mamit district of Mizoram state and its impact on their people, for heuristic purpose.*

**Key Words:** MGNREGA, implementation, livelihood, employment, Rawpuichhip etc.

### Introduction

MGNREGA has been regarded as one the best rural development programme that works on poverty reduction, eradication of backwardness and on providing employment opportunities for the people at the rural level. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social security scheme launched by the Government of India which was passed on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2005, notified on

7th September 2005 as a subsumed scheme of the erstwhile Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana, National Food for Work Programme, Employment Assurance Scheme and Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (Giri, 2017; Naikoo, 2017) by the Indian Parliament. This scheme is indeed a success as compared to several programmes which were previously being undertaken by the Government like Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) which aims at

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integrating rural development. The mandate of the Act is to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the household in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work (Lali, 2021; Kumar, 2014). It has been recognised as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. The main aims of MGNREGA are:

Ensuring economic security to rural people.

Providing social protection for the less opportunated people in rural areas through employment opportunities.

Creation and maintenance of durable assets such as roads, canals, ponds and wells, and environment protection.

Empowering women's right, more vulnerable section of the society, scheduled castes and tribes with right-based legislation as its ground.

Decreasing rural-urban migration.

Intensifying democracy at its roots by strengthening Village Council System or Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Encouraging pellucidity or transparency and liability in terms of governance (Bhat, 2016).

### **Objectives of MGNREGA**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is intended to further develop the existence states of individuals in the country settings. It is a visionary lead program of the Government of India. The transient target of the plan is to satisfy the need of easy-going work and put relocation down while the drawn out objective points is to make manageable job measures for the town staying individuals. The plan stayed appealing for the provincial needy individuals as it ensure wage business, simple methodology, equivalent work and wages among sexes, responsibility and straightforwardness. Yet, because of a few inadequacies as far as expert and local area support, debasement of workers for hire, nonappearance of

intensive investigating of MGNREGA exercises, it could turn out to be one more sponsorship program that risks turning into a weight on the country (Reddy et al., 2014). Hence, there is a requirement for broad anthropological examination work to comprehend the financial effect of MGNREGA program on country India. Here are a portion of the significant targets of the review -

To examine the points and criticisms given by the rural individuals in regards to initiatives taken by the MGNREGA.

To highlight the impact and effect of MGNREGA in regards to the living conditions of the rural people.

To assess the view of rural people towards the resources or assistance provided to them in order to make improve their business.

To examine the awareness undertaken among the rural people about the MGNREGA.

MGNREGA was implemented in phase wise (Reddy et al., 2014) across the country and for the beginning of the programme, it was carried out on February 2006 in the 200 backward districts of the country under Phase- I; and was extended to another 130 districts of the country under Phase- II in April 2007. In April 2008 the Act was able to be implemented in the remaining districts of the country under Phase-III. In Mizoram, MGNREGA was carried out in Lawngtlai and Saiha Districts under Phase-I at the initial year of 2006-07. It was extended to Lunglei and Champhai Districts during 2007-2008 under Phase-II. From 2008 the programme covered all the remaining districts of the state. But as new political party formed the Government and made several new addition of districts namely Hnahthial, Khawzawl and Saitual in the State. Then from 2017-18, it covers all the Districts of Mizoram viz. Aizawl, Champhai, Hnahthial, Khawzawl, Kolasib, Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Mamit, Saitual, Serchhip and Siaha (Government of Mizoram, Rural Development Department, 2014).

Various studies which focused on issues of MGNREGA in researching have been analysed:

As per Mishra Kumar Sushanta (2011) studies have shown that a lot of resources or what we call it assets has been made on rural families through MGNREGA. Be that as it may, these resources could end up being more successful assuming it was observed completely. Saha Roy (2013) saw from various investigations that there is proceeded with illicit presence of worker for hire and postponement in instalments, which is a huge negative component influencing the accessibility of work. Panda Santanu and Majumder Arup (2013) delivered their exploration paper on rural development programs which expressed that in spite of the fact that MGNREGA expects to expand the buying force of rural poor, decreases trouble relocation and make valuable resources in provincial India, it does not get genuine expert help it required and came about number of inadequacies. Rao Mallikarjuna (2013) dissected the exercises of MGNREGA and inferred that MGNREGA fills in as an emotionally supportive network for the frantically poor and thus empower, urge and enable them to remain on their own feet. MGNREGA gives an elective wellspring of livelihood which will affect diminishing relocation or migration, limiting child labour or worker, reducing poverty and making village self-supporting through useful resources creation, for example, street development work, and so forth. It additionally upgraded rural livelihood by including them in non-agricultural work. Chhetri Madan (2015) inspected the rural neediness relief through MGNREGA activities in the territory of Sikkim. The exploration underscored that numerous agrarian workers had profited from MGNREGA as the plan constrained to increment agricultural compensation or increase in agricultural wages. Parmod Kumar and Dipanwita Chakraborty (2016) highlight the different valuable plan of MGNREGA as well as those issues connecting with orientation balance and migration. It additionally examine the issues and difficulties of the plan, likewise its triumphs and accomplishments across the nation, which presumed that this was a significant achievement at any point laid by the Government of India. Priyanshu Tripathi and Nikita Wadhawan (2018) inspected the financial status of MGNREGA recipients among ladies in Baran area of Rajasthan. They

communicated their finding by expressing that MGNREGA is working really hard among the ladies by guaranteeing uniformity with the male part, by utilizing various chances to assist those ladies with having the option to remain all alone by depending onto that very program. S. Sunitha and S. Sudha (2020) made sense of the convenience and significance of MGNREGA during this pandemic that our nation is confronting. In light of the fact that this program is producing business valuable open doors and more strong resources for the rural individuals who have no long-lasting position and dependable wellspring of job. It gives a food and monetarily help them in managing what is happening by observing the Guideline Operating System of the country.

From the above mentioned surveys and researches, we can conclude that MGNREGA itself, its point and targets can possibly reduce neediness in rural regions, encourage social and orientation equity to further develop the buying force of the provincial or rural individuals, especially semi or incompetent workers living in country India, regardless of whether they are underneath the poverty line. Be that as it may, this plan, in spite of the fact that it has numerous constructive outcomes on a few destitute individuals, it could not satisfy the hopes of all people which is mainly due to the absence of expert help and mindfulness about the projects. The outcome of this Act relies on its legitimate execution and in this situation, the participation of the local people is especially critical to make this programs more powerful. In times of difficult situation like the Covid-19 pandemic and so forth, MGNREGA provides massive assistance and support to the needy and rural poor who are heavily depending upon the scheme and had no other financial support at all.

### **Outline of Mizoram State under MGNREGA**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been truly outstanding and best program ever which is carried out by the Government of India especially for the prosperity and advancement of the rural people in our country. India is a country with high populace of individuals living underneath neediness line or BPL.

There are likewise sure models where rural people were distinguished according to their local area and family condition, similar to the Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Scheduled Castes (STs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and so forth. Greater part of the rural population are relying on Agricultural and other associated activities. Thus rural workers and day to day compensation labourers, perform various kinds of jobs as and at whatever point important to keep them and their family alive. This obviously shows that most of the rural people are relying on the public authority as far as on the supply of food sources and different administrations. Sometimes, they had to work irrespective of the conditions, whether day or night, lawful or unlawful, whatever conceivable to bring in cash. It is because the reality of the life of these rural people is way over the imagination, and they had no choice but to live on those life. These rural masses can be portrayed as the people who are fully relying on the provisions delivered by the public authority to them like the Public Distribution System (PDS), where they were able to get food supplies at reasonable costs. Each State Governments are liable for the organization of the issues of individuals, and furthermore in executing projects and strategies for the prosperity of its kin. Thusly, to give stable and normalize living conditions, the Government has gone to different lengths to take care of the issues of the rural people by executing different plans and projects particularly determined to give more solid and manageable turn of events. The Ministry of Rural Development has attempted a few projects and strategies connecting with neediness to decrease and practical improvement for the rural masses, and MGNREGA is one of their leading programme for destitution or poverty easing and advancing feasible development for individuals. It will mean to give wage work to 100 days to each family and helps in building strong resources for the towns. Over the course of the years after its execution, it was a triumph all over India. Rural people are currently ready to work and bring in cash with less working hours and more fulfilment. Compensation or daily wages are moved from the authority through the individual personal bank accounts and can be overseen without anyone else as and when essential. With the help of MGNREGA,

the rural people performed and satisfied the appointed works, making contribution for the development of the nation and also for the well-being of the society. This projects gives security of individuals and exceptions to advanced age people inside the local area. Subsequently individuals can have more agreeable and stable life than previously.

The economy of Mizoram when contrasted with different states of India, is extremely low. This is a result of the fact that Mizoram state has extremely low creation and production in the field of agriculture and its allied activities. Actually, this is valid, yet assuming as and when we look from the perspective of its geological area and its way of life, the creation that we have now is extremely enormous despite demand surplus supply. Dissimilar to the farmers and agriculturists from other states, the method involved with delivering food-grains and different vegetables takes longer period and required more labour. Despite the fact that farmers are really buckling down, it is challenging to raise the production immediately. Individuals are additionally poor and aside from their rural grounds, they are vigorously relying on the public authority in wording food and different supplies. Beneath Poverty Line (BPL) families establishes greater part of the all-out population in Mizoram. However fifty per cent of the populace relies upon agriculture as their primary wellspring of occupation, request is as yet in the run as supply does not meet the longing necessities of individuals. Moreover, larger part of the goods and services are still imported from various states, economy cannot develop and grow. With the presentation of MGNREGA in Mizoram, development in rural regions can be said to go along. Similarly, this projects offered business open doors or opportunities to the rural people who are relying just upon farming for their living. They are now ready and able to create pay by performing works, which are for the developments and improvement of the town. They were additionally offered working chances at building constructions like structuring of dams, water tanks, streets development, and so forth, aside from the hundred day business works. It likewise offer different advantages like making a fish lakes and cultivable porch for selected families,

constructing or building link roads and bridges, and so forth. Quality of life was very different in rural areas when contrasted with before the presentation of MGNREGA.

One might say that MGNREGA in Mizoram has changed the rural areas in terms of building infrastructural and strong resources. Prior to the presentation of this projects, the majority of the rural areas have no appropriate streets and availability. The state of streets were awful to the point that during rainy season no vehicles could enter such areas. To have those resources, there were no unique financing or bundles neither from the Central nor from the State Government for building it. In some cases, non-Governmental Organizations or associations and the locals make commitments for revamping and making of the streets. Through MGNREGA, different development and advancement of works were produced which are to be executed at the rural regions, development of roads were intended to keep going for the entire season and works were performed under a supervisor allotted by the gathering at the rural level. Pretty much every work orders were intended for the development of the rural as well as concerning for the improvement in different ways. This projects acquires changes to various rural areas, however the necessities and nature of works probably would not be something very similar, yet the general desire is for the improvement of the entire rural areas. In this way, with the execution of such plans and projects, different development works are presently being embraced and are in progress in almost every rural areas inside Mizoram.

In Mizoram, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was firstly carried out in Lawngtlai and Siaha district along with the other districts which were under the Phase I of the programme in 2006 which was the beginning of the implementation of the programme by the Government of India (Kumar, 2014). In 2008, it covers all the remaining districts of the country. According to the 2015-16 Financial Year report of the Government of India, it covers 648 Districts, 6,849 Blocks and 2, 50,441 Gram Panchayats all over the country. Mizoram has a population of around 12 lakhs,

dividing into 11 districts (which was previously 8 Districts) 26 Blocks and 856 Village Councils/Local councils (as per the 2011 Census). The total number of job card holders in Mizoram is 2.08 lakhs in which most of the people are belonging to the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category ([www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)). Research have shown that more than 60% of the total population are depending upon agriculture, farming and allied sector as their main source of livelihood. Especially among the rural people, employment opportunities are very scarce and they had to depend upon agriculture and farming as their main source of livelihood. They also migrate to urban areas in search of more profitable and suitable jobs in order to look after the family. Government jobs are very scarce even for the educated people and there are no big companies and industries that could offer employment opportunity for the rural youth and educated people at a large scale, most of them are small scale which requires small amount of workers only. Because of this, the MGNREGA was implemented by the Government of India so as to meet the problem and comes with a solution for the people. It offer jobs and an employment opportunity for them so as to earn their living and make a life for their own family with some fraction of income that they can generated with less working hour and energy.

### **Rawpuichhip Village: Performance under MGNREGA**

Rawpuichhip village is located at Reiek Rural Development (R.D) Block of Mamit district in Mizoram, India. It is situated 30km away from sub-district headquarter Reiek and 45km away from district headquarter Mamit and one can easily have an access to this village by vehicles. Which is only around 50km away from Aizawl. The village is headed and administered by a Village Council President (Sarpanch or Head of Village) with the Village Council Members elected by the people through adult franchise. The functioning and administration of the village does rely on the hands of the Village Council, but sometimes it also joint forces with various non-governmental organisations like Young Mizo Association (Y.M.A), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm

Pawl (M.H.I.P), Mizo Upa Pawl (M.U.P) and Mizo Students Union (M.S.U) in terms of performing certain tasks for the welfare of the village. They assist each other accordingly in times of Hnatlang and other community works besides as and when jobs were coming under MGNREGA scheme. As Table 1 had mentioned below that there are about 316 (now 525) houses with a total population of 1,507 (now 1,618) (Male-746 [628], Female-761 [990], ST-1507 (1618), and SC-0) people in Rawpuichhip village. Literacy rate in Rawpuichhip village is 97.38% which is higher

as compared to Mizoram Literacy rate is 91.33%. In Rawpuichhip village, Male literacy is lower than Female literacy which stands at 97.64% and 98.01% respectively. It is a rural village where 100 per cent of the population belongs to Scheduled Tribe category and most of the population were depending upon agricultural farming and other entrepreneurial jobs as their main source of livelihood. There are no industrial and governmental firms which could offer the people an opportunity to make a living more moderate, means of durable and sustainable jobs.

**Table 1: Population of Rawpuichhip Village (as per 2011 Census of India)**

Particulars	Total	Male	Female
Total No. of Houses	316	-	-
Population	1507	746	761
Child (0-6)	218	110	108
Schedule Caste	0	0	0
Schedule Tribe	1491	736	755
Literacy	97.83%	97.64%	98.01%
Total Workers	856	439	417
Main Worker	807	-	-
Marginal Worker	49	33	16

Source: [www.census2011.co.in](http://www.census2011.co.in)

MGNREGA programme has been carried out and taken into action in the village from the year 2008, and right from the moment of its inception it has a great impact on the life of people. The total number of job card holders as per 03.09.2021 is 568. During 2019-2020 Financial Year, the total number of works completed by the village is around 36 works; and during 2020-2021, a total of 132 works have been completed so far. The works are mainly categorised into four main areas which is permissible under the Act – (a) public works relating to natural resource management, (b) individual assets for vulnerable sections, (c) common infrastructure for Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) compliant self-help group, and (d) rural infrastructure ([www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)). The village is among one of the best performing village as compared to other villages in the nearby area as well as other areas within Mizoram; in terms of various activities under

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) - like utilization of various works components came under the scheme, conducting Gram Sabha and promotion of women participation in the village. Through this programme, the village had achieved development in many areas like construction of link roads, water canals, drainage system, water storage facilities, land development, ponds, terrace and many more which can be beneficial for the community in general and also for the individual in particular. It is one of the well organised and well maintained village within the district of Mamit. This can be taken into consideration in terms of its assets and other facilities that exist in the area - like the Primary Health Centre (PHC), Government Department offices, Bank (Mizoram Rural Bank), Government Schools and Parks (managed by the State Government but own by the Village). Such infrastructure and facilities cannot be found in the nearby village.

Before the execution of MGNREGA, practically every one of the residents were relying upon farming and other agricultural works on barring those of the public authority representatives. The principal thing that surfaced to mind is that education rate is probably going to be lower. The villagers or the rural individuals were dealing with their field consistently, making themselves their very own worker. As it is appropriately seen in many places of India, they said that a beggar raised another beggar, a sweeper raised a sweeper, a trash collector brought one more of his own, etc. Moreover, a farmer is additionally prone to raise another farmer like him from his offspring. Yet, this is not correct, the Mizo public were having as a top priority that despite the fact that they, at the end of the day, could not get educated or getting more higher level themselves, they work for their different generations to not carry on day to day a like they are living. There is also a clear factor which shows how competent and hard-working people they are in the condition of their living standards and in the number of well-educated people they have as compared to other villages. With the introduction of MGNREGA, life turns out to be all the more simple and straightforward. They currently had a family pay through the projects to help them without working their days off consistently all over time. The cash was not that much for them to totally depend on. For that, they began business and make interest in specific regions in order to produce more pay and have appropriate monetary help for themselves. Today greater part of the populace are relying upon agrarian cultivating as well as on other enterprising or entrepreneurial position like hotels, restaurants, vehicle services, variety stores and so forth. Other than every one of these, MGNREGA additionally gives numerous sturdy resources for the village. Season long streets, link roads, public urinal, appropriate waste waterway, road lightning, and so forth, which the village alone could not do as such were finished through the subsidizing that came from the projects. With the improvement of street conditions, they can now effectively supply and adapt their cultivating item at whatever point and at every possible opportunity. Personal satisfaction and ways of life was very much different, all due to the execution of the MGNREGA programme.

### Findings of the study

The scope of the study is confined to a very small portion due to the covid pandemic. The village was put under Red Zone by the District Magistrate of Mamit and no further interaction and interviews could be processed within the village. MGNREGA had great impact on the lives of Rawpuichhip village and the study also put much effort to investigate on the flow of how things were taken up and how people reacted to it. As per several findings from various articles of MGNREGA in Mizoram, the negative and positive influences it has on the village and people are somewhat similar in various ways. Following points are the information and findings which is collected from the selected locals through personal interaction-

### Negative impact or Disadvantages:

1. Like other villages, they used to cut some portion of money from MGNREGA for village development like construction of roads, building water tanks, cleanliness, etc. for this development, the Village Councils used to hired their relatives or people from the party co-workers to work in these respective projects. This make the other locals feel uncertain and unfair as they do not give them equal opportunity to work in such projects. From this, it is clear that favouritism and involvement of politics is practiced among the local leaders.
2. Because of favouritism and not giving other locals to work equally, it can be seen that their works are not good enough and the mind-set of the people changed in a bad way.
3. There are lots of work for the development of village which can be done by the village people through social work (Hnatlang) without cutting the money of the people from MGNREGA. But instead of this, the Village Council always cut money even in small projects or works. People, from this perspective viewed that it was like making a contract work for the Village Council every time a sum of money for the people wages came to their hands.



4. Because of this, discussion and decision made at Gram Sabha are not given importance. Detainment of work proposed by the Village Councils were not followed as expected and this cause bad finishing of works.
5. Most of the work they performed under MGNREGA does not usually require a lot of hard work and effort. Even though using of machinery were prohibited as per the rules and guidelines of MGNREGA, for heavy works that requires lots of man-power machines are used instead. While some work can be done easily even by old aged people and women. One of the statements of the Act is that machinery ought not to be utilized. The works under MGNREGA ought to be done just physically. Nonetheless, through perception or observation, the researcher observed that a great deal of work was done through machines. Thus, many of the villagers thought of it as a kind of work in which they can get money easily without hard work and in ease. This cause a huge negative impact in the minds of the people which is very bad and even in terms of development too.
6. In MGNREGA, there are different kinds of works and in some areas there are works which can be beneficial for a selected family but needs to be done by the village as a whole. But according to the view of many locals, most of the works that they had done were not useful as it should be and sometimes left untouched without any improvement and sometimes required to be touched again after a while. This shows that personals works required a lot of time and energy, which is very time consuming and waste of money. People saw the systems on how works were undertaken by the Village leaders and therefore a negative impact is drawn in their minds and have a feeling that work does not need a proper plan and results. If works were done for the sake of, they felt true to themselves and do not have the need to do much better and improved.
7. Delay in refreshing MIS - The Management Information System (MIS) must be refreshed often to guarantee straightforwardness and openness to data. In any case, the researcher observes that the region under study is exceptionally delayed on refreshing data in the MIS. This creates setback for getting to data which can be gathered through the MIS (Sailo & Singh, 2016 p. 45).
8. There is absence of mindfulness among individuals. Through casual meeting, it is seen that as the majority of them are not even mindful that they can go after jobs. They are neither mindful of the significance of social review nor its ramifications. Many of them do not know that they can submit official complaints. They do not know about the kind of work they can embrace. The fact that machinery cannot be utilized makes them not even mindful. All they appear to be mindful of is that they are qualified for a 100 days wages a year assuming they have some job card.
9. Lastly, awareness about the rules and guidelines of MGNREGA were never undertaken, neither by the government nor by the Village Council except for the discussion of the planning of work to be done, that is in Gram Sabha. Some educated people might be aware of the rules and regulations of the programmes, but majority of the people are unaware of the guidelines of MGNREGA. Informal interaction with the job card holder uncovered that it is not an unexpected practice that an individual who is not willing to accomplish manual work under the plan will go after a job card. At the point when the job card is allowed, the person will let another person who will accomplish manual work under the plan accomplish the work. At the point when the wages are paid, the pay will be parted between the labourer and the job card holder with a sum settled upon between them. This keeps the designated recipients from getting the advantages of the Act while the advantage is redirected to untargeted gatherings (Sailo & Singh 2016, p. 45-46).

**Positive impact or Advantages:**

1. In MGNREGA, every adult member of the family within the village including the old-aged persons, a woman, a person with disabilities and even a man or women whom no one wish to hire them can have the same status and enjoy the same benefit as the other does. In the point of view from the local people, this is really good and helpful for them.
2. Majority of the respondents are jobless. This Act channels work to those individuals who observe no work and direct wages in the pockets of individuals who are poor and jobless. It additionally gives work to individuals who cannot look for employment through the entire year.
3. MGNREGA is also really helpful for a poor family who do not have any financial or monthly income, a widow and widower, etc. because they cannot have any financial support to even pay their debt and so forth. Thus, it may sound absurd to some point, but when looking into the reality of their life, it make a very great sense and very fruitful to them. A widow might have no profession and thereby a great responsibility is laid upon her shoulder to take care of her children and is in no position to work or earn a sum of money to support her family. The case might be different in several circumstances, but the need for money is infinite, even among the elite and wealthy family too. So, MGNREGA does a great job for such family and serve to the best of its potential.
4. Majority of these individuals did not have bank accounts. Through powerful instalment of wages through banks, the recipients currently have their own personal bank accounts and have begun getting to the conventional financial framework on a more normal premise.
5. Various development works that were finished and some ongoing projects within the village greatly put the village and the people to a whole new level. Construction of roads, wells, side drain, waste pit, terrace, etc. massively

contributed for the beautification and re-modelling of the village. Sanitation and cleanliness were properly maintained, timely collection of garbage and disposal of such waste help improved the village too.

**Suggestions**

From the above mentioned points and from the interactions from various locals, there needed a lot of transformation and changes in the system. Even though the village is well equipped and well developed to some extent, to meet the requirements and to avail most of the benefits from the financing authority, work has to be done as per rules and demand. Along with it, changes has to be made in the system and the village leader needed to sharpen up or brush up so as to be able to cope with the ever changing technology and system. Followings are some of the suggestions for the development and betterment of Rawpuichhip village-

The checking panel or the monitoring committee exists at different levels. The board of trustees at the Block Level, District Program Coordinator, Program Officers and VLAs ought to ensure that no machinery is employed for doing MGNREGA works. As village level, VLAs ought to rigorously regulate and take care of the advancement of work performed under their supervision.

The supervisors ought to be stricter in their oversight of works and see that labourers stay from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m. similar to the ordinary working hours in all of the Districts in Mizoram according to the MGNREGA Operational Guidelines. The current arrangement of the functioning hours rehearsed in the town ought to be changed. However the functioning hours are excessively short as of now, it ought to be coordinated and fixed appropriately on the suggestions of individuals. However, it is smarter to go by the principles in any case.

Seminars, workshops and preparation of training ought to be led and booklets and the like ought to be distributed to build consciousness of their freedoms and rights among the beneficiaries.

Furthermore, interpretation of the MGNREGA Operational Guidelines in Mizo language will be exceptionally useful in instructing the majority about their rights and freedoms under the Act.

The job cards of the multitude of beneficiaries who are not willing to take part in manual works ought to be dropped or cancelled. On the off chance that a job card holder sends another person on the work, than the supervisors should report to the Village Council Members and the Program Officers and such job cards should be cancelled.

The significance of the MGNREGA works and its effect in building important resources for the local area in general needed to be emphasize so that labourers will be propelled to be more dedicated. Additionally labourers should be approached to choose the sort of activities or works to be embraced with the goal that they will be motivated to improve their works.

MGNREGA work should be request or demand driven, yet is still stock based. The Government need to find fundamental ways to make it an interest or demand driven.

MGNREGA can be utilized to work on the abilities of the needy individuals of rural regions by giving specialized expertise or technical based jobs. Be that as it may, the actual Act precludes the jobs which are expertise or skill based. Accordingly, there is a requirement for expanding the rundown of allowable or permissible works to incorporate expertise or skill based works (Sailo & Singh 2016, p. 45-46).

## Conclusion

The analysis concludes that Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) brought confident and positive changes in the lives of rural poor people by securing their livelihood through wage employment with an easy approach and asset development. MGNREGA serves as safety value, as it ensures risk factor management for any personal injury caused by accident of the work sites. In this way, there is great place for humanity under MGNREGA since it provides both social and economic safeguard in area prone to accidents and other injury for the workers. In addition, development of assets should be created as per the needs and demands for the benefit of whole village. Meanwhile the employment opportunity should be provided timely to those who possesses the job cards and who are actually above 18 years of age. However for the smooth functioning of MGNREGA, co-operation between Sarpanch (village head) and the local people are prerequisite and essential for the full benefit of the people and the success of the programme itself. The study was conducted in Rawpuichhip village, Mamit district of Mizoram. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected by interviewing selected job card holders from different registered rural households of MGNREGA and through personal interaction with some of the beneficiaries of the scheme among selected villagers. Secondary data were derived from website of MGNREGA as well as research studies from different journals, articles, statistical handbooks, newspapers, etc. It is both empirical and exploratory in nature and follows the descriptive method of research design to clearly examine the effects of MGNREGA activities in rural livelihood.

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## Well-being and Levels of Group Participation among the Elderly Mizos

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study was to examine well-being of the elderly in relation to group participation among the Mizos. A total of 408 participants comprising of two age groups of elderly Mizos, 204 young-old and 204 old-old groups, in equal proportion of gender, were recruited using a systematic random sampling procedure. Psychometric checks indicated generally acceptable reliability for the measures of Well-being (MHC-SF, Keyes, 2002) and Group participation (Rasmussen, M .F, 2003) used in this study. Significant effects of age indicated that young-old elderly group was higher than the old-old elderly group in Emotional Well-being, Social Well-being, Overall Well-being and Levels of group Participation. Regression analyses revealed that Group participation significantly predicted Emotional Well-being, Psychological Well-being and Overall Well-being for both young-old and old-old elderly Mizos; whereas Social Well-being was predicted by Group participation only for the old-old elderly group. Results seen in the study may be considered as providing new insights into the Well-being of elderly Mizos, especially the old-old group, and brought to light the worthiness of groups such as Mizoram Upa Pawl (Mizoram Senior Citizens Association) for the elderly community in facilitating their adjustments and healthy aging.*

**Keywords:** Well-Being, Group Participation, Elderly.

### Introduction:

As people live increasingly longer, the period considered as “late adulthood” is increasing in length. This has resulted in a larger proportion of people living into the late adulthood stage today than at any time in world history (WHO, 2015). Some researchers of aging categorize elderly people into three groups by age – the *young old* refers to those who are aged between 65 – 74, the *old old* refers to those who are aged between 75 – 84 and the *oldest old* are those who are 85 and older (Feldman & Babu, 2017). Papalia, Olds & Feldman (2008) have described the

differences among the extremes by saying that young-olds are most likely to be active, energetic and enthusiastic whereas the old-olds are more likely to be weak, debilitated and quite unable to cope with the demands of everyday life. A direct link between participation in social activities and well-being among the elderly has been found early on, with emphasis on face-to-face interaction especially (Graney, 1975). Findings from meta-analysis (Pinquart and Sörensen, 2000) also indicated the importance and strong association between social contact and the subjective well-being of the elderly.

Well-being is a multifaceted complex construct (e.g., Diener, 2009). Ryan and Deci (2001, p.142) defined well-being as an “optimal psychological

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functioning and experience.” Emotional well-being refers to one’s subjective experiences of both good and bad emotion. It is defined in terms of satisfaction with life, the balance that one has between both positive and negative affect as well as one’s happiness (Carstensen, Pasupathi, Mayr & Nesselrode, 2000). Keyes (1998, 2002) proposed Social well-being as comprising of five dimensions namely, social coherence, social contribution, social actualization, social acceptance and social integration. He further claims that it is an achievement in itself, made possible with the attainment of both age and education. According to Huppert, (2009, p.137) “Psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively.”

Social participation is also a multi-faceted construct that integrates the interchange of social support and formal (such as participation in religious activities, voluntary work and attending various meetings) as well as informal (telephonic conversations and interacting with friends) social engagement with members of one’s social network (Utz, Carr, Nesse and Wortman, 2002). Depp and Jeste (2006) reported that older adults more commonly attribute successful ageing to social participation rather than physical health.

Among the Mizos, the elderly population have always had important roles in the society. In a traditional Mizo society, the Village Chief would rule over his people with the help of a council of elders/ advisers referred to as *Upas* who were appointed by the Chief. Their role may be compared to contemporary ministers in the Chief Minister’s cabinet, but in addition they were also akin to the jurors in modern judicial courts (Nag, 1998). Till today, one of the most important Mizo ethos is *Aia upa zah* (respect for the elders). However, as times change, so may the execution of the behaviour conforming to the ethos.

In 1957, the Mizoram Upa Pawl (Mizoram Senior Citizens Association) was formed as a non-governmental organization to tackle various problems faced by senior citizens. Today, it has more than 500

units, 67 areas and 4 Sub-Headquarters across the whole of Mizoram. Any citizen of Mizoram above the age of 50 is eligible for membership. According to the 2011 census in Mizoram, there were 14,222 males and 13,968 females between the age of 65 - 74 and 3,884 males and 3900 females between the age of 75 - 79. Further those aged 80 plus amount to 3882 males and 4292 females (Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Mizoram, 2018).

Members of the MUP in every unit are actually engaged in finding out destitute among their fellow members in particular and the poor and needy in general within their local limit and give them financial assistance from their own contribution and sometimes by rendering physical work. To make their life more enjoyable and occupied, they always organize meetings in which recreational items of different descriptions including cultural items, games and dancing which every member could enjoy were chalked out and included in the programme. Sometimes, lectures on various subjects like health education, sanitation, care of the aged and how to rear a successful family are given by resource persons including doctors, professionals’ and others (Thanseia, 2007).

The elderly people in Mizo community may have comparatively many more constructive and rewarding years in store. The wealth of knowledge, experience and wisdom they already accumulated with age has always been acknowledged by the younger generation. Retirement and old age can be most satisfying as experienced by most of the MUP members, if one retains old interests as well as develop new ones. Many of them keep themselves active and alive by joining voluntary works of different descriptions (Thanseia, 2007). It is within this rubric that the present study is proposed, towards delineating the predictability of well-being from group participation, thereby revealing the worthiness, or non-significance for that matter, of groups such as Mizoram Upa Pawl (Mizoram Senior Citizens Association) for the elderly community in a globalized world that is becoming more and more ‘older’ and ‘isolated.’

**Objectives:**

- 1) To determine the level of Well-being and Group Participation among young-old and old-old elderly Mizos.
- 2) To determine the relationship between Well-being and Group Participation among the young-old and old-old elderly Mizos.
- 3) To examine age differences in well-being and group participation between elderly young-old and old-old groups.
- 4) To examine the predictability of well-being from group participation.

**Hypotheses:**

- 1) Well-being and Group participation are expected to be moderately high among the samples.
- 2) Young-old are expected to be higher in Well-being and Group participation than the old-old elderly.
- 3) Well-being and Group participation are expected to be positively correlated among the young-old and old-old elderly Mizos.
- 4) Well-being is expected to be significantly predicted by Group participation in both young-old and old-old groups.

**Methods:**

**i) Sample:** Using a systematic random sampling method, data were collected from 20 localities in Aizawl Municipal area from among male and female elderly Mizos aged between 65-74(young-old) and 75-84 (old-old), making up a total sample of 408 elderly Mizo participants in the study in equal proportion of gender (204 male and 204 female). APA ethical standards were maintained throughout the research.

**ii) Tools used:**

- a) The Mental Health Continuum—Short Form (MHC-SF; Keyes, 2002) is a 14-item self rating

scale using the 6-point Likert which ranges from 0 (never) to 5 (every day). It is made up of three subscales: Emotional well-being, Social well-being and Psychological well-being. Scores were simply totaled and this sum of scores reflected the over-all well-being of respondents, with high scores being indicative of higher well-being and low scores being indicative of lower well-being. The Mizo version of the scale was piloted using back translation method for the study.

- b) Levels of Group Participation Scale (LOP; Rasmussen, M .F, 2003) is a Likert like scale where participants rate themselves on 6 items, with possible responses ranging from 1 = low and 5 = high. The scores were used to assess the extent of their participation in community based organizations (CBO). The higher their mean scores, the higher their level of participation in the CBOs. It has yielded a good reliability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha = .94 in the pilot study conducted on the Mizo sample population (Lalkhawngaihi et al., 2019). Scores in each item were summed up with possible scores ranging from 6 to 30. The higher the scores obtained, the higher the level of participation. The Mizo version of the scale was adapted using back translation method for the study.

**Results and Discussion:**

Psychometric adequacy of the measures of the psychological constructs was first examined. Results of Cronbach's Alpha reliability showed generally acceptable reliability of the scales ranging from .62 to .93 across the groups (Nunnally, 1978; Pallant, 2001). Levene's test for Equality of Variances was significant for Levels of group Participation; however, there were no violations for Kurtosis and Skewness in terms of normality of the data distributions.

**Table 1: Descriptives, reliability, age differences, and effect sizes for the groups (young-old and old-old) in measures of Well-being and Group Participation**

Scales	Group	Cronbach's alpha	Mean	SD	Levene's		t		Cohen's d
					F	Sig.	Stat	Sig.	
Emotional well-being	Young-old	0.62	11.69	2.45	0.86	0.4	2.74	0	0.27
	Old-old	0.62	10.99	2.67					
Social well-being	Young-old	0.65	16.21	4.61	0.08	0.8	3.15	0	0.31
	Old-old	0.63	14.77	4.6					
Psychological well-being	Young-old	0.73	18.91	5.53	0.16	0.7	0.73	0.5	0.07
	Old-old	0.73	18.54	5.52					
Overall well-being	Young-old	0.83	46.87	10.4	0	1	2.47	0	0.24
	Old-old	0.83	44.28	10.7					
Levels of Group	Young-old	0.9	23.03	4.47	13.2	0	2.91	0	0.27
	Old-old	0.93	21.6	5.46					

**Table 1 (b): Mann-Whitney U-Test for Group Participation**

Mann-Whitney U	17602.5
Wilcoxon W	38512.5
Z	-2.697
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007

The present study examined the differences between young-old and old-old elderly Mizos in Well-being and Group participation. Significant age effect on Emotional well-being can be seen from Table 1 where elderly Mizos belonging to the young-old category showed significantly higher scores than those in the old-old category, indicating that the young-old seem to have a higher sense of Emotional well-being than their younger counterparts. Lalkhawngaihi (2021) has also found that young Mizo adults to be significantly higher than older Mizo adults in Emotional well-being. For Social well-being and Overall well-being as well, results indicated that young-old elderly Mizos seem to have a higher sense of Social and Overall well-being as compared to the old-old group; further, Mann-Whitney U Test confirmed a significant age effect on Levels of Group Participation indicating that the young-old elderly seem to have higher levels of participation in social activities than the old-old elderly Mizos.

Lucas & Gohm (2000) in their study found that age seems to have no effect on life satisfaction – pleasant affect was found to decrease continuously as one ages, unpleasant affect displayed a curvilinear

relation with age – it decreased initially, only to increase among the elderly. Diener and Suh (1998) attribute this curvilinear relation as possibly due to increases in difficulties and bleak circumstances in life. Both studies may explain the current findings of significant age effects for Emotional, Social and Overall well-being.

Diener & Suh (1998), and Stroebe & Stroebe (1983) further talk of the curvilinear effect of age on unpleasant as being stronger among unmarried than married people, which may arise due to loss of spousal support or income as a result of retirement. A closer look at the demographic data indicated that there were more married young-old elderly (66.2%) than old-old (56.9%) and more widows and widowers among the old-old (36.8%) than young-old (25%). It is likely that young-old elderly Mizos have higher sense of Overall and Social well-being as a result of social support available from their spouses.

Keyes (1998) talks of Social well-being as the assessment of the conditions and performance in one's life. Among the dimensions of social well-being that he proposes, he talks of Social integration where healthy people feel that they are an integral part of the society they live in, and where they feel they have shared commonalities with other members of their community. Social integration is the evaluation of the quality of one's relationship to society and community. Healthy individuals feel that they are a part of society. Integration is therefore the extent to which people feel they have something in common with others who



constitute their social reality (e.g., their neighbourhood), as well as the degree to which they feel that they belong to their communities and society. In line with this thought, it is possible that the higher levels of Social well-being among the young-old elderly may be attributed to their greater level of participation in various social activities. Morgan, Dallosso, Brassey, Ebrahim, Fentem & Arie (1991) found that participation in social activities is significantly less for those elderly aged 75+ when compared to those who are aged 65-74. Findings from yet another study (Huang & Yang, 2013) show that while men display higher levels of participation in social activities before retirement, with increasing age it becomes reversed – participation in social activities decreases. This trend reduction in participation in social activities may explain why old-old elderly Mizos display lower levels of group participation when compared to young-old elderly as seen in the results of this study.

**Table 2(a): Correlation between the variables for young-old elderly Mizos**

	EWB	SWB	PWB	MHCSF	LOP
EWB	1				
SWB	.438**	1			
PWB	.511**	.560**	1		
MHCSF	.693**	.837**	.891**	1	
LOP	.195**	0.048	.217**	.174*	1

**\*\* correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)**

**\* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed)**

**Table 2(b): Correlation between the variables for old-old elderly Mizos**

	EWB	SWB	PWB	MHCSF	LOP
EWB	1				
SWB	.463**	1			
PWB	.509**	.576**	1		
MHCSF	.712**	.841**	.892**	1	
LOP	.312**	.291**	.221**	.317**	1

**\*\* correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 - tailed)**

**\* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 - tailed)**

In terms of the relationship between Group Participation and well-being, for the young-old elderly Mizos, Group participation is significantly positively correlated with Emotional well-being, Psychological well-being and Overall well-being, but not with Social well-being. For the old-old elderly Mizos, there are significant positive correlations between Emotional well-being, Social well-being, Psychological well-being, Overall well-being and Group Participation.

Litwin & Stoeckel (2013) in their examination of the association between social networks and well-being among old-old and young-old people found that the said associations seem to vary according to age. They found more significant associations between social networks and well-being for younger-old as compared to older-old, indicating that while social networks are relevant in very old age, it does not seem to be in the same level as for the young-old. However, in the current study, the associations found were mostly higher for old-old elderly and not young-old as seen in the study quoted above.

In line with these findings, Mizo society is one where respect for the elderly is deeply embedded within cultural values, and a sense of identity and belonging is also strongly inculcated in the elderly through membership and active participation in the MUP, a non-government organization run solely by the elderly themselves – their activities include celebration of an annual day dedicated solely to the elderly as well as various prosocial activities catering to the needs of not only their own members, but economically weak members of the society as well. The MUP is an active organization that is able to publish and distribute state-wide, a bulletin for members on a regular basis (Thanseia, 2007); this strong presence of the MUP may be considered as possible contributing factors for old-old elderly Mizos being more emotionally satisfied than young-old elderly as indicated in this study.

**Table 3(a): Results of simple linear regression analysis testing the predictability of Emotional well-being, Social well-being, Psychological well-being and Overall well-being from Group Participation for young-old elderly Mizos**

Criterion	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Emotional well-being	0.038	8	0.005	0.195	2.83	0.005
Social well-being	0.002	0.47	0.494	0.048	0.68	0.494
Psychological well-being	0.047	9.94	0.002	0.217	3.15	0.002
Overall well-being	0.03	6.29	0.013	0.174	2.51	0.013

Results of linear regression indicated that for young-old elderly Mizos, Group participation significantly predicted Emotional well-being scores,  $\beta = .195$ ,  $t(202) = 2.83$ ,  $p = .005$ . Group participation also significantly explained a proportion of variance in Emotional well-being scores,  $R^2 = .038$ ,  $F(1,202) = 8.00$ ,  $p = .005$ . Similarly predictions for

Psychological well-being  $\beta = .217$ ,  $t(202) = 3.15$ ,  $p = .002$ , and the proportion of variance in Psychological well-being scores,  $R^2 = .047$ ,  $F(1,202) = 9.94$ ,  $p = .002$ ; and predictions for Overall well-being  $\beta = .174$ ,  $t(202) = 2.51$ ,  $p = .013$ , and the proportion of variance in Overall well-being scores,  $R^2 = .030$ ,  $F(1,202) = 6.29$ ,  $p = .013$  were significant.

**Table 3(b): Results of simple linear regression analysis testing the predictability of Emotional well-being, Social well-being, Psychological well-being and Overall well-being from Group Participation for old-old elderly Mizos**

Criterion	R <sup>2</sup>	F	Sig.	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Emotional well-being	0.097	21.71	0	0.31	4.66	0
Social well-being	0.085	18.75	0	0.29	4.33	0
Psychological well-being	0.049	10.4	0.001	0.22	3.22	0.001
Overall well-being	0.101	22.62	0	0.32	4.76	0

Results of linear regression indicated that for old-old elderly Mizos, Group participation significantly predicted Emotional well-being scores,  $\beta = .31$ ,  $t(202) = 4.66$ ,  $p = .000$ . Group participation also significantly explained a proportion of variance in Emotional well-being scores,  $R^2 = .097$ ,  $F(1,202) = 21.71$ ,  $p = .000$ . Predictions for Social well-being  $\beta = .291$ ,  $t(202) = 4.33$ ,  $p = .000$ , and the proportion of variance in Social well-being scores,  $R^2 = .085$ ,  $F(1,202) = .085$ ,  $p = .000$ . Similarly predictions for Psychological well-being  $\beta = .221$ ,  $t(202) = 3.22$ ,  $p = .001$ , and the proportion of variance in Psychological well-being scores,  $R^2 = .049$ ,  $F(1,202) = 10.40$ ,  $p = .001$ ; and predictions for Overall well-being  $\beta = .317$ ,  $t(202) = 4.76$ ,  $p = .000$ , and the proportion of variance in Overall well-being scores,  $R^2 = .101$ ,  $F(1,202) = 22.62$ ,  $p = .000$ , though small were meaningful.

Research with the elderly has consistently shown that there is a positive correlation between the number of social relationships one has and one's happiness and psychological adjustment (Antonucci & Jackson, 1987; Felton & Berry, 1992; Krause, 1987; Lang & Carstensen, 1994). Baumeister and Leary (1995) have further proposed that the human need to belong is a primary need, channelling our thoughts, emotions and behaviour with others, and older adults do not seem to deviate from this. González-Herero and Extremera (2010) have said that elderly citizens who participate in more social activities are found to have higher subjective well-being; they have also found social activities to be a partially mediating factor for personality variables, like self-esteem and optimism, and subjective well-being. As people grow older and retire from their various jobs, they lose the

formal roles that their jobs gave them and as a result, social roles and social activities tend to become an even more important avenue for social integration (Evandrou and Glaser 2004; Thomas 2011). Thomas (2011) has said that elderly people who are more involved in social pursuits and actually spend more time in these pursuits will tend to have more resources at hand, have a better sense of motivation within them, and more determination to invest in health-promoting behaviours; all these factors taken together contribute further to increased health. This is because psychological health is determined by the level of one's social integration, which in turn is dependent on the quality and quantity of social participation.

### Conclusion:

To conclude, results found in the present study were seen to be in line with similar researches in the area and has hence reiterated the relevance of studying the elderly population, especially at a time when the elderly are a growing demographic group accounting for more than one fifth of the population in 17 countries today (U.N., 2019). The present study revealed the predictability of well-being from group participation in both the groups of young-old and old-

old sample of the elderly Mizos, but especially for the old-old group. This brought to light the worthiness of groups such as Mizoram Upa Pawl (Mizoram Senior Citizens Association) for the elderly community in facilitating their adjustments and healthy aging.

### Limitations and future prospects:

Despite the fairly large sample that was considered in this study, there were some limitations to the current study. Responses were collected through Google forms due to the Covid 19 pandemic; therefore, for many of the women respondents as well the many in the old-old group, their responses were recorded for them by family member. As such, there is the distinct possibility that they may not have answered as truthfully as they would have if it was a one-on-one interaction with non-family members. In addition, the sample comprised of elderly Mizos living within Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram only. Since it did not include responses from the vast number of elderly Mizos living in the rural areas, our findings may not generalize to elderly Mizo populations at large. It would be desirable to include rural samples in future studies in order to make the findings even more relevant.

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## The Role of Resilience and Wellbeing: A Study among Female Commercial Sex Workers in Aizawl

Lalhriatpuii\*  
Zokaitluangi\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*The study aims to examine the difference between Resilience and Wellbeing among female commercial sex workers and general female in Aizawl city. The participants comprises of 100 female sex workers and 100 general female. The Resilience Scale (RS: Wagnild & Young, 1993) and The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) were used in the study. The finding highlighted that Female Commercial Sex Workers scored lower on resilience and wellbeing than general female; Resilience and Wellbeing has a significant positive relationship among the samples. The finding of the study portrayed the need for psychological intervention for changing their belief of the sources of their resilience leading to psychological wellbeing.*

**Keywords:** *female commercial sex worker, resilience, wellbeing*

### Introduction

Sex work is one of the few long-standing professions in history as well as the most stressful and dangerous occupation (Rekart, 2005; Ross, Crisp, Mansson, & Hawkes, 2012). Sex workers experienced a variety of psychological issues such as childhood sexual abuse, exposure to physical abuse as a child, poverty, unemployment, poor education, interpersonal violence in adulthood, sexually transmitted diseases, and substance abuse, all of which can produce an increased psychological distress.

**Female commercial sex workers (FCSW):** 'Sex worker' was coined by social activist Carol Leigh in 1978. 'Sex work' refers to a variety of activities where money (or its equivalent) is exchanged for the provision of sexual services (Desyllas, 2013).

Sex workers are stigmatized and marginalized within our society and often suffer severe health disparities as a result of their lifestyle. Women in streets have been found to make less income (Cohan et al., 2005) and support from family and friends is almost non-existent (Dalla, 2002).

**Resilience:** Resilience can be understood as the ability to withstand stress and adapt to difficulties following a negative experience (Tugade, & Fredrickson, 2004). Women leaving the sex trade industry also need to acquire job skills and gain access to other employment opportunities. Without financial assistance, this can be impossible for women without any job experience outside of the sex trade industry, limited education, and dependents to support (Maxwell & Maxwell, 2000).

Psychologists noted that social support contributes to resilience (McClure, Chavez, Agars, Peacock, & Matosian, 2008), and hence social support is an important factor of a resilience lens as

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a way of looking at sex work. There is increasing evidence showing the psychological impact of engaging in sex work on female sex workers.

**Wellbeing:** Women in the sex trade are pitied and despised for failing to adhere to sexual and other behavioural norms and are excluded from society. Outcast status denies them customary protection from various abuses as compared to other citizens, women or workers. This social exclusion renders the sex workers vulnerable to exploitation (Hong et al., 2007; Mundle, 2005; Dandona et al., 2005).

Guney (2009) noted that psychological well-being and life satisfaction are strongly connected. As every individual has their own needs, desires, and wishes, all of these factors play a vital role in determining the criteria of life satisfaction for that particular individual. A person's satisfaction with life is strongly correlated with their physical and mental health (Beutell, 2006).

### Objective of the study:

The present study is designed to study the following objectives:

- To examine the level of Resilience and Wellbeing between the groups (FCSW's and General Female).
- To study the relationship between the Resilience and Wellbeing among the dependent variables.

### Hypothesis:

The following hypotheses are framed to meet the objectives of the study;

- It was expected that there will a significantly different level of Resilience and Wellbeing between the two groups.
- It was expected that there will be a significant positive relationship between the Resilience and Wellbeing.

### Sample:

200 female comprising of 100 Female Commercial Sex workers (who has been in sex industry more than 1 year to 4 years) and 100 General Female working in private/ NGOs (who has been

working in the organization more than 1 year to 4 years) operating in Aizawl with age range from 18 years to 34 years were serve as participants. FCSW's were drawn from the list of registered home/centres run by Government or registered NGOs in Aizawl City, and the general samples were selected to match the FCSW's on socio-demographic profiles.

### Psychological tools:

**1) Resilience Scale (RS; Gail M. Wagnild and Heather M. Young, 1993):** It is a 25-item self-report questionnaire with a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). All items are positively scored. The possible total scores range from 25 to 175 with higher scores reflecting higher resilience.

**2) The Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985):** This scale was developed as a measure of the judgmental component of subjective well-being (SWB). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagree.

### Procedures:

Firstly, socio demographic profile was framed and required permission and consent were obtained from the authority and participants. Random sampling procedure was followed as far as possible. The administration of the psychological scales on the selected samples was done by following the American Psychological Association (APA) code of ethics. The response sheets were carefully checked to detect any missing of incomplete answer before leaving the administration setting for further analysis.

### Design of the study:

The study aimed to compare the Female Commercial Sex Worker and General Female on the selected dependent variables – resilience and wellbeing. It is a comparative design in nature.

### Results and Discussion

The reliability test showed trustworthiness for the scales (for resilience  $\alpha = .928$ ; for Wellbeing  $\alpha = .885$ ). Levene's test was used for Homogeneity of Variances which showed significance (resilience

=.00; Wellbeing =.21). The variances are statistically significantly different. Equal variances are not assumed. The assumption of homogeneity of variance has been violated.

**Table 1:** Reliability (Chronbach's alpha) and Homogeneity (Levene's test) of the scales

Scales	Reliability	Homogeneity
Resilience	0.928	0
Wellbeing	0.885	0.021

Table 2 shows that FCSW's and General female have a significant difference on resilience ( $M=104.523, 136.16$ ) that General female scored higher than FCSW's; and also have a significant difference on Wellbeing that General female showed greater life Satisfaction than FCSW's ( $M=97.64; 89.59$ ).

**Table 2:**Skewness and Kurtosis for Locus of Control and Resilience

Items	FCSW		GENERAL	
	Resilience	Wellbeing	Resilience	Wellbeing
Mean	104.523	15.592	136.16	23.323
Std.Deviation	18.023	4.653	12.15	5.647
Kurtosis	0.34	0.216	-0.007	-0.449
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.422	0.422	0.422	0.422
Skewness	0.916	0.796	-0.18	-0.533
Std. Error of Skewness	0.212	0.212	0.212	0.212
SEM	1.58	0.4081	1.066	0.4953

Table 3 revealed that the level of Resilience was higher among general female,  $U = 1544.50, p = .000$ . The Mann-Whitney test revealed that the Wellbeing was higher among general females,  $U=2612.00, p=.000$ .

**Table 3:** Mann-Whitney U Test showing differences in Resilience and Wellbeing scales between the comparison groups

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Rank	U	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2 tailed)
Resilience						
Fcsw	100	77.38	10059.5	1545	-11.4	0
General	100	183.62	23870			
Wellbeing						
Fcsw	100	85.59	11127	2612	-9.64	0
General	100	175.41	22803			

The result as shown in Table 4 indicated that there were significant relationships among them. Resilience has a significant positive correlation with Wellbeing ( $r = .706, p < .01$ ).

**Table 4:**

*Spearman correlation between the two scales*

SCALES	Resilience	Wellbeing
Resilience	1	.706**
Wellbeing	.706**	1

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## Summary and Conclusion

An overview of the results reveals that Female commercial sex worker have a lower resilience and lower level of life satisfaction (Wellbeing). This could perhaps be found that many female sex workers have negative views about themselves and feelings of guilt and shame as a result of their work. These suggest that sex work increases the risk of psychological distress among female sex workers (Gorry, Roen, & Reilly, 2010; Wong et al., 2008). Resilience shows a positive correlation with psychological well-being. Souri and Hasanirad (2011) found that resilience has a positive correlation with psychological well-being in addition to being a significant predictor. Higher levels of resilience are associated with greater life satisfaction and quality of life (Plexico et al. 2018).

Studies shows that low resilience in female commercial sex workers are affected by protective factors including education, social support, and health care access, however, homelessness, drug use, and victimization negatively impair resilience (Buttram et al. 2014).

Overall findings indicate effective interventions for Female Commercial Sex Workers with mental health disorders are urgently needed. Women in sex work psychological intervention encouraging them to identify their strengths and assets to increase their sense of self-worth, their self-efficacy, and their hopes for the future.

## Limitations:

The present study has some limitations that the sample size not big enough to represent the targeted population, more systematic and comprehensive theoretical and empirical examination is required regarding the trustworthiness of the FCSWs which need to explore.

## Significant of the study:

Based on the findings that the study has highlighted, the level of resilience much lower in resilience and wellbeing which explain the stressful situation of the FCSWs and their psychological functions which need urgent attention for designing a psychological intervention.

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## Somatization and Depression among Hearing Disabled: A comparative study of Hearing Disabled Children and Normal Hearing Children

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### ABSTRACT

*Hard of hearing and deaf children are victims of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse which invite the risk of mental health problems all through life. The study examined somatization and depression among hearing disabled children and compared with normal-hearing children, it was ascertained using the Symptoms Checklists (Derogatis, 2012). The results revealed that hearing disabled children were significantly higher on somatization and depression than normal-hearing children, and showed a significant positive relationship between depression and somatization. Results revealed that hearing disabled children need more attention on their physical and mental health than children with normal hearing.*

**Keywords:** Hearing, Hearing Disabled, Hearing Impaired, Symptom, Depression, etc

### Introduction:

Hearing impairment is one of the most problems causing disability all over the globe (Cunningham & Tucci, 2017), millions of people are hard of hearing or deaf in the world population, and more than 432 million adults are victimized (WHO, 2018). Looking at the present scenarios, it may be predicted the increase in hearing impairment is very prone to happen in the future (Vos et al., 2016; Wilson et al., 2017). A researcher found that a higher prevalence of hard of hearing among older adults than younger, more prevalence in men than women (Goman & Lin, 2016), prevalence also found differences between different regions' of the world (WHO, 2018) and presence of hearing loss very high as one-third of adults aged over 65 years.

Deafness alone might not cause emotional, behavioural, cognitive and psychiatric disorders but

it may be invited or associated with other problems resulting in disorders and coupled with a multitude of situational factors leading to negative attitudes and uncooperative behaviours of others (Demorest & Erdman, 1989), developing emotional/behavioural problems and neurodevelopment disorders depending on the severity of impairment (Shontz, 1971).

### Hearing Impairment:

Hearing impairment refers to an inability to hear or "hard of hearing" (HOH) or "deaf" and a person's hearing loss is more than 25 dBHL in one or both ears hearing threshold, and classified into different levels: (i) mild (26-40 dB) (ii) moderate (41-60 dB), and (iii) severe (61-80 dB), (iv) profound (over 81 dB) affect one ear or both ears with difficulty in hearing conversational speech or loud sounds (WHO, 2020; Ministry of Law and Justice, 2016). 'Deaf' people are almost a profound hearing loss, with very little or no hearing, and usually has to use sign language for communication (WHO, 2020).

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The communication barriers are more among hard of hearing than hearing children (Knutson, Johnson, & Sullivan, 2004) that increases mental health problems throughout their life (Downs & Harrison, 1998; MacMillan et al., 2001) accompanied by a burden to disease that hampered the quality of life.

Hearing impairment is noticeably connected with different disabilities which included - increased risk of incident morbidity, poor self-perceived health (Ejaz et al., 2020), poor psychological well-being, low levels of self-efficacy and happiness (Contrera, et al., 2016), anxiety, cognitive decline and lower health-related quality of life (Mehboob et al., 2019).

### **Psychological problems:**

The term psychological problem (disorder) is referring to mental disorders or psychiatric disorders. The major categories of disorders are described in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) which is one of the most widely used systems for classifying mental disorders and provides standardized diagnostic criteria (APA, 2013). People with hard of hearing have difficulty in coping with stressful, disturbing or harmful circumstances in their daily life that result in psychological distress.

**Somatization** - Somatic symptom disorder is a physical symptom, such as pain, weakness or shortness of breath that results in major distress and/or problems functioning. It is an excessive thought, feelings and behaviours relating to physical symptoms like cardiovascular, gastrointestinal, respiratory, and so on. If a person repeatedly complains of physical symptoms without any physical condition present to cause the symptoms is somatization. The psychopathological symptom has a positive relation with the level of hearing impairment (Stephanie et al., 2015).

**Depression** - Depressive symptoms may include signs of withdrawal of life interest lack of motivation, loss of vital energy, feelings of hopelessness, thoughts of suicide, low mood and aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behaviour, anxiety, emptiness, worried, helpless, worthless, guilty, irritable, or restless, problems concentration and so on.

Hearing-impaired children are more prone to more depression than children with normal hearing (Theunissen et al., 2011) and have a higher level of psychopathological symptoms (Theunissen et al., 2015). The physical handicaps causing lack of communication and cognitive functioning accelerate psychopathological symptoms (Hindley et al. 1994; Moeller 2007; Fellingner et al. 2012) and internalizing their problems is expressed in a form of somatic complaints (Campo et al. 2004).

### **Methodology:**

#### **Objectives of the Study:**

The study aims to have an in-depth study of the people living with hearing impairment by comparing with normal hearing persons and the following objectives were framed for the present study:

- 1) To examine any significant difference between people living with hearing impaired and normal hearing on Somatization and Depression.
- 2) To elucidate any significant relationship between Somatization and Depression.
- 3) To determine the independent effect of 'hearing impairments' on Somatization and Depression.

#### **Hypothesis:**

The present study has a set-forth hypothesis to serve the objectives of the study, which are:

- 1) It was expected that a significant difference will be observed between people living with hearing impaired and normal hearing ability on Somatization and Depression Scale.
- 2) It was expected that a positive significant relationship between Somatization and Depression.
- 3) It was expected that a significant independent effect of hearing impairment Somatization and Depression

#### **Methodology and Procedures:**

**Samples:** Two hundred samples drawn from the Manipur State comprises of 100 severe hearing impaired (who were identified from the list of social

welfare department, Government of Manipur) and 100 of normal hearing which was well matched with hearing-impaired on socio-demographic variables following random sampling procedure, and the age range will be 14-18 years of age.

**Design:** The design was a Correlational design intending to compare the hearing impaired and normal hearing on selected variables to determine the effect of Hearing impairments.

**Psychological scales used:** Symptoms Check List (Derogatis, 2012) having high reliability ( $\alpha$ : 0.72 y 0.97) and consists of 90 items. It assesses nine symptom dimensions but the present study used only the depression and somatization subscale due to time limitations.

**Procedure:** The researcher procured the selected psychological test, and has to translate it into local language with due care of methodological obligation to check its applicability in the population under study. Hearing-impaired samples selection was done from the list of people living with hearing-impaired maintained by Manipur government Hospital and

Registered NGOs to the government of Manipur. The normal samples were identified with an attempt to have a well matching to the people living with hearing-impaired on age, sex, ecology, hearing ability and so on to prevent confounding variables. All necessary permission and consent were taken from significant persons (participants, authorities, etc). The conduction of the psychological scales was done in individual conditions following the prescribed manual and APA code of research ethics (APA, 2002).

**Results:** The raw data was checked for missing and outlier and no such thing was there, then workout for psychometric adequacy for the targeted population. The Mean, SD, SEM, Skewness and kurtosis were within the normality. The reliability showed its trustworthiness that  $\alpha$  = .61 for depression and  $\alpha$  = .67 for Somatization; the homogeneity of variance showed non-significant for both depression (.37 NS) and somatization (.42 NS). The results of psychometric property check evinced that the scale was highly applicable to the targeted population, and the data was fit for application of parametric statistics for further analysis.

**Table: Showing Mean, SD, SEM, Normality, Reliability, Homogeneity, t-test, ANOVA, and Correlations**

	Hearing Impaired		Normal Hearing		Total Samples	
Stats	Depression	Somatization	Depression	Somatization	Depression	Somatization
Mean	18.6	7.6	13.44	4.56	16.02	6.08
SD	2.12	1.16	2.09	1.09	2.11	1.13
Skewness	-0.41	-0.72	0.31	0.64	-0.36	-0.68
Kurtosis	-1.29	1.38	-1.23	0.84	-1.26	-1.11
Reliability	Depression $\alpha$ =.61			Somatization: $\alpha$ =.67		
Homogeneity (Lavene's (test)	0.37			0.42		
t=test	Between HI and NH on Depression=2.92*			Between HI and NH on Somatization =2.81*		
Hearing impairment effect on Depression and Somatization(ANOVA)						
	Depression			Anxiety		
IV	F ratio	sig	Eta sq	F ratio	sig	Eta sq
He aring impairment	12.54	0	0.21	11.23	0.01	0.19
Correlations(Pearson's)between Depression and Somatization was r=.35*						

\*=significant at .01 levels (2 tails) \*\*=significant at .05 levels (2 tails)

The t-test showed a significant mean difference between the boys and girls on depression ( $t = 2.92$ ;  $p < .00$ ) that person with hearing-impaired having higher

depression ( $M = 18.60$ ) than Normal hearing ( $M = 13.44$ ), and the same trend found on somatization ( $t = 2.81$ ;  $p < .00$ ) that person with hearing-impaired

having higher somatization ( $M=7.60$ ) than Normal hearing ( $M=4.56$ ). Results showed that the children with hearing impaired and normal hearing children were significantly different on depression and somatization which accepted the first hypothesis of the study. Results depicted that depression and somatization had a significant positive correlations ( $r=.35^*$ ;  $p<.00$ ) which accepted the second hypothesis of the study.

The ANOVA results showed that hearing impairment had a significant independent effect on depression was significant ( $F=12.54$ ;  $p<.00$ ;  $\eta^2=.21$ ) with 22%, and on somatization ( $F=11.23$ ;  $p<.00$ ;  $\eta^2=.19$ ) with 19 %, that accepted the third hypothesis of the study.

### Discussion:

The findings of the study depicted that people with hearing impairment and normal hearing were different on depression and somatization; the somatization and depression had a positive significant relationship; and the independent effect of hearing impairments was found on depression and somatization. The overall findings support the hypotheses set forth for the study by highlighting the impending effect of hearing impairments on depression and somatization which could be the eye-opener for the vulnerability of hearing-impaired people

to all other psychological problems. In conclusion, despite limitations, children with hearing impairment have higher levels of depression and somatization symptoms than children with normal hearing. Results of the present study support earlier findings that Hearing-impaired children are more depressive than normally hearing children (Theunissen et al., 2011), the level of impairment has a positive relation with the psychopathological symptoms (Stephanie et al., 2015).

### Limitations:

The hearing impairments effect is massive having many consequences which could not cover in this study; more variables with bigger samples will be ideal to confirm this finding.

### Significant of the study:

The study revealed the difference of hearing impairment on depression and somatization that people with hearing impaired have higher depression than normal hearing which got the support of research findings (Gopinath et al., 2009); and both are positively related that depression and somatization as mentioned by earlier finding (Belli et al., 2008). Prevention and treatment of depression in hearing-impaired children could focus on the use of coping strategies adequately because these strategies have a direct relation with the level of depression.

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## Family Functioning of Intact and Non-Intact Families: A Study among Mizo Adolescents

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### ABSTRACT

*As societies develop, we observe more frequently cases in which there is absence of one parent due to reasons such as divorce, separation, and death. Dissolution of family unity brings along many challenges in the family members, resulting in higher risks of behavioural and emotional problems for the children. On the other hand, though parents may live together under the same roof, there can be difficulties which make intact family quite dysfunctional in reality as there could be various types of abuses and other difficulties behind the intact precept. The aim of this study was to study the effect of family structure (intactness vs. non-intactness) on family functioning while considering the effect of gender as well. The sample for the study comprised of randomly selected 396 Mizo adolescent, with their age ranging between 15 to 19 years, from randomly selected secondary and higher secondary schools in and around Aizawl, Mizoram, with equal sample size ( $n = 99$ ) across each condition of gender (male and female) and family structure (intact and non-intact families). Two-way ANOVA revealed no significant main effects and interaction effect for family structure and gender on family functioning. The results are discussed in relation to caregiving in family types and significant others in cultural perspectives.*

**Key words:** Family functioning, Intact and Non-Intact Families, Adolescent.

### 1. Introduction

Being regarded as the basic foundation of human societies, families may be described as carrying a universal characteristic, united within common goals, reciprocal rights and duties (Worsley, 1980). As societies develop, we observe more frequently cases in which there is absence of one parent due to reasons such as divorce, separation, and death (Gander & Gardiner, 1998). Intact families refer to families in which both biological parents are present in the home. Oxford English Dictionary defines an intact family as a nuclear family in which membership has remained constant, in the absence

of divorce or other divisive factors. Non-intact families, on the other hand, consist of families with parents that have been divorced, have always been single, as well as from the death of a spouse and the remarriage of the parent as well.

In many different societies, it is seen that the rapid social, economic, technological and cultural changes bring forth increasing stress and strains on traditional values, family structures, and adaptability to new environments. According to H.P. David (1978) "A healthy family functioning is defined in terms of a family unit (however it is conceived in any given culture) effectively coping with cultural, environmental, psychosocial, and socioeconomic stresses throughout the family lifecycle". It is the

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frequency of normal family routines, effectiveness of family communication and problem solving, family cohesiveness, and how well family members get along.

Though the parents may live together under the same roof, there can be difficulties which make intact family quite dysfunctional in reality as there could be various types of abuses and other difficulties. Some parents may even hide behind the 'intact' precept to conceal their wrongdoing from the grandparents, the law, and the neighbourhood while they are actually abusive and destructive for their families. Therefore the 'intactness' of a family doesn't necessarily mean it functions well. Thus, the 'intactness' of a marriage is not necessarily an indicator of the health of a marriage, and so does not always have to be rationalised as a predictor of a child's behavior.

On the other hand, it has been known that the break-up of family unity due to divorce, separation, or death bears the risk of behavioural and emotional problems for children (Harland, Reijneveld, Brugman, Verloove, and Verhulst, 2002). Children react in various ways to the break-up of their families according to their own development phases (Leung and Robson, 1990; Palmer 2002; Smart, 1980). Adolescents especially need parental support and an atmosphere of trust for their balanced growth, which may be absent when parents divorce (Amato, 1993; Kifli, 1990; Rosen, 1999; Weyburne, 2000). Such adolescents, exposed to marital discord are vulnerable to behavioural and emotional maladjustments (Davies, Cummings, & Winter, 2004). Though no family is perfect, even the functioning ones, it is more often found that children raised in intact families have, on average, higher academic achievement, better emotional health, and fewer behavioural problems as compared to children from non-intact families (South et al., 2005; Scott and Myers, 1996; Seijo et al., 2016; Yexley, 2002)

In spite of relatively late education system, as of the latest census in 2011, Mizoram is the second highest in literacy rate (91.58%) among the Indian states. Though there is a good atmosphere of learning in the state as a whole, we find students who do poorly in schools, and often times were found to be from non-intact families. It has been observed that

the teachers find it difficult to motivate them to do well in their studies. Many of them are unfortunately addicted to drugs and some of them are alcoholics even as early as in their early teenage years. These children are seen to have very low self-concept and fall prey to the various adjustment problems among their peers. They tend to do very poorly in schools and shift from one school to another. Many times, they are seen to be misfits in their family, locality as well as in the school.

The small North Eastern Indian State of Mizoram which has a population of just 10.97 lakhs, as per the Census 2011, has 27 licensed orphanages which speak about the increasingly alarming rate of non-intact homes. The incidence rates in divorce from the north-east states of India are relatively higher than in any other parts of the Country: Mizoram has the highest divorce rate (4.08%), more than four times that of Nagaland, the state with the second highest rate (0.88%). Till date neither any scientific literature has been provided on the cause of non-intact homes nor has there been any scientific study on the family functioning of these non-intact homes, or on the functioning of the intact homes for that matter.

In Mizoram, the negative effects of broken family are perhaps not seen as damaging as in other places in India as the children born out of wedlock and the children of the divorcees are observed to be generally taken care of by their grandparents or uncles and aunties. However, the upbringing of children by own parents can never be substituted. Having said these, the Mizo society as a whole has a bearing on this aspect of their growth and development. Outwardly, though they may appear to be happy and do not miss anything, in reality they could undergo tremendous agony and trauma. While the effects of a broken family on children's development in fact depend on many factors, including their age at time of their parent's separation, and on the strength and quality of their family relationships, they seem to experience several problems in their social, emotional and educational functioning (e.g. Seijo et al., 2016; Amato & Keith, 1991)

What affects the family functioning is the way the family is constructed or in other words, one can

say that it is the way the family either single or joint that affects the family functioning. In view of the above-mentioned presentation of the theoretical constructs and observations within the context of Mizoram and Aizawl city in particular, the current study was conducted with an aim to understand how the structure of families (intact and non-intact) affect the family functioning from the adolescents perspectives. For the purpose of defining the intactness of the family, families where the parents are either divorced or deceased (i.e. either parent) were considered as non-intact families while families of children where the parents are married at the time of the study were considered as intact families.

## 2. Objectives:

1. To determine the effect of family structure (intact versus non-intact) on family functioning among school-going adolescents in Aizawl.
2. To determine the gender differences in family functioning among the samples.

## 3. Hypothesis:

1. It is expected that family functioning of non-intact families will be poorer than intact families.
2. Gender differences are expected in measures of the dependent variables. Females are expected to perceive more family dysfunction than males.

## 4. Methods

### Sample:

The initial sample consisted of randomly recruited 424 adolescent participants, with their age ranging between 15 to 19 years, from randomly selected secondary and higher secondary schools in and around Aizawl, Mizoram. Data screening necessitated elimination of a few participants due to incomplete forms, outlier scores, ethnicity (non-Mizo), and the preference to maintain equal sample size in each cell of the design for statistical reasons. The final sample size came down to 396 (n = 99 across each condition of gender and family structure, i.e. intact and non-intact families). The Sociodemographic profile of the participants in the study may be seen in Table 1.

*Table 1: Sociodemographic profile of the participants.*

Characteristics	Intact		Non Intact	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	99	25	99	25
Female	99	25	99	25
Total	198	50	198	50
<i>Parents' Marital Status</i>				
Married	198	50	0	0
Married but separated	0	0	12	3
Divorced	0	0	134	33.8
Deceased (Either Parent)	0	0	52	30.1
Total	198	50	198	50
<i>Type of Family</i>				
Nuclear	145	36.6	100	25.3
Joint	53	13.4	98	24.7
Total	198	50	198	50

Note: N = 396 (n = 99 for each condition).

**Design:**

To address the objectives of the study, a two-way classification of variables of 'Gender' (male and female) and 'Family Structure' (Intact and Non-intact) was incorporated to examine family functioning in and across the groups.

**Psychological measure:**

*Family Assessment Measure – III (FAM-III; Skinner, Steinhauer, Santa-Barbara, 1995):* This is a self-report instrument that provides quantitative indices of family functioning in terms of its strengths and weaknesses. The FAM consists of three subscales viz., a General Scale, which focuses on the family as a system (50 items), a Dyadic Relationships Scale, which examines relationships between specific pairs (42 items), and a Self-Rating Scale, which taps the individual's perception of his or her functioning in the family (42 items). Only the General Scale that taps the family functioning as a whole was used for this study.

**Procedure:**

After the basic Sociodemographic information were obtained, the general scale of the Family Assessment Measure (FAM III) was carefully administered in groups of 40 or so in their classrooms, which took approximately 30 minutes. APA ethical

standards were maintained throughout the research. All the participants gave their informed consent, and the participants' right to privacy and confidentiality were assured, and they were also allowed to withdraw from participating in the study at any time. The data was analysed using SPSS 20.

**5. Results**

The Mean age of participants was 16.6 years (SD = 1.37), with their age ranging between 15 – 19 years. A total number of 396 adolescents make up the final sample for the study with equal sample across each cell of the design, viz. gender and family structure. Reliability testing of the scale yielded Cronbach's Alpha values within the range of 0.61 – 0.64 across each condition. Although Nunnally (1978) recommends 0.70 as a desirable value, Pallant (2001) recommends a value of 0.60 to be quite adequate. Moreover, it may be noted that the current study incorporates the whole general scale of the Family Assessment Measure III (FAM III) as a measure of the overall family functioning, i.e. family function as a unidimensional construct. This may affect the overall internal consistency of the scale resulting in low Cronbach's Alpha values for the scale. A multidimensional approach at studying family functioning using the same scale may yield better internal consistency of the scale.

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations and Levene's Test of Equality of Variances for the Scores of the Participants on FAM III (General Scale)**

Family Structure	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Levene's Test	
					F	p
Intact	Male	99	74.03	6.99	0.956	0.414
	Female	99	74	7.46		
	Total	198	74.01	7.21		
Non Intact	Male	99	74.07	7.76		
	Female	99	71.66	6.92		
	Total	198	72.86	7.43		

No violations of the assumptions for the statistics to be used were found on the FAM III. Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant (Table 2) indicating the

homogeneity of variances across the groups. Skewness and kurtosis also showed non-probability curve indicating a normal distribution of the test score as well.

Table 3: Results of Two Way ANOVA for testing the main effects and interaction effects of gender and family structure on family functioning

Source of Variation	Type III SS	df	MS	F	p	$\eta^2$
Family Structure	131.27	1	131.27	2.47	0.117	0.006
Gender	147.89	1	147.89	2.78	0.096	0.007
Interaction	140.65	1	140.65	2.64	0.105	0.007
Error	20841.74	392	53.17			
Total	21261.54	395				

The present study incorporated a factorial design to test the measure of family functioning under two conditions - intact and non-intact families. Results of the Two-way ANOVA (given in Table 3) indicated no statistically significant interaction between the effects of both variables ( $F(1, 392) = 2.64, p = .105$ ). Simple main effects analysis showed that gender did not have a statistically significant effect on family functioning ( $F(1, 392) = 2.78, p = .096$ ), and also that family structure has no statistically significant effect ( $F(1, 392) = 2.47, p = .117$ ). Accordingly, the effect sizes of the variables were also found to be minimal.

The impact of the intactness of the family structure has been depicted in numerous literary sources – with inconsistent findings. Studies by among Hong Kong Chinese adolescents Shek, Xie & Lin (2015; Yeung & Chan (2010)) reported poorer family functioning among non-intact families with perceived lower levels of parental behavioural control, lower level of paternal psychological control, and poorer parent-child relationship. Further, secondary problems have been found to be precipitated as a result of poor family functioning among non-intact families in a study among American young adolescents (Hemovich & Crano, 2009). Nato (2016) Chala Chew & Lakshmi (2013) also found that, from a sample of Kenyan and Ethiopian students, children of non-intact families fare poorly in academic performance than from intact nuclear families perhaps as a result of the disadvantages posited by lack of economic support, family support, parental motivation and home study environment.

Findings from the current study conducted among Mizo adolescents are not consistent with

findings from other cultures showing the negative impact of non-intactness on family functioning among adolescents. Instead, the findings support researches from cultures that report no significant effect of the family structure on family functioning. Researches contradicting findings from other researches showing the negative impact of non-intact family structure report factors that may be regarded as – more or less – ‘protective factors’ against such an impact. For example, Hornberger, Zabriskie, & Freeman (2010) found that leisure involvement among family members predicted family functioning strongly despite the structure. Agate, Zabriskie & Eggett (2007) also found that religiosity and leisurely activities among families such as ‘playing and praying together’ may contribute strongly to family functioning as well.

The Mizo community is a highly collectivistic culture whose members are largely influenced by their collectivistic values (see Fente & Singh, 2008), and by their religious beliefs (Haokip, 2013) and practices of collective worship in Sunday schools and youth fellowships especially for the youngsters. Accordingly, there is a need to look at the families within Mizoram in a slightly different way, which is very unique for the State. For the study, families where the parents are either divorced or deceased (i.e. either parent) were taken to be non-intact families while families of children where the parents’ marriage are intact were categorized as intact families.

Our findings revealed no significant differences in the way family function between these two families - intact and non-intact. This may be attributed to the fact that some of these non-intact children come from joint families where they are well looked after by

either their grand-parents, other blood relatives, or significant others in the community or church. Further, as 31% of the non-intact families were due to death and not divorce, such factors may impact the findings. Timonen, Doyle & O'Dwyer (2009) also found that grandparents stabilizing forces in the lives of their grandchildren at the time of divorce among the Irish population, and Ruiz & Silverstein (2007) noted that children of single parents in the U.S. tend to show less signs of mental illnesses when the relationship with their grandparents is cohesive. Moreover, extended families can provide support through trying times such as illness, unemployment, or divorce (Eggebeen and Hogan 1990; Hogan et al. 1993). Also, non-governmental societies and religious organizations often take care of the need of the children, which is a complimentary feature of the Mizo society. As a result, such children, though technically known as children of non-intact families, may function comparably to children from intact families.

## 6. Conclusion

The current study was designed to lay the groundwork for future research into the impact of family structure on family functioning among Mizo adolescents. The results show that there is no significant effect of family on family functioning in the samples, as well as no significant effect of gender and no significant interaction effect between gender and family structure. Thus, non-intact families do not appear to be necessarily perceived as dysfunctional by the adolescents. Research on the relationship between family structure and family functioning tend to yield inconclusive results anyway, with the current

study leaning toward those describing no significant influence of the former on the latter.

There are some limitations to the study as well. No investigation was conducted into the effects of the recentness of divorce or reason for non-intactness (death or divorce) among the participants coming from non-intact families. Given that the recent divorce may be an additional stressor for parents (e.g., Hald et al., 2020c), it is likely that this will affect the relationship between family structure and family functioning. Furthermore, the current study conceptualises family intactness based on structural composition rather than the relationship quality within the family; additionally, the type of family ('joint' or 'nuclear') and its influences on the relationship between the variables were not addressed. Further, the reason for non-intactness such as death as opposed to divorce may have differential effects on the significant others in terms of their empathy and sympathy for the children. Further research in this area must take these limitations into consideration.

The current study, on the other hand, has significant implications as a literary source for future family research as well as a source of information for parents and professionals working with families, keeping in mind that non-intact families may not be necessarily dysfunctional. The impact of grandparents and extended families, the community, and significant others on the lives of children from non-integrated families can be examined further, with a focus on the Mizo culture's collectivistic nature. This may also prove useful in the developments of childcare policies in the future.

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## Health-Related Quality of Life and Perceived Social Support Among People Living With HIV/AIDS: A Study Among Mizo

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### ABSTRACT

*This study is an attempt to obtain the level of Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) and its correlation with Perceived Social Support (PSS) among people living with HIV/AIDS. The study employed 2X2 factorial design by comparing people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and non-infected persons (non-PLWHA) and gender (male and female). The result shows significant difference between People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and non-PLWHA in HRQoL ( $p < .01$ ) and positive correlation between HRQoL and Perceived Social Support ( $p < .01$ ) is obtained from the data collected for this study.*

**Keywords:** Health-related Quality of Life, Perceived Social Support, People Living with HIV/AIDS

### 1. Introduction

People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) often report poorer Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) than that of the general population, especially after the diagnosis of HIV. This may be related to the psychological and physiological demands of HIV disease, social stressors, or demographic factors. Many studies have observed that social support – particularly perceived social support (PSS) – is one of the most important assets in coping with HIV infection and related distress (e.g., Turner-Cobb et al., 2002; Gonzalez et al., 2004; Earnshaw et al., 2015). More specifically, perceiving a high availability of support may enhance adjustment to HIV infection directly through improved adherence to treatment (e.g., Ashton et al., 2005; Alemu et al., 2012) and also indirectly through buffering the effect of HIV-related stigma on mental functioning and quality of

life among these patients (Bekele et al., 2013; Breet et al., 2014).

According to Cohen and Wills (1985), social support can influence health through two models: the main/direct effects model and the stress-buffering model. In the main/direct effect model, social support influences one's health directly. That is, higher social support is directly related to greater Quality of Life (QOL) or lack of social support is directly associated with low level of QOL (Herzer, Zeller, Rausch, & Modi, 2011). In the stress-buffering model, social support is supposed to have indirect effect on health by preventing stressors or reducing the severity of stressors. The extant literature has identified that higher social support has been linked to low levels of depression (McDowell & Serovich, 2007), which in turn, is associated with better QOL (Burgoyne & Renwick, 2004; Vyavaharkar et al., 2011).

Some investigations have showed the importance of the relationship between social support and HRQoL in men and women living with HIV. Although social support and HRQoL are important

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factors that affect the health of HIV patients, few studies have been done in these fields. Since most of the research has been conducted in developed countries, there is no guarantee that these results can be generalized to the populations of developing countries. Social support and HRQoL of people in these countries can vary from what people in developed countries are facing.

According to Unique Identification Aadhar India, Mizoram population in 2022 is estimated to be 1.27 million (12.7 Lakhs) and it is the second smallest state in India. But Mizoram stands highest in adult HIV/AIDS prevalent rate at sub-national level. The study on this regard might help the infected persons to identify themselves and persons working in this field might be able to gain knowledge from this study about the level of contributing factor this social support can have on these infected persons' quality of life. This study is an attempt to obtain the level of HRQoL and its correlation with perceived social support among people living with HIV/AIDS. While the number of PLWH has been increasing day by day in Mizoram, research on health-related quality of life and social support has so far been limited. An extensive review of literature found no published articles focusing on health-related quality of life and perceived social support in Mizoram. It is therefore felt necessary to explore this aspect. The overall consideration would not only help satisfy to achieve the theoretical and methodological considerations but would provide foundations for behavioural intervention programs and further extended studies.

## 2. Objectives and Methodology

Given the theoretical and methodological foundations pertaining to the research problem, the present study has put forward the following objectives:

1. To determine the levels of Health-Related Quality of life (HRQoL) in PLWHA and non-PLWHA.
2. To explore the relationship between degree of Perceived Social Support and degree of HRQoL among PLWHA and non-PLWHA.
3. To highlight gender differences between the variables under study.

## 3. Hypotheses:

Following the review of literatures pertaining to Health-Related quality of Life and Perceived Social Support among PLHIV and the research objectives put forward, it is hypothesized that: -

1. The level of HRQoL of PLWHA will be low in comparison to non-PLWHA.
2. There will be a significant positive correlation between the levels of health-related quality of life and perceived social support among PLWHA.
3. There will be significant gender differences on the variables under study.

## Methods and Procedure

### Sample:

Purposive random sampling procedure was used for the present study. 200 PLWHA and 200 non-PLWHA, 400 in total who were young adults between the ages of 20 to 40 (Sandrock, 2013) from Aizawl district and were willing to participate were selected to serve as subjects for the study. The study was carried out in Aizawl district, in agencies such as Care and Support Centre and NGOs within Aizawl district. PLWHA who were the beneficiaries of these agencies constituted the universe for this study. The non – PLWHA sample was randomly selected based on the above age group.

### Design of the Study

To achieve the objectives, the study incorporated two-way classification of the variable of 'Status of Participant' (PLWHA and non-PLWHA) and another two-way classification of variable of 'Gender' (Male and Female) on the dependent variables to elucidate the level of health-related quality of life and its correlation with perceived social support.

Psychological Tools used: In order to determine the level of HRQoL 36 Item Short Form Survey (Ware and Sherbourne 1992) was used. Further, the perceived social support statuses of the subjects were examined using Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (Zimet et al., 1988). A pilot study was conducted to ensure participant comprehension.

#### 4. Results:

**Table 1: Mann-Whitney U Test to determine significant difference between PLWHA and non-PLWHA in Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) using 36 Item Scale.**

	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
Non-PLWHA	200	242.1	0
PLWHA	200	158.9	0

The result in table 1 shows that there was a significant difference between PLWHA and non-PLWHA in health-related quality of life ( $p < .01$ ). Based on mean rank, the table further shows that PLWHA scored lower in 36 Item Scale than non-PLWHA which signifies that PLWHA were lower in health-related quality of life than non-PLWHA.

**Table 2: Spearman's Coefficient of Correlation between Health-Related Quality of Life (36 Item scale) and Perceived Social Support (PSS) in HIV infected subjects/PLWHA.**

		36 Item Scale	PSS
36 Item Scale	Correlation Coefficient	1	.220**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	0.002
	N	200	200
PSS	Correlation Coefficient	.220**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	.
	N	200	200

Table 2 shows there was significant correlation between health-related quality of life and perceived social support at  $p < .01$  level. The result obtained signifies those persons who scored high in 36 Item Scale also scored high in Perceived Social Support Scale among HIV infected subjects/PLWHA.

**Table 3.1: Mann-Whitney U Test to determine significant gender difference between Male and Female participants in Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) using 36 Item Scale.**

	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
Male	200	217.62	0.003
Female	200	183.38	0.003

The result in table 3.1 shows that there was a significant gender difference between male participants and female participants in health-related quality of life ( $p < .01$ ). Based on mean rank, the table further shows that female participants scored lower in 36 Item Scale than male participants which signifies those female participants were lower in health-related quality of life than those male participants.

**Table 3.2: Mann-Whitney U Test to determine significant gender difference between Male and Female participants in Perceived social Support (PSS).**

	N	Mean Rank	Sig.
Male	200	210.08	0.098
Female	200	190.93	0.098

The result in table 3.2 shows there was no significant gender difference between male participants and female participants in perceived social support. The result obtained shows that there was no sufficient gender difference between male and female participants in perceived social support even though there was a slight difference in mean rank.

#### 4. Summary and Conclusion:

From the result obtained in this study, it was found out that there was a significant difference between PLWHA and non-PLWHA in health-related quality of life as it was hypothesized before that the level

of HRQoL of PLWHA will be low in comparison to non-PLWHA. This finding is consistent with study conducted by Pozniak in 2014 which specified that the HRQoL of people with HIV is generally lower than that of the general population. This study is also congruent with the study conducted by Drewes et al. in 2013. Even though 95% of the PLWHA participants in this study were registered ART clients, they still scored lower than non-PLWHA in health-related quality of life which means that PLWHAs were having more health-related problems than non-infected persons. The result obtained support hypothesis 1 which predicted that the level of HRQoL of PLWHA will be low in comparison to non-PLWHA.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that there will be a significant positive correlation between the levels of health-related quality of life and perceived social support among PLWHA. From the result obtained in this study, there was a significant positive correlation between health-related quality of life and perceived social support among PLWHA. The finding suggested that those participants who scored low in health-related quality of life were also found scored low in perceived social support scale which signifies those persons who had good social support system also had better health quality of life. The study is consistent with the study conducted by Turner et al. in 2002, which signified that HIV infection has been found to dampen social support and lead to psychological

distress, and deterioration of their quality of life and life satisfaction. The study is also congruent with the study conducted by Herzer et al. in 2011, which signified that higher social support is directly related to greater quality of life or lack of social support is directly associated with low level of quality of life.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that there will be significant gender differences on the variables under study. From the result obtained, it was found out that there was significant gender difference in health-related quality of life and the mean rank further suggested that male participants were higher in quality of life than female participants. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Tesfay et al. in 2015 which suggested that female HIV patients usually showed lower quality of life than their male counterparts. But there was no significant gender difference in perceived social support score which signifies that there was no sufficient gender influence on perceived social support.

Based on the result obtained in this study, we can certainly conclude that people living with HIV/AIDS are prone to have lower quality of life than the general population which can be affected by the disease itself or other influencing factors. Whilst, social support is one of the most important contributing factors for the improvement of their quality of life. So, it is necessary to make an intervention and support system to improve the physical and mental health of the infected persons.

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## Syphilis in the Colonial Chittagong Division

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### ABSTRACT

*Syphilis was one the devastative diseases that sapped the European soldiers already in a tough situation with the harassing tropical climate in India. The cooperation between indigenous and imperial medicine could be seen at a time when confidence on imperial medicine was almost lost. Data from colonial ethnographers or else, including Finch's demand for indigenous medicinal queries under the light of statistical evidence purported that syphilis took the shape of epidemic and was a cause of much sufferings. The Chittagong Division also showed innumerable cases of syphilis before and after the findings of Fritz Schaudinn and Erich Hoffman.*

**Keywords:** Chittagong, syphilis, colonizers, soldiers, medical.

### Syphilis Disease:

Venereal disease enjoyed least enthusiasm to modern historians and the political historians in particular have drawn their understanding in seeing little connection between sexually transmitted diseases and the business of politics and governance.<sup>1</sup> There was no theories on syphilis whether moral, political and scientific and no concern raised on the dreaded 'fevers' of India or it was absolutely rare by 1840s.<sup>2</sup> In post-Mutiny British India, venereal diseases and the various legislative means enacted from the 1860s to combat them spawned a lengthy controversy, spilling over into Lord Kitchener's military administration early in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> All these discourses finally led to a number of enactments published in controlling this epidemic. The venereal disease was considered dreadful than small-pox and cholera as there was no other contagious and non-infectious disease except venereal, which was

dangerous to the public health.<sup>4</sup> Considering the havoc syphilis created at that time juncture, query on colonial Chittagong Division, one of the most backward division of Bengal Province, reserves the right to be a subject matter which would generate glaring information. This paper intends to serve the information on syphilis available in archives and further analyze the same to reach to conclusion. It covers the period from pre World War I to post World War I. It is known that no war was fought in any of the front in Chittagong Division as it was a part of British colony as basically the war was Western in nature and content and Southeast Asia has practically remained aloof perhaps. As colony was born to serve the colonizers 'the master of the colonies' unintentionally Southeast India was dragged into the war to quench the thirst of their masters and this seems to be the fate of Chittagong Division in the Bengal Province also. As this paper sides with the intention to find out the archival record available on primary and secondary syphilis patients treated indoor and out-door in various dispensaries, including

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police hospital records, within the division, it left no room for any other kind of involvement with the colonizers in their ruling India. This paper intends to highlight the sway of syphilis and its intensity in various parts of the division it encompasses not only district dispensaries records but also throw light on the record of dispensaries at the headquarters level of the district. This paper would also study the spread of primary and secondary syphilis in the in-door and out-door treatment arranged by the colonizers. The collapse or survival of primary and secondary syphilis patients in terms of gender is also recorded to make it more interesting and insights.

As the study is concerned only with archival records, in a situation where no interpretation is available, it would no doubt be called as its limitation. It is also to be understood that the fair weather, in terms of conflict, of Chittagong Division did not demand much of soldier movements but the movements perhaps took place and that too, to war front in Europe at the soul wish of the colonizers. The movement definitely has lead to some limitations as the body of soldiers kept on moving sometimes to war front adversely had an impact on the analyzing part of the archival record. Leaving apart the to and fro movement of soldiers from cantonment one can come across a common question and that is, whether the soldiers lead intermixed life with the indigenous people especially with harlots or not, if not how they got affected with the venereal disease. In general most cantonments had connection with bunch of harlots and the history of relation between soldier and harlots is not new but was there since time immemorial. The only difference is the harlots were sometimes indigenous or white skinned who travelled across seas and lands with soldiers. Were the soldiers responsible to carry and spread the syphilis in the Chittagong Division mediated by the harlots? Did the disease enter the cantonment mediated by the harlots or else which was popular among the indigenous people in the division? This part would be left for further research.

#### **Syphilis in Francis Buchanan's tour diary: -**

Francis Buchanan's tour diary record of 1798 speaks of venereal diseases, a rare disease, among

the hilly tribal people as few of them often visit the harlots as they come down to the bazaars of Chittagong to marketing. However, one thing is prominent that few people opted to visit harlots whether hilly tribal people or people in plain region. Human psychological nature of demand and supply could befit the situation. To soldiers no fear of prestige, no fear of inferiority, no tension of likes or dislikes vis-à-vis rejection whereas the indigenous had every fear. If one understands this logically then one would with reasonable sense pinpoint the soldiers to be the one who indulged more with harlots which led to the spread of syphilis in the cantonment? However, the indigenous people cannot be freed fully from the allegation either.

#### **Promiscuous:**

To understand the societal atmosphere of the promiscuous women information is figured out which would draw interest to many and even serve as an eye opening to the harassing condition they underwent throughout their various stages of life. Harlotry has always been an integral part in any society the world over. It is understandable that woman played an important part in satisfying mans physical desire and for this reason the British soldiers also had a band of promiscuous followers which dates back to at least 1818.<sup>5</sup> These unfortunate women travelled far and wide with the British regiment in a notorious tropical climate, which was quite adverse to European natural habitat. Their health condition matters, as they may not be up to the level of performing their expected unwritten assigned duty. The reasons for taking such risk could vary from want of food to living a hopeful life with unholy elements. It is also true that these women were not unaware about Indian conditions and life and also that it may not be possible in easy way to go back home if one desires. Under such circumstances they travelled to India. Probably, the tough life of harlots in UK depicts strain and sick economic conditions in colonizers headquarters. With the appearance of harlots in India there started a new generation of framing rules and regulations within which they, from now on, were

accommodated. One of the premier rules that came about was of provision within each Cantonment of a Lock Hospital for (a) the periodical examination of the registered women, and (b) the treatment therein of such as proved on inspection to be diseased. The compulsion of fine and imprisonment under the Rules and expulsion powers were vested in the Cantonment Magistrate.<sup>6</sup>

In 1805 the first venereal “lock” hospitals in India were established in the Madras presidency under the supervision of the civil magistracy<sup>7</sup> which were maintained by the British government in India and were generally filled with innumerable patients. However the government was not very successful in its mission towards lock hospitals because of opposition from the natives.<sup>8</sup> The term that were attached to lock hospitals in Bengal was *mahaldarni* and she is known by this and the *dhai* was the woman in charge of the women at the lock hospital. The nurse was probably the *dhai* but the *mahaldarni* was sometimes called the *dhai*.<sup>9</sup> In the Chittagong division also as the largest population being Bengali it can be assumed that the system would have been in vogue in this region as well. Archival sources shows innumerable syphilis patients treated in various dispensaries in Chittagong division in the 20<sup>th</sup> century A.D. this proves that the concept of lock hospital or its replica was also extended to this part of Bengal province.

During the time of Company’s rule up to 1857 and before the imposition of direct British rule in 1858, local enactments had established regular examination of women as well as hospitals for their reception when diseased.<sup>10</sup>

It is interesting to note that the British were unaware of the Indian cast system and strongly believed that prostitution was a hereditary caste profession within Hindu society, an assumption that sat very comfortably with general theories about the morals of the “Orient”<sup>11</sup> as degradation of being Indian has always been the agenda of the British to prove their superiority over the natives. This qualification of the natives projected by the British signifies the slave and master relationship.

Prostitution has definitely overwhelmed the medical system of the colonizers in relation to cantonment and politics swung around especially in the last part of the nineteenth century. 6<sup>th</sup> August 1888 was a remarkable date and year because the registration of prostitutes was not only forbidden by then but also the government has shown satisfaction and that this was particularly followed in places where European troops were posted. However, this action did not include Assam and Punjab Frontier Force, where there were no European troops.<sup>12</sup> European women who lead a dissolute life in Madras, as also of those left without protection<sup>13</sup> is given in the table given below.

Table: I

Names	Whether married or not	To what regiment belonged	Ostensible employment	Remarks
W Burns	Unmarried	The Royals		The leader of a dissolute life
Eliza Williams	Unmarried	From New South Wales formerly kept by Ensign Ross of HM 46th Regiment		Ensign Ross having left her, she has since lived with another Gentleman by whom she has been left with two children and has now no protector. The dates of the correspondence with Government regarding this woman are 6 October and 4 December 1818. 18 & 19 January, 4 & 16 March 1819
Mrs. Stone alias Pye	Unmarried	HM 25th Light Division		She is kept at present by Sergeant Pye employed at the Deputy Adjutant General’s Office King’s Troops

Mary Ann McMullen	Unmarried	HM 80th Reg't		This woman was with Mr. W Parr before and he has undertaken to send her home
Mrs. Cuningham	Married	The Royals	None	Her husband is at Trichinopoly with his Regiment and she has been at Madras for some years prostituting herself, and sometimes begging, etc.
Mrs. Thompson	Married	The Royals		Her husband is in England, and she is reported to be now in the General Hospital.

Source: Letter to the Secretary to Government from Mr. Ormsby, Superintendent of Police, 22 February 1823. TNSA Fort St George Public Consultations, 28 February 1823.

### Backdrop of England's thinking on promiscuous women: -

Far away, from tropical weather, in England the discourse on the issue of prostitutes had taken a turn and coerced the House of Commons to have discussion on the matter. It was Mrs. Elizabeth Wheeler Andrew who stated that women were detained in hospital not only when diseased, but during the monthly period similar evidence was received from Dr. Kate Bushnell and that the women were treated violently by the soldiers especially when drunk depicted the deplorable condition of many of the women<sup>14</sup> she also stated that information was obtained from more than 300 persons upon whose testimony the evidence of witness was largely based and that her statements was based also on hospital records and other documentary evidence. Evidence of Mrs. Elizabeth Wheeler Andrew as regards the *chaklas*, hospitals, examinations and else were collected from the women through interpreters as collected through missionary inquiry. Conclusion expressed in statement handed in by Lord Roberts that the evidence of the missionary ladies is in the main correct. It is also that women suspected of imparting disease were haunted up and sent to hospital for examination. Testimony of the women as to the compulsion upon them to attend for examination; exception as regards women who consort with native soldiers and that no compulsory examination applied in the case of other contagious diseases, besides venereal disease.<sup>15</sup> It was General Chapman the Quartermaster-General in a response to Lord Cross query stated that the regimental system of dealing with prostitutes had been in force in the

Bengal Presidency since the time of the East India Company.<sup>16</sup> From the realm of religious think-tank we find the sheer inclination on the prostitution issue it was the Bishop of Lichfield who, also called attention in House of Lords to the existence of official regulations for provision of prostitutes in regimental bazaars, British and native.<sup>17</sup> Again it was Mr. Williamson who asked the Under Secretary of State for India whether he has acknowledged of the scandal of licensing of prostitutes in military stations in India by the public and military authorities and also that whether he is aware that at Sitapur there was one licensed harlot to every 11 soldiers and that number of women were sent by the commanding officer as an escort to the men *en route* to the exercise camp also talks about the issue at its highest esteem.<sup>18</sup> However, under such circumstances when London seek to know more on the prostitution issue it was the General Officers Commanding in Bengal responded to a query in negative as to whether registration of prostitution was in force in any cantonment under their respective commands.<sup>19</sup> with this came about some enactments. On 21<sup>st</sup> December 1889 a new Cantonment Act (Act XIII of 1889) came into force that allowed for the forced expulsion from the cantonment of any 'diseased' individual refusing treatment or leaving hospital without permission.<sup>20</sup> Cantonment legislation in the late 1890s continued to allow for the identification and banishment of prostitutes from military areas.<sup>21</sup> However, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1890 the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland adopted a memorial to the Secretary of State for India protesting against the new Cantonments Act, and pointed out that the Indian



Government had disregarded the Resolution of Parliament and Lord Cross's own instructions in despatch of May 17<sup>th</sup> 1888 notwithstanding these various protests these Rules were finally ratified on 4<sup>th</sup> July 1890.<sup>22</sup>

It can be argued that the era that invested time into syphilis thinking, at least before the Cantonment Act (Act XIII of 1889), pronounced punishment<sup>23</sup> for a situation that was not known properly to the colonizers but majority think-tank assumed some generated systems to be right to a great extent. In the later phase of its scientific development of queries on syphilis, it was found that, the element of climate on the primary syphilis issue hardly enjoys any importance if one undermines the secondary symptoms. There is in fact an additional gravity attached to the disorder, as it was one of the most fertile predisposing causes of endemic disease which could exist.<sup>24</sup> The attempt to control venereal contagion rested largely on the control of female prostitution and prostitution was believed to be the cause of the origin of venereal affliction.<sup>25</sup>

### **Synthesis of indigenous and imperial treatment and syphilis: -**

No experiments or tactics worked for the colonizers and their succumbing to syphilis coerced them once more to look upon for cross-fertilization between Indian and European medical practices in India. Perhaps tellingly, Finch was one of the very few surgeons who admitted approaching *hakims* to discern which methods they utilised in the treatment of venereal disease.<sup>26</sup> The Quartermaster General's Circular of the 17<sup>th</sup> June 1886 suggested the establishment of a native medical school for the study of venereal disease was issued under witness instructions in consequence of disease being then terribly rife among the natives.<sup>27</sup> It was only in 1905 that Fritz Schaudinn and Erich Hoffman identified the syphilis bacterium, *treponema pallidum*. It took a further four years until Sahachiro Hata's discovery of the anti-syphilitic properties of Arsphenamine, an arsenicbased compound, were developed into the commercial cure, Salvarsan. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries therefore,

treatments for venereal infections were based on only the most uncertain medical understandings and included mercury, magnesia, sarsaparilla and potassium-arsenic compounds, among other (potentially lethal) cures. Burke, Clarke asserted, failed to take into account the fact of the greater levels of virulence of syphilis at stations where lock hospitals had not been present. Clark argued that syphilis was a disease of the poor. It was found that syphilis in India was different from its European counterpart. The system of compulsion and forced treatment as was forwarded by Inspector General of Hospitals Burke, was endorsed officially by Governor-General Bentinck.<sup>28</sup> For instance, in 1909, a scion of a zamindar family in Dhaka, Kumar Ramendra Narayan, who was suffering from syphilis at an advanced stage, when ulcers were breaking on to his arms and legs.<sup>29</sup> However, way back in 1822 'Western' medical education began in Calcutta in combination with classes in Ayurvedic and Unani medicine.<sup>30</sup> This system of Hindu and Yunani medicine was given in Calcutta early in the nineteenth century in the Sanskrit College and in the Madrasa. This instruction, however, was given entirely by lectures and by reading, no attempt was made at dissection or practical work. The first real medical school in India was the school for training native doctors, established in Calcutta by G.O.G.G. of 21st June, 1822, published in the C.G. of 27<sup>th</sup> June, 1822. In Eatwell's introductory lecture it is stated that these classes were established in 1826.<sup>31</sup> In between the World Wars the decision that Western medical standards should alone determine the education which Indian students should receive, and it resulted in a hardening of the divisions between 'Western' (or 'allopathic') doctors and their indigenous counterparts.<sup>32</sup> The colonial scientist, who was a member of a relatively small group of men oriented toward an external scientific culture, is to be replaced during the course of phase 3 by a scientist whose major ties are within the boundaries of a country in which he works.<sup>33</sup> As Chittagong division was a part of Bengal Province the rules laid from time to time also affected the region. The huge turnout of syphilis patients for treatment as shown in the given table in remarkable and it could also be that many more were

left untreated in colonial dispensaries whereas took the shelter of 'baidya' (native physician who were expert in plant medicine). It is understandable that some 150 or 200 hundred years back getting into dispensaries would have been a great ask on the part of the natives, that too treatment on this kind of disease, as the society was much rigid and outcast was always a method to stay away from such people who were affected with a disease not very much welcomed by the natives.

### **Soldiers, Europeans and syphilis: -**

Doctors proclaimed that a large number of the men were rendered permanently invalid by the aggressive and complicated relationship between syphilis and other diseases. As a result, the men were sent before the invaliding board and from there back to London (at a loss to Crown and Company).<sup>34</sup> Syphilis haunted colonial cantonment and the disease easily proved to be one that harassed the colonizers for years and because of this reason in 1859, London has sanctioned an 'experimental' lock hospital in Bengal<sup>35</sup> to combat the disease that left the soldiers in havoc. Attempts to control the health of soldiers through the control of the women with whom they slept was not new to India in the 1860s.<sup>36</sup>

As the European soldiers suffered terribly in numbers it was obvious that experiments were geared-up but detection of venereal disease and the difficulty of differentiating between syphilis and gonorrhoea, presented a major barrier to effective and it was not until 1879 that scientists formally established a distinction between gonorrhoea and syphilis.<sup>37</sup> This experiment has at least demarcated the hinge in scientific research on this particular issue. The extent of overpower of syphilis on British soldiers in Bengal was almost 50 per cent and hence it was felt not unreasonable assumption that inspections of those most likely to spread the contagion would not only be made if voluntarily applied for, but would be compulsorily enforced.<sup>38</sup> In India regiments were haunted on regular basis and the record of Madras speaks greatly of this disease. Regimental surgeons

sought inexpensive methods of treatment and prevention for syphilis and gonorrhoea which would have the least impact on the men. The system of regulated prostitution was the product of these fears. Supporters of this system argued that it would reduce venereal disease by providing the men with a 'healthy' pool of women who were closely monitored for any signs of disease. However, the primary syphilis, treatment took four to six weeks.<sup>39</sup> Since 1870 it was an accepted notion that there was a great increase of venereal disease throughout the army in India<sup>40</sup> and attempt was made for the better prevention of the spread of disease in the army from 1876 to 1886 for which circulars issued from the Quartermaster General's Department which included examination.<sup>41</sup> Before 1888 the Regimental system existed in India which provided for the residence in regimental bazaars of registered prostitutes and the care and supervision was bestowed on the commanding officers both in Cantonments and in camp or on the march.<sup>42</sup> According to Dispatch No. 193, dated 15<sup>th</sup> October 1888, the Indian Government reported that the residence of prostitutes within regimental limits, or their accompanying troops to camps, or on the line of march has been forbidden and all compulsory examination of women, all registration of women and granting of licenses to practice prostitution have been put a stop to, and the hospitals in which prostitutes may be treated were to be worked as voluntary institutions.<sup>43</sup> In 1893 there was a direction from the Commander-in-Chief to submit for the information of the Government of India, the accompanying reports, showing the action taken by General Officers Commanding Districts in this Presidency regarding the discontinuance of the registration and compulsory examination of prostitutes in Cantonments, their expulsion from regimental bazaars and prohibition from accompanying regiments on the march.<sup>44</sup>

### **Syphilis in Chittagong Division: -**

The following statement shows the extent to which venereal disease has prevailed amongst the British troops serving in Bengal: -<sup>45</sup>

Table: II Venereal disease in British troops in Bengal Province

Year	Average annual strength, deducting troops marching or on active service	Total number of admissions from all venereal diseases	Ratio per thousand average annual strength
1889	40,917	20,416	499
1890	39,958	20,328	508.7
1891	38,517	15,698	407.6
1892	40,448	17,141	423.8
		Yearly average	459.7

Table II shows that the total number of admissions from all venereal diseases reported was 73583 since 1889 till 1892. The report cannot be underestimated as this huge number counted within a mere four years. The highest number recorded was in 1889 followed by 1890, the following year was bit milder in terms of numbers and again in 1892 it showed an upward inclination. However, the average number of affected people was 18395.75. The per cent of people suffering from venereal diseases was 46.03 which was astonishingly high. Almost half of the people were affected by the disease.

Table: III Annual Statement of in-door and out-door patients treated

Name of Police Hospitals	Primary syphilis	Secondary syphilis
Tippera	13	2
Noakhali	5	3
Chittagong	-	2
Rangamati	-	4
Bandarban	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>
Name of Dispensary	Primary syphilis	Secondary syphilis
Chittagong	2	6
Pahartoli	-	1
Laksam	-	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>
Name of Dispensary	Primary syphilis	Secondary syphilis
Camilla	91	52
Lady Dufferin Faizanessa Zanana Hospital, Comilla	12	23
Brahmanbaria	5	72
Ramchunderpur	36	18
Chandpur	87	101
Moradnagar	15	31
Nasirnagar	2	23
Kasab	2	7

Chaudagram	-	8
Hajiganj	5	3
Laksam	1	6
Markab	-	14
Nabinagar	8	21
Daudkandi	-	2
Bancharampur	5	-
Gouripur	108	82
Sarail	21	32
Bangora	6	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>508</b>
<b>Name of Dispensary</b>	<b>Primary syphilis</b>	<b>Secondary syphilis</b>
Noakhali Hospital	42	52
Dulal Bazar	29	32
Fenny	9	21
Harishpur (Sandwip)	-	9
Hatiya	5	4
Bogamganj	2	11
Ramganj	12	9
Bose's Hat	31	52
Fulgazi	-	4
Lakhimpur	16	15
Chhagalnaia	3	4
Nanda Bhueah	3	2
Ramgati	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>Name of Dispensary</b>	<b>Primary syphilis</b>	<b>Secondary syphilis</b>
Chittagong	41	58
Cox's Bazar	2	14
Phatikchari	-	30
Patiya	3	105
Mahajan's Hat	1	15
Kutubdia	1	4
Raojan	12	54
Satkania	-	15
Banigram	-	1
Pomera	-	-
Hathhazari	-	1
Sitakund	19	23

Eadgong	-	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>323</b>
Mahalcheri	3	8
Manicksheri	7	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>56</b>

Source: *Proceedings of the Hon'ble the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal during November 1904, Municipal Department, Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1904, West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata.*

The table given above shows that police hospitals in the Chittagong division recorded 13 primary syphilis patients treated in Tippera and Noakhali police hospital recorded only 5. Other police hospitals in Chittagong, Rangamati, Bandarban showed no primary syphilis patients treated and carried the total to 18. Secondary syphilis patients treated in police hospital were recorded highest with 4 in Rangamati followed by Noakhali with 3 and Chittagong and Tippera with 2 each patients, and the total being 11. Dispensaries in Camilla district recorded the highest number of primary syphilis patients at 404, dispensary at Gouripur in Camilla district recorded 108 and was the highest amongst the dispensaries in headquarters of different districts in the Chittagong Division extracted from the archival record of colonial rule of 1904. The least number of primary syphilis patients treated was recorded in Chittagong district with only 2.

As far as secondary syphilis was concerned, dispensaries in Camilla district recorded the highest number of treated patients with 508. Chittagong district followed Comilla district with 323 secondary syphilis patients and dispensary at Patiya in Chittagong district recorded 105 patients followed by Chandpur with 108 in the Comilla district. Noakhali district come third in terms of secondary syphilis patients treated with 221. The least number was recorded in Chittagong, Pahartoli, and Laksam with 11 treated patients.

**Table: IV: Syphilis (Primary and Secondary) patients treated in the State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided Dispensaries in Chittagong Division of Bengal Province**

Districts	1913		1914		1916		1917		1918		1920		1922			
	Number of dispensary	Class of dispensary	Syphilis (primary and secondary)	Number of dispensary	Class of dispensary	Syphilis (primary and secondary)	Number of dispensary	Class of dispensary	Syphilis (primary and secondary)	Number of dispensary	Class of dispensary	Syphilis (primary and secondary)	Number of dispensary	Class of dispensary	Syphilis (primary and secondary)	Number of dispensary
Chittagong	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-
	14	III	308	14	III	321	16	III	379	16	III	588	16	III	223	17
	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	1	IV	487	1
Total	14	-	308	14	-	321	16	-	379	16	-	588	16	-	710	18
Noakhali	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-
	12	III	164	12	III	188	12	III	136	15	III	182	15	III	225	17
	2	IV	45	4	IV	58	2	IV	51	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-
Total	-	-	209	16	-	246	14	-	187	15	-	182	15	-	225	17
Tippera	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-	I	-	-
	16	III	457	16	III	527	17	III	554	17	III	547	18	III	863	25
	1	IV	40	1	IV	69	1	IV	73	1	IV	66	1	IV	27	2
Total	17	-	497	17	-	596	18	-	627	18	-	613	19	-	890	27
Chittagong Hill Tracts	8	I	74	8	I	76	8	I	107	8	I	72	8	I	146	8
	-	III	-	-	III	-	-	III	-	-	III	-	-	III	-	-
	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-	IV	-	-
Total	8	-	74	8	-	76	8	-	107	8	-	72	8	-	146	8

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1913, Department Finance, Medical Branch, September 1914, West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1914, Department Finance, Medical Branch, July 1915, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1916, Department Financial, Medical Branch, September 1917, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1917, Department Finance, Medical Branch, August 1918, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1918, Department Finance, Medical Branch, December 1919, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1920, Department Local Self-Government, Medical Branch, April 1921, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Proceedings of the Government of Bengal for the year 1922, Local Self-Government Department, Medical Branch, June 1924, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Year 1913 indicates the number of primary and secondary Syphilis patients treated in Chittagong Division of Bengal. Tippera district with a total patient of 497 top the list of syphilis patients followed by Chittagong with 308 and then Noakhali district with 209 and finally Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 74.

Year 1914 shows that Tippera district had 527 patients in class III and 69 in class IV dispensary. This way the district earned the highest place in terms

of syphilis affected area in the division. It was followed by Chittagong district with 321 in class III dispensary. Least number of patient was recorded in Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 76 in class I dispensary.

Year 1916 shows that the patients were highest in Tippera district with 627 in class III dispensary followed by Chittagong district with 379 in class III dispensary. It was lowest in Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 107 and all of them were recorded in class I dispensary.

Year 1917 shows that the number of patients were highest in Tippera district with 547 in class III dispensary and 66 in class IV dispensary respectively carrying the total to 613 followed by Chittagong district with 588 in class III dispensary. The lowest patient was recorded in Chittagong Hill Tracts district Class I dispensary with 72.

Year 1918 shows that Chittagong district class III dispensary recorded the highest number of patients with 605 followed by Tippera district with 554 in class III and 36 in class IV dispensary. The lowest being 95 in class I dispensary in Chittagong Hill Tracts district.

Year 1921 shows the highest number of patients with a record high within 8 years in Chittagong division. Tippera district recorded 890 patients 863 in class III and 27 in class IV dispensary. Tippera district was followed by Chittagong district with 710 and had 223 in class III and 487 in class IV dispensary; Chittagong Hill Tracts district comparatively had as low as 146 patients, this makes it the least affected district.

Year 1922 showed Tippera to be at the highest position as far as the number of primary and secondary syphilis disease is concerned. It was recorded 1038 which was exceedingly high and in fact the highest recorded since 1913.

Table: V Syphilis (Primary and Secondary) in-door and out-door patients treated and deaths in the State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided Dispensaries in Chittagong Division of Bengal Province

Total	Chittagong Hill Tract		Total		Tippera		Total		Noakhali		Total		Chittagong		Districts	
4	-	-	4	Deat	1	3	2	1	1	-	3	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1914
Deat	IV	III	Treat	I	IV	III	Treat	IV	III	I	Deat	I	IV	III	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Deaths	
4	-	-	4	4	1	3	3	2	1	-	3	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1915
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	16	-	-	5	3	2	-	-	-	-	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Deaths	
5	-	-	4	4	1	3	3	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1916
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Deaths	
8	-	-	4	4	1	3	3	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1918
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	14	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Deaths	
4	-	-	4	4	1	3	3	2	1	-	3	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1919
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	-	-	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Deaths	
8	-	-	24	24	2	22	16	-	16	-	18	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1921
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	815	12	803	-	313	-	399	-	147	252	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	264	74	190	-	69	-	64	-	53	11	Female	
8	-	-	4	4	1	3	3	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	Class of dispensary	1921
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III	Total treated	
-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	7	-	7	-	-	-	-	Deaths	
-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1	-	5	-	3	-	-	-	Number of dispensary	1922
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Class of dispensary	
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Total treated	
8	-	-	4	4	1	3	3	-	3	-	3	-	-	-	Deaths	
	IV	III			IV	III		IV	III	I			IV	III		
-	-	-	-	-	5	1	4	-	10	-	13	-	-	-		
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1914, Department Finance, Medical Branch, July 1915, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1915, Department Financial, Medical Branch, July 1916, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1916, Department Financial, Medical

Branch, September 1917, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1918, Finance Department, Branch Medical, December 1919, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1919, Department Local Self-Government, Medical Branch, April 1921, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1921, Local Self-Government Department, Medical Branch, August 1922, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1922, Department Local Self-Government, Medical Branch, June 1924, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

The table given above shows different number of dispensaries in different region in Chittagong, Noakhali, Tippera and Chittagong Hill Tracts whereas the class of dispensaries from 1914 to 1922 remains the same for the regions in the Chittagong Division, it is to be noted that the syphilis (primary and secondary) patients varies but the disease caused just a single death.

Year 1914 indicates the number of patients treated and the number of deaths caused because of primary and secondary syphilis in the State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided Dispensaries in Chittagong Division of Bengal during the year 1914. 1914 record shows a steady decline in case of treated and deaths patients of syphilis for Chittagong district. It was 28 to nil and Noakhali district shows that there was no treated patients and death in the district. The lowest number treated was in Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 3 patients with no deaths.

Year 1915 shows the number of syphilis treated and Chittagong district record the highest with 21 in class III dispensary. However no deaths recorded in the division. The lowest number treated was in Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 4 patients in class I dispensary.

Year 1916 shows that the number of syphilis treated was highest in Chittagong district in class III dispensary with 22 and the lowest number recorded

was in Noakhali district with 2 in class III and IV dispensaries.

Year 1918 shows no dead in the division due to syphilis. However, just like the other years, here also the number of primary and secondary syphilis patient treated in Chittagong district was highest with 22 and the lowest being Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 4.

Year 1919 recorded shows a steady decline in syphilis case. Chittagong district recorded 34 treated patients with 2 deaths; at Noakhali district 9 patients were treated with no deaths record; Tippera district 10 patients were treated with no death record; and finally Chittagong Hill Tracts district where 3 patients were treated with no death record.

Year 1921 shows a massive increase in the number of patients in Tippera district with 803 in class III dispensaries where 22 number of dispensaries were engaged to treat the disease amongst male patients carrying the total to 815. This was followed by Chittagong district with 399 male patients treated in Class III and IV dispensaries where 252 and 147 patients were treated in 18 dispensaries. Noakhali district again followed Chittagong district with slightly narrow margin of 313 male patients in III class of dispensaries where the number of dispensaries were 16 in total. The least number of patients were treated in Chittagong Hill Tracts districts with only 52 male and 3 female. The highest number of female syphilis patients in this year was recorded to be 190 at Tippera district in III class of dispensary and the number of dispensaries was 22 in total. However, 74 female patients were also treated in IV class of dispensary where 2 dispensaries existed. The total number of male syphilis male patients in the division was 1579 whereas the number of female syphilis patients were exactly 400, if we put together both the genders together it comes to 1979 syphilis patients treated in 66 number of dispensaries.



**Table: VI: Showing the diseases of Syphilis (Primary and Secondary) patients treated in the State-Public, Local Fund and Private-aided Dispensaries in Bengal**

District	Syphilis (Primary and Secondary)											
	Private Non-Aided											
	In-door and out-door											
	1922				1928				1929			
	Total treated		Deaths		Total treated		Deaths		Total treated		Deaths	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Chittagong	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Noakhali	3	1	-	-	85	31	-	-	63	16	-	-
Tippera	190	48	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chittagong Hill Tracts	15	4	1	-	52	17	-	-	94	26	-	-
Total	208	53	1	-	138	48	-	-	157	42	-	-

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1922, Local Self-Government Department, Medical Branch, June 1924, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1929, Local Self-Government Department, Medical, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1929, Local Self-Government Department, Medical Branch, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

In 1922, 1928, and 1929 no patients of Primary and Secondary Syphilis was treated in Chittagong district. Among the three intervening years, the year 1922 witnessed the highest number of patients treated with male 208 and female 53. No death amongst female was recorded in these years whereas only 2 deaths were recorded among male. The highest number of treated Primary and Secondary Syphilis patients amongst the dispensaries of Chittagong division among both the sexes was recorded in Tippera with 190 male. In case of female again Tippera district showed the highest number of patients treated with 48.

**Table: VII: Showing the syphilis Diseases in the Bengal presidency, during the year 1928**

District	1928		1929	
	Total treated	Deaths	Total treated	Deaths
Chittagong	406	-	396	-
Noakhali	173	-	166	-
Tippera	1080	-	796	-
Chittagong Hill Tracts	109	-	151	-
Total	Treated	1768	-	1509
	Deaths	-	-	-

Source: *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1928, Local Self-Government Department, Medical, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata*

Source: Showing the infectious Diseases (and including Malignant growths, opium poisoning and Beri-Beri) of the In-door and out-door patients treated in the several classes of medical institutions in the Bengal presidency, during the year 1929. Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1929,

Local Self-Government Department, Medical, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata

The record available with archives for the year 1928 and 1929 showed a different case. Here, in the

table above it shows that Chittagong division recorded 1768 syphilis treated patients in 1928 and 1509 patients in 1929. Tippera district recorded the highest number of syphilis patients i.e., 1080 in 1928 followed by Chittagong district with 406 patients. In the year 1929 Tippera district

recorded 796 syphilis patients followed by Chittagong district with 396 patients. The least number of patients recorded in 1928 was Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 109 and in 1929 the least number of syphilis patients treated was again the same district with 151.

Table: VIII Showing the diseases of the in-door and out-door male and female patients treated and deaths in the State-Public, Local Fund and Private-aided and State Special and Railway dispensaries in the Chittagong division of Bengal Province

Districts	Syphilis (Primary and Secondary)												Syphilis (Primary and Secondary)											
	State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided						State Special and Railway						State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided						State Special and Railway					
	1928												1929											
	In-door				Out-door		In-door				Out-door		In-door				Out-door		In-door				Out-door	
	Total treated		Deaths		Total treated	Total treated		Deaths		Total treated	Total treated		Deaths		Total treated	Total treated		Deaths		Total treated				
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Chittagong	1	1	-	-	204	116	14	-	-	-	29	5	-	2	-	-	253	84	13	-	-	-	42	2
Noakhali	4	4	-	-	821	102	11	-	-	-	22	-	8	3	-	-	546	147	6	-	-	-	7	-
Tippera	4	1	-	-	140	24	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	6	-	-	117	35	6	-	-	-	1	-
Chittagong Hill Tracts	2	1	-	-	29	5	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	19	9	-	-	-	-	2	-
Total	11	7	-	-	1230	247	27	-	-	-	55	5	10	11	-	-	935	275	25	-	-	-	52	2

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1928, Local Self-Government Department, Medical Branch, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1928, Local Self-Government Department, Medical Branch, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata.

Source: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal during the year 1929, Local Self-Government Department, Medical, September 1931, State Archives of West Bengal, Kolkata

The record of 1928 shows that in State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided dispensaries 1495 Primary and Secondary syphilis male and female

patients were treated with no death in the in-door and out-door treatment, out of which 1241 were male patients treated whereas females were 254. The in-door patients treated were 11 male and 7 female whereas out-door patients treated were 1230 male and 247 female. If individual district dispensary is taken into account in case of in-door and out-door dispensary then the highest number of male and female patients treated was 825 and 106 in Noakhali district and the least number of in-door and out-door patients treated for syphilis was in the Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 37. Again the least number of female syphilis patients treated in in-door and out-door dispensary was 6 in Chittagong Hill Tracts district. In the State Special and Railway in 1928 total number of in-door and out-door patients treated were

87 and the number of male were 82 and female were 5. The highest number of male patients in this year was recorded in Chittagong district dispensary with 29 out-door and 14 in-door patients and the least was recorded in Chittagong Hill Tracts district and Tippera district dispensaries with 2 male and 1 female each. Only 5 female were treated in Chittagong district and that too in the outdoor.

In the year 1929 it is seen that 1231 both male and female patients were treated in in-door and out-door in the State-Public, Local Fund and Private-Aided dispensaries with Noakhali district recording the highest i.e., 546 male treated out-door followed by Chittagong district 253 male and the lowest being Chittagong Hill Tracts district with 19 male cases treated out-door. The highest number of female affected was in Noakhali district which was 147 in number treated out-door followed by Chittagong district with 84 female patients treated in the same place. However no death of syphilis patients was recorded amongst male and female. In the in-door 8 male patients were treated in Chittagong district which was the highest and 6 female were treated in Tippera district. In case of State Special and Railway in 1929 it is found that 79 patients were affected in the in-door and out-door, out of which the highest was in Chittagong district with 42 patients treated out-door and the lowest being Tippera district dispensary with only 1 patient treated in the same way. Only 2 female were treated in Chittagong district in out-door dispensary. The highest number of in-door male patients was treated in Chittagong district dispensary numbering 13 male and the lowest being Chittagong Hill Tracts district with no patient treated in the same place. The total record of two 1928 and 1929 shows that most of the syphilis patients were treated in the out-door dispensaries.

## Conclusion:

In the context of the Chittagong Division of the Province of Bengal the venereal disease that has not only destabilised but also demoralised the strongest machinery of the British raj all over India and has rapped the Chittagong cantonment in its best and hardest possible way. This article analysed the case

of syphilis that threatened the British as it sapped the most energetic pillar of the empire, the soldiers, on whose healthy shoulder the destiny of the colonizers depended in India. It is interesting to note that in the eve of the World War I the number of deaths from syphilis was only 3 in total in Chittagong Division. From the year 1913 syphilis was at its peak in terms of patients treated in the Chittagong Division but with no deaths record from 1088 treated patients whereas in the next year i.e. 1914 with the momentum in World War I it showed 42 treated patients in Chittagong Division with 2 death record. However, in another record in the same year it showed that 1239 patients were treated with 527 records high treated in Tippera. In 1915 it came down to 46 treated patients in the division. 1916 showed the lowest record number of patients treated i.e. 38. In another record in the same year it showed that 1300 patients were treated with Tippera recording the highest with 627. In the year 1917 it was 1455 with Tippera again recorded the highest number of patients with 613. In the same year in another record it is shown that 65 patients were treated which is exceedingly low. In 1918 the recorded number of patient were 1455 and in the same year in another record it was recorded to be 65 syphilis treated patients yet again the same year it was recorded to be 1491. The year 1919 came about with two different records on the same area in one record it seems that there was a steady rise in syphilis with Chittagong where 56 were treated with 2 deaths, a massive change in the figure of patients came about in the same year in a different record 1971 the highest ever in the area chosen for study. As a whole Chittagong district recorded 3100 treated patients, Noakhali 1276, Tippera 3886 and Chittagong Hill Tracts 594. The Chittagong Division recorded 8856 number of treated syphilis patients.

In economic terms also the Colonial expenditure on health was almost entirely limited to preserving that of Europeans and the military,<sup>1</sup> as soldiers were the only resort the colonizers depended upon for engulfing India politically. It also seems that partiality existed in their dealing with soldiers and hence racism was all over with the colonizers. The issue of oriental and white authority over black could undisputedly be

accepted. If the out-door patients and in-door patients were taken into account during the year 1929 and 1929 it is found that the number of syphilis patients treated in out-door dispensaries was exceeding large. This reveals the social position as most of the people were perhaps reluctant to transfer themselves to in-door kind of treatment. It is also seen in gender wise division case most of the female were treated in the out-door dispensary only and few were treated in-door in the division. This also reveals the rigidity on the social structure which forbids female to be in as in-door patients in Chittagong division. However, the turnout of patients in dispensaries was in large number this also proves the psychological status of the people leaning towards the acceptance or reliance towards

the allopathic medicine. Nevertheless, many more patients might have been affected with syphilis and relied on traditional medicine for the cure. It can be assumed that if the number totals 2892 during 1928 and 1929 with 2345 male and 547 female the number of sufferers would be more and not reported to dispensaries because reaching to dispensaries during those years for the natives would definitely be a big ask and bold action especially because of their dislikes of foreign rule, ignorance and fear. Therefore, it can be assumed that many more people were affected with syphilis in this region either treated in dispensaries, treated by Vaidya's or left untreated and died unknown natural death in the Chittagong division.

## Endnote

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## A Constructive Approach on Research Publication

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### ABSTRACT

*Higher educational institutions like the universities and research centers are mainly meant for promoting the research-oriented studies. In an attempt to advance the knowledge base, research programmes have always been encouraged. Incidentally, research is aimed at finding answers to some socio-economic and political issues, if it is a case of social science research. For, research has been the most effective motivating factor in the life of research scholars. Meanwhile, academic pursuit is decisive in one's career development. In fact, academic research is mandatory for research scholars and faculties in various scholastic institutions. While there are numerous research papers being produced that hardly get published in reputed journals, there are ample opportunities for the researchers if certain strategies are understood and internalized. Thus, this paper is an attempt in that direction so as to enable one to understand a few guidelines that could be followed during the course of writing and publishing a research paper.*

**Key words:** Research Writing, Research Strategy, Publication Steps

### Introduction

All the higher educational institutions, be they universities or research centers are mainly aimed at promoting the research-oriented studies so as to advance knowledge base in any discipline. Based on the accessible literature, research studies are conducted to add to it so that a new literature is generated for the potential scholars. Besides the research scholars, faculties at different levels have also been encouraged to undertake the research studies on variety of themes. For, the academic pursuit is crucial in one's career development. On the basis of one's research output, faculties can boost up their career prospects. Thus, research has been the most effective and motivating factor in the life of research scholars. More so is the case with young faculties in the universities at home and abroad.

Over the years, research studies are conducted on a customary basis in any university worth the name. Particularly, it is mandatory for the research scholars to undertake time-bound and degree-oriented research programmes, like MPhil, PhD and PDFs. In consequence, one observes the pursuit of high value post-doctoral studies in some institutions. Obviously, there are eligible faculties who would be supervising and monitoring the research studies of their scholars. Periodic review of their progress will invariably be recorded as a matter of formality. Within the stipulated period of a few years of research, concerned scholars get awarded with research degrees. Apparently, their research studies get stockpiled in the shelves of their libraries thereafter. That is not all what research is all about and its multiple purposes. In consequence, the research studies have to be published invariably in some journals, reputed or otherwise.

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**Inspiring Research:** Actually, research is intended for finding answers to some socio-economic and political problems, particularly in the case of social science research. Similarly, it is about diagnosing the prevalent ailments and health troubles so that new medicines could be man-made within the physical and biological science labs. In other words, thanks to the research exercises alone, new knowledge is created and disseminated, as these have to be beneficial to the community and society at large. While this process of research certainly recognizes the contribution of concerned researcher, research results are hardly published.

In any case, the every research study has got public purpose as to ensure the welfare of mankind in the long run. Viewed in this perspective, research becomes a noble job for research scholars and faculties in the academic institutions. Besides the state and governments, various funding organizations are there to sustain the research activities. As part of the Research and Development (R&D) programmes, requisite grants are being allocated and utilized in various institutions. Expectedly, research programmes is to be undertaken and accomplished as per the requirements of the sponsoring institutions. Also, research reports would be drafted and prepared, whether or not those get published.

**Systematic Writing:** Publication of research results/findings is an integral part any researcher's professional work as well. It is supposed to be an ultimate step in any scholar's research career and professional life. Writing in a systematic/scientific way seems exigent in the beginning for some scholars, perhaps. However, it is feasible to learn and unlearn certain ways and means so as to modernize oneself, whereby some scientific papers could be published. According to Robert Day (1983), a 'scientific paper is a written and published report describing original research results', which has to 'meet certain requirements regarding how the paper was written and the way it is published'. He focused on the writing process that would lead to publication as well. For, it is equally important as the content, style and organization of the published paper. In other words, a scientific paper should be a valid publication, as it

would be published in the right place, like a peer-reviewed journal or in a top-ranked conference proceeding. Thus, there is a need of knowing and learning a few basic points and crucial steps about writing research papers scientifically. For, it is essential to get the research papers published in a reputed journal. These are a few measures one should know as to how one could address the issues of publication.

Besides, several facts have to be kept in view when preparing a research paper for its publication. According to O'Connor (1995), first of all, the researcher has to ask oneself some preliminary questions to make sure that the studies were designed to answer precisely the research question under study, that the research exploration would meet the accepted standards and that the process of keeping records of the study was agreed upon in the select community. And he observed that a paper that 'records significant experimental, theoretical or observational extensions of knowledge, or advances in the practical application of known principles' is worth publishing. Moreover, he states a few principles for solving problems of writing style, to be simple and concise. Further, he mentioned that the plagiarism is to be considered a serious offence in the research community and thus such practice should be avoided. Rather, due credit should be given when using another person's ideas, opinion, theory or information that were not of common knowledge.

### Some Steps of Research Paper

Evidently, the research paper comprises of three main components, namely introduction, main body and discussion. While the introduction leads the audience from a general motivation and broad subject to a particular research problem, main body of the paper stays within a fixed thematic framework and describes the research methods and results in some detail. Eventually the discussion part aims to draw a few general conclusions and present some implications there from. According to Berry (1986), a research paper should be circular in argument, i.e. the conclusion should return to the opening page and examine the original purpose in the light of present research.

**Introduction:** The introduction is the leading first step for proceeding with any research writing. It serves the purpose of focusing the reader from a general subject area to a particular area of research. While writing the introduction one should go through a complete thought process of the publication outlet/ Journal and its subject area for its research viability. According to Swales (1993), there are three phases of an introduction that could be identified as mentioned below:

- Establish a territory: bring out the importance of the subject and/or make general statements about the subject and/or present an overview on current research on the subject.
- Establish a position: oppose an existing assumption or reveal a research gap or formulate a research question or problem or continue a tradition.
- Occupy the function: sketch the intent of one's work, and/or outline the important characteristics of the work, then, one can outline a few important results and give a brief outlook on the structure of paper.

In other words, the introduction guides the reader to a current state of the art in the study field and allows the reader to comprehend the rest of that paper without referring to any previous publication on the topic.

**Main body:** Incidentally, main body of the research paper is to report on the actual research done to answer the research question or the problem identified in the introduction. According to Dees (1997), it should be written as if it were an unfolding discussion, each idea at a time. Often the main body comprises of several sections and subsections, whereas structure, organization and content are dependent greatly on the type of paper, publication outlet, publisher and the creativity of concerned authors. For instance, some of these paper types include: empirical, case study, methodology, and theory papers. Normally, the main body of a paper answers two questions, i.e. how the research question was addressed and what was found of it.

**Discussion:** Discussion or 'discussion and conclusion', as it is sometimes presented, is considered as the corresponding item to the introduction. For, this part should direct the reader from narrow and or very specific results to more general conclusions. According to Day (1983) and Swales (1993), generally the discussion part includes the following items:

- A presentation of background information as well as recapitulation of the research aims of the study.
- A brief summary of the results, whereas the focus likes on discussing and not recapitulating the results.
- A comparison of results with previously published studies.
- Conclusions or hypotheses drawn from the results with summary of evidence for each conclusion.
- Proposed follow-up research questions and outlook on further work.

Besides, there are some additional parts of the research paper with similar significance, which deserve an attention. These include, title, abstract and references among others.

**Title:** the title is that part of the paper that would attract the reader first and most often it is the largely read item. Robert Day (1983) defines a good title, 'as the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents of the paper'. When the title is too long, it usually contains too many needless words. Similarly, the too short title often uses words which are too general. Thus, it should be even-handed in terms of words. An effective title should identify the main issue of that paper, begins with the subject of it, attract the readers and consist of accurate, unambiguous and specific words, for instance.

**Abstract:** an abstract is supposed to be a brief synopsis of a research article, thesis or a conference proceeding of a particular subject. And, it is often used to help the reader promptly to make certain the

paper's purpose. An abstract appears at the start of a manuscript, acting as the point-of-entry for any given scientific paper. It comprises a one-paragraph outline of the whole paper. According to Koopman (1997), the abstracts have become very important as electronic publication databases are the primary means of identifying the research reports in a certain subject area at once. Thus, everything of relevance to potential readers should be in the abstract, everything else not so. According to Day (1983), there are two types of abstracts viz., an informative and descriptive ones. While the informative abstract extracts everything relevant for the paper such as research objectives, research methods, results and conclusions drawn, the descriptive one rather describes the content of paper and thus serves as an outline of what is to be presented in the paper. An abstract is a section one can work on in the last, as it has to cover all the sections very briefly. In fact, an abstract catches the attention of one to decide whether or not to read the research paper at all.

**References:** Inserting one's work in a related literature is one of the essential parts of research writing. This can be achieved by citing the related work within the text part and by listing all cited references in the sub-text as part of the 'end notes' at the end of that research paper. Different publishers require different formats or styles for citing a paper in the text and for listing references. The most commonly used referencing systems are variations of the following ones: name and year system, alphabet-number system and citation order system. For instance, American Psychological Association (APA) style (APA, 2003), Modern Language Association (MLA) (Gibaldi, 1995) and Chicago style (The University of Chicago, 2010) are the most popular ones among others. In any case, the research authors have an option, but to use the style required by publishers. Regardless of the citation style, there are two basic conventions for the list of references: one, every cited source must be listed and two, every listed source must be cited. This is what the crux of the referencing all about that makes the research writing complete so as to be published.

**Publication Issues:** While some of the research reports are published by the sponsoring institutions themselves, several others hardly get published at all. There are barely any takers for publication of such reports. Conceivably, for want of quality research or otherwise, all such reports cannot be published. Of course, there are a few local-level publication houses on hand and accessible ubiquitously so as to publish the research findings at some cost. In other words, publication has often become so marketable that one could get any report published for a price. Obviously, such periodicals scarcely attract an academic attention. Nor do these publications care for, leave alone elevating, the career position of research scholars or faculties, for that matter.

In consequence, undertaking the research and writing such reports appear easier than publishing the same in a high standard publication, be it a journal or conference proceeding. Finding a right publisher and getting it published is a tiresome and time-consuming task that the researcher had to run into during the process of research publication. Besides, there are numerous complications that had to be overcome, before the research finding is published. For instance, an editor or two have to be approached and convinced of one's research value that would fulfil the scientific writing so as to be published at once. In the event of its selection, there are a few article reviewers, anonymous or otherwise who should be contented of its research quality, content-wise and form-wise. Usually, the publishers' expectation about the form and structure of the report is dependent upon the reviewer comments as well as reader interests. At the end of the day, it is their brand image that could not be compromised for the sake of a publication or two. Accordingly, good research studies are expected therein. Only such research findings will be published.

### Strategic Points for Publication

Usually, the PhD theses or research papers are expected to be written for a specific audience or a target group, while the key audience of the PhD thesis is the supervisor/examiner. But, a scientific paper is written for the purpose of an editor and audience of

the intended publication channel. Hence the place of such publication should be selected prior to writing of the paper, and chapters extracted from the PhD theses have to be reconsidered accordingly. In any case, this paper enables one to discern some guidelines that could be followed during the course of writing and publishing a research paper.

**First:** The preliminary action for publishing a scientific paper is to figure out the specific area of one's interest. And, one should make sure that one had carried out sufficient studies on basics of that topic. Then one can modernize oneself with the ongoing practical happenings in the chosen field. This can be done by reading and glancing through a lot of papers. Then there is a need of attending a few conferences, listen vigilantly to the best talks, and find out what people are thinking/talking about the subject under discussion. Once it's done with these mentioned steps, then one can try for writing a paper.

**Second:** Next, one can read the existing papers, which might be very relevant for the task which gives a different perspective on the supposed topic. But one has to be discerning too, for not getting too much deviated from the topic of one's interest.

**Third:** When one starts reading up on a new field of study, one can make inquiries with the fellow researcher about what the most useful journals and conference proceedings are there in the field, and also request for a list of important papers that one should read. Then, there is a possibility of jump start at once.

**Fourth:** After that, there is a need to come apart the jargons and complex terms. Another important step among the paper writers is to understand the papers published by the others. The easiest way is to do it reading many a time. The more number of times one reads the more would be exposed. Obviously, one should keep the latest computer tools like the Internet handy so that one could crack the jargons and intricate terms, which one may find little anomalous in the writing process.

**Fifth:** As part of writing down some studies, there is a need to write down speculations, interesting problems, possible solutions, random ideas, references

to look up, notes on papers already read, outlines of papers to write, and appealing quotes. Then, one should read back through it periodically. Of course, keeping a journal of the research activities and ideas is very useful.

**Sixth:** Subsequently, as part of making bits and pieces together, one can identify essential problems in the research field, besides being aware of what could be done. The more one goes along, the more one discern that the bits of random thoughts would be flowing together and form a writing outline, which may be sufficient for a good research paper.

**Seventh:** Essence of one's work can be diagnosed by analyzing the below-listed points, which can enhance the development of research paper by improving upon these points:

- Significance
- Originality
- Completeness
- Correctness

Afterward, one can consider improving these crucial points, one-by-one.

**Eighth:** Structure or anatomy of any research paper will usually have about six main sections, besides a few other sections or sub-sections. This being the main body of writing exercise, it can be covered within eight to ten pages. These main sections include the following.

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. Research techniques
4. Discussion
5. Results
6. Conclusion

**Ninth:** Ultimately, there is a need of plagiarism check prior to submission of the paper for publication. Then getting its pre-review is to see if the paper was ready for publication in all respects. One can ask one's peers or professors to evaluate the draft paper. Next is to find the right place to publish it. One can get going

with the national level conferences, which are often conducted periodically in various universities. Once gained a level of confidence, one can proceed to the international conferences and journals as well, thereafter.

To conclude it, research activity is an essential requirement in any academic institution. More than the books and edited chapters, journal articles are preferred more nowadays. Hence, research writing is largely aimed at publication in a reputed journal. As part of academic pursuit, scholars and faculties are always engaged in research and documentation. But, preparing a good research publication is a challenge among several research scholars. This paper gives an overview of basic issues and strategies

about writing and publishing a research paper in a journal or in the conference proceeding. Based on the specific intentions of paper author, the paper has to be drafted and published for the sake of particular audience. Of course, the basic framework and interests of the target publication outlet or the journal, as the case may be, has to be kept in view prior to attempting the research article for publication. Although there are similar structural steps being followed in the case of writing a paper, yet, nature of research is decisive in having the format for each type of publication. Ultimately, the publication-orientation is what one should internalize in the process of writing a research paper, lest one hardly carves out a good research publication.

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## Evolution of the Lusei Hegemony in Mizo History

Dr. Lalrinnunga Hmar\*

### ABSTRACTS

*The success of the Lusei seem to rest upon three important principles – one was that they had better unity and were more able to uphold and sustain cohesion amongst themselves, second was that they devised a means to augment their strength in a village, and third was that they endorsed the office of a political chief. Given that, with the exception of the Pawi, the various clans were more or less under the dictates of the same ecological factors working on them, their success or failure depended on their ability to garner strength within the limits of adaptation that human intelligence and fortitude could muster. One important factor that seems to have helped the Lusei at this critical juncture was that they were, initially, weaker than the other clans. They were weaker in the sense that they were lesser in number. As compared to their nearest neighbours – namely the Ralte and the Pawi, they were a younger clan. With fewer numbers, there was more closeness and the conscious need to rally together when threatened by bigger groups.*

**Key word:** Lusei, social formation, unity, Political Chief, Saphun, Sakhua

### 1. Introduction

According to B. Rev. Liangkhaia, there are eleven Lusei clans, namely- Descendants of Zahmuaka, Pachuau, Chhangte, Chawngte, Chuaungo, Chuahang, Chhakchhuak, Hauhnar, Hrahsel, Tohhawng and Vanchhawng (Rev. Liangkhaia, 2002:24-26). The earliest settlements the Mizo after moving out from the Kabaw valley were established in the adjoining hill range of Thantlang in the present Myanmar. Settlement here is roughly estimated between 1300-1500 A.D. (B. Lalthangliana, 2001:201). According to Mizo folk tradition, clan-wise settlements were the order of society when they first settled in Thantlang. From Thantlang, there was a gradual process of shifts that brought them to Lentlang. Lentlang lies between the

Run and Tiau rivers. This movement is estimated to have occurred roughly from 1500 to 1700 A.D. (B. Lalthangliana, 2001:105). With the shift to the western part of Len range, they began to cultivate rice. Folk tradition alludes to the fun and gaiety associated with winnowing at this time. With rice providing better support to life, increased production of food-grains was followed by a process of steady growth in population. Population growth, in turn, exerted strong influence upon the social and political development. On the one hand, it brought in conflict as there was a contesting for the acquisition of prime land. Wars and raids, though generally seasonal became prevalent. On the other hand, villages became larger and new villages branched out of an original one. This led to lineage segmentations within the clan. Thus, in course of time, settlements in the Len range show them configured as divided and delineated into clans with each forming a separate

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village or villages. Lusei dominated many other clans by adopting and adjusting the ecological atmosphere.

## 2. Analysis on Lusei Hegemony

Lusei are the dominant group among the Mizo. As seen from the writings of all the early Mizo historians, the establishment of clans and villages by the various tribal groups from the Lentlang phase significantly introduces the various groups that constitute the Mizo today. However, while much of the characteristics that denote the society in terms of polity and religion were evinced here, they come into clearer outline after these groups left Lentlang and crossed the Tiau River to occupy the areas on the eastern side of the present state of Mizoram. While search for better cultivable land impelled regular movements and migrations, they were often at war in contest for prime land. In fact, there was an increasing intensity of war closely following upon the increase of population and the improvement in material conditions. As agriculture afforded a certain amount of regular surplus in food, inter-clan and inter-village wars became important for securing the human means of production. By raiding other village and capturing women and children, the victors gained productive work force. Besides manpower, livestock and other property were captured and taken as booty. War necessarily became an economic activity in the Mizo social formation.

Thus, as with the general insecurity of life, the clan structure was severely tested. The success and failure of a clan depended much upon its ability to cohere and in its fortitude to make necessary adjustments and compromises. While some were left with no choice but to flee to more remote areas, others took stock to cope up with the situation and devised various means and methods in order to bolster up their strength. In as much as number was important, unity and cohesion at the clan level within a village, or stretching across villages, was an important consideration. It was also important how they made alliances, within and without, of the clan structure and the village, with members of other clans and other villages.

In these circumstances, the Pawi had an added advantage over the others. Their proximity to Burma gave them a whip hand as they had more or less direct access to better technology from the valley civilization of Burma, while at the same time they stood between this important source and the other tribes (BS Carrey and Tuck, 1975:135). They were better equipped by way of tools and weapons - iron blades and subsequently, guns. Added to their strategic location, they maintained a strong bond and contact amongst their close kindred and villages. With the advantage they enjoyed, the Pawi exploited the other tribes in a number of ways. Tribute was the standard fare. They pressed against these tribes demanding and making off with whatever they could extort - from bison to all kinds of prestige goods. As against this, they often resorted to outright collection of booty and slaves by sacking a village. Having none but slaves to exchange for their needed articles from Burma, direct plunder, if incurred with minimum of damage on their side, was certainly more paying, and hence, more suitable. They also resorted to means considered highly obnoxious and unsporting by the Ralte and the Lusei - such as ambushing and murdering solitary travellers and commuters. Because of this, they were feared and hated. There were instances when they suffered reversals. The Ralte inflicted heavy damage on their war party when trying to attack their village (K. Zawla, 1964:68). However, the Ralte were not united, or strong enough, to launch a direct offensive against them. Therefore, the Pawi, being in a commanding position, could not be withstood by the other groups. As they pillaged upon the other groups time to time, they also exacted a regular tribute. In general, they slowly drove the ones before them, who in turn, obliged the ones ahead to flee further on.

It was in this fluid and volatile ecological niche that the process of social formation of the Mizo under the Lusei tribes unfolded. As conditioned by these circumstances, within each village, the denizens naturally formed a close working and sharing society to combat against the natural elements in order to secure food; they were also induced to organize themselves in order to mobilize for the defense of the village against the predation of their own kindred (Vanchhunga, 1994: 35). With these given demands,



the society had to be highly organized and yet elastic and accommodating. The considerations of survival demanded a high premium of each and every individual in society. In the wake of the village becoming composite, it became difficult to maintain cohesiveness of the society while constant war with others made organized defense imperative.

In this connection, an important development in the process of social and polity formation of the Mizo during their migration was the role played by the Lusei clans. While folk memory recounts the Ralte clans as the primary group during the early phase especially between river Run and Tiau, there was a gradual process of their dominance being whittled away as they proceeded onto the west. While they continued to occupy an important element in society, they were superseded by the Lusei in the power struggle.

The success of the Lusei seem to rest upon three important principles – one was that they had better unity and were more able to uphold and sustain cohesion amongst themselves, second was that they devised a means to augment their strength in a village, and third was that they endorsed the office of a political chief. Given that, with the exception of the Pawi, the various clans were more or less under the dictates of the same ecological factors working on them, their success or failure depended on their ability to garner strength within the limits of adaptation that human intelligence and fortitude could muster. One important factor that seems to have helped the Lusei at this critical juncture was that they were, initially, weaker than the other clans. They were weaker in the sense that they were lesser in number. As compared to their nearest neighbours – namely the Ralte and the Pawi, they were a younger clan. With fewer numbers, there was more closeness and the conscious need to rally together when threatened by bigger groups. Thus their disadvantage in size gave them a keener perception and ability to make compromises and adjustments within their clans and also at the same time to devise strategies in handling the odds against whom they were pitted. Therefore, as a standard measure, the Lusei, unlike the Ralte, never engaged in open confrontation with the Pawi. Also, while not fleeing

away from the vicinity, they put themselves at a distance from the Pawi without having to take the brunt of their incursion and depredation. In other words, they always tried to put a buffer between themselves and the Pawi. They were more measured and calculating in their relationship with other clans and were more unscrupulous. Because of this, they began to occupy a central position in Mizo folklore from the time that the clans were settled along the banks of the *Run*. In the light of these, from here attempt will be made to unfold the process of migration and social formation with particular reference to the Lusei.

The earliest account in folk memory of the Lusei group is of them settled at Sumpui on the western bank of the Run River, near present Falam (B. Lalthangliana, 2001:107). On their westward move as the inter-clan rivalry and feuding became rife, the Lusei developed certain principles that helped to promote the solidarity within the clan even in the ecology of strife and struggle. As they spoke a particular dialect called *Duhlian*, bundled their hair on the back of the head, and acknowledging that they were kindred, they devised various ways of confrontation within their group without necessarily indulging in manslaughter. One of such devices, and upon which the first known conflict amongst them was noted, was on the contest known as *Vawklu invuak thlak sak* –knocking down pig skulls (Liangkhaia, 2002:52). From those days on, the pig was the chosen animal for performance of a necessary household ritual. After the pig was killed and consumed, its skull was hung up on a post outside the house. The suspended skull became the target of the aggression between rival clans. Assertive clans boldly strode to other villages knocking down their pig skulls. On this issue, those who hailed from Muchhip - the Chhange, Chawngte and Tohhawng were noted for their bravery and they kept up a tradition of leaving their sacrificial pig skulls outside while others were obliged to keep them within the safety of their four walls for fear of the humiliation of getting them knocked down. According to most scholars, during the times when such clans were practicing *Vawklu Invuakthlaksak*, they were

located in the neighbourhood of Lentlang, sometime between the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (B. Lalthangliana, 2001:110).

This practice sacrificing a pig and hanging up the skull was a very significant development. It symbolized the insignia of the clan, a sort of religious practice related to ancestral worship. As it represented the identity of the clan, it stretched to the individual level. It became a ritual that initiated the beginning of a new household. When a man got married, his first duty was to perform this ritual to signify and formally proclaim that he has set up a separate household of his own. This practice was called *Sakhua* (C. Chawngkunga, 1997:32). The purpose of this ritual was to invoke upon the spirits of the ancestors to recognize the individual as a member of the clan in their custody. The chants and incantations are made to implore upon these deities to extend their guardianship and also to give blessing to the sacrificer. Thus *Sakhua* was a necessary ritual for the initiation and integration of a man into the fold of the clan. In other words, when setting up a separate household, a man was not automatically an extension of his father's lineage unless formally initiated into the clan fold through this ritual. Conversely, it also meant that unless the man subscribes to the *Sakhua* of his father, he is also severed from the clan. By principle, it also meant that a man could, by choice, sever his ties from his own clan and gain membership to another clan. This was exactly what applied as an extension of *Sakhua*. This was called *Saphun*.<sup>1</sup> Thus, a man could forfeit his own clan and adopt (or be adopted), by going through the said ritual and honouring the *Sakhua* of the adopting clan. Of course, he first had to get the formal approval of the person to whose *Sakhua* he was committing himself. Then the person performs a ritual in order to assuage the anger of his own *Sakhua* for his abandonment. After this he pledges his loyalty to the guardian spirit, *Sakhua*, of the host clan. From then onwards he is integrated into the clan and forfeits his own lineage. It was also obligatory on the part of the village denizens to accept his new identity. Mention or remarking on his previous affiliation was strictly forbidden and offence on this was punishable by way of a heavy fine imposed on

the transgressor. The system of *Saphun* was a needed institution in the face of intermittent war between rival clans and villages. It was a useful instrument for the absorption of new members into the clan and through which the clan, and subsequently, the village, was reinforced in strength. It helped to integrate different clans into one community. It facilitated the settlement of helpless and hapless refugees in times of war.

As the Lusei inducted members of other clans within their fold through this innovation, they also learned the advantage of forming a bloc against other clans and usually succeeded in the tussle against other kin groups. While they prevailed with little damage inflicted to each other, they also, from time to time, were able to form alliances against other clans. Many a time they raided other groups who were around at their surroundings.

At this time, the Lusei organized their villages in such a way as to enhance their defense. There was a regular watch round the clock by a party of ten (10) men who stayed out in the village surroundings in order to forestall against surprise attacks. All the able bodied men of the village took turns in this duty of keeping vigil (Vanchhnunga, 1994:33). The duty entailed each member to put in five days five days out in the jungle as a sentinel at a stretch.

Because of these measures and innovations of the Lusei, by the third quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, they were able to establish Seipui, which represented a stable settlement so that, relying upon its defensive power, such groups as Vuite, Vaiphei, and Ralte came to live within the limits of Seipui (B. Lalthangliana, 2001:28). Thus, many non-Lusei clans fleeing from the Tedim area became slowly absorbed within the Lusei fold from this time. There was a continuous flush of people who migrated from Tedim due to the fratricidal war between the various lineage segments that had emanated from Cimnuai. At this time, the clans who were prominent in the Tedim area and who were engaged in inter-clan feuds were the Mualbem, Vaiphei, Guite, Thado, and Yo. Knowing of their presence from a distance these various

branches of families or clans could not be distinguished and were therefore ordinarily referred to as a group by the Lusei as Paite. The familiar distinguishing feature that set them apart from the Lusei was that these commonly bundled their hair at the top of their head and spoke a dialect that was distinctive.

As can be seen from here, the defense of the village took a heavy toll on the braves and warriors. It was upon these circumstances that the institution of chieftainship was born. This institution was not the invention of the Lusei. As they were able to hold their own against other groups, it fell upon the weaker in order to formulate a social organization where a certain amount of privilege was given to a war chief. It seems that at this time, neither the Paite, Pawi, the Ralte nor the Lusei were so stressed to consider and allow for the defense of their villages to be given to a member outside of their own clans. They considered it to be their own responsibility and not a specialized role but a part of the social obligation that fell to each and every able-bodied male member of the village. The various responsibilities that were shouldered were worked out within the framework of the clan and the village as a unit, with chores directed and regulated by the village headman. In the same way, the village headman also rendered service as part of his obligation to the clan and the village. All these functions and roles were worked out within the household, or family, so to say.

However, smaller villages and clans were especially vulnerable and exposed to raids. Thus, there were clans who could not prevail within the set mechanism of the social structure and system of governance that developed in a kin based village. As mentioned earlier, in the face of these situations, before extreme conditions should befall them (such as falling in captivity to be sold off as slaves or even extinction) there were two regular options open to them – to bolt or board. In fact, this was the given order of things. However, interestingly and most significantly, at this juncture, there was a deviation from these ‘trodden ways’ by the Hnamte. The Hnamte clan, who lived near the Lusei village of Seipui, was hard pressed by the Pawi incursion and with their small size and acute shortage of manpower,

instead of succumbing to other clans and boarding their villages, or bolting, decided to make a stand and resolve their problem in a rather unconventional way (AG McCall, 2003:36). From Seipui they got Zahmuaka to stay in their village and defend them from enemies, for which every household would give a share of their produce as due, to him. Thus, in their desperation, the Hnamte evinced the institution of chieftainship among the Mizo tribes.

Mizo writers attribute Zahmuaka as the first person to have gained this title and position. This is somewhat in contradiction with some of the earlier narratives in folklore which mentions chiefs before the time of Zahmuaka. However, there are two important factors that relate particularly to the case of Zahmuaka that has secured him this primacy and position. One is that he was not the head of the village or clan who were also ordinarily called *Lal*. Rather, his status at Seipui was low. Zahmuaka’s father was Chhuahlawma, whom, the Chhakchhuak, (a segment of the Hualngo, a Lusei clan) in Seipui had captured from Tedim. He was adopted by them as their son. When he grew up and got married, his first son was named Zahmuaka. So, in this connection, Zahmuaka was the son of a prisoner of war, *sal*, effectively a slave. From this position he suddenly rose to the position of a chief of the Hnamte. Therefore, the significant factor in the chieftainship of Zahmuaka is in its uniqueness. Until then, chiefs were the natural outgrowths of kinship relations where the eldest of the patrilineal line was generally accorded that position. So, as a chief was from within the clan, he was the head and representative of the clan, his own blood and kin – the clan which established the village. However, the most important factor in the chieftainship of Zahmuaka was that his appointment was a direct political appointment. It was settled upon a contract. The rules were clearly drawn and defined. His was to protect the village from external threat while it was obligatory on the part of the villagers to give him his due in kind. He was set apart from the villagers. His was a paid office; his position and obligation did not stem out of familial relations with the rest of the villagers. This opened up and defined the seat of the chief as an office. Another point to

consider in this regard is the established fact of an unbroken record of his lineage whereby his descendents, spanning over fourteen generations, continued as chiefs until the abolition of chieftainship in Mizoram in 1952. On the other hand, as against this, the other chiefs alluded to before the time of Zahmuaka have no successors to make their stamp on history, these legendary chiefs figure today in the realm of folk memory subscribed to as myth – that hazy twilight zone between fiction and fact.

Folk memory gives a good account of the initiation of Zahmuaka to chieftainship. The story unfolds with the Lusei settlement in Seipui. At this time the harassment from the Pawi was particularly virulent. Under these circumstances, the Hnamte clan, who lived in their own villages of Tlangkhua and Khawrua, near Seipui, lost their leader, Chhanpiala (VL Siama, 2009, p.11). Upon this, the Hnamte went to look for a replacement from Seipui. In the event, as they approached one house after another, there was no one bold enough to accept the Hnamte offer. It necessarily entailed placing oneself in hazard and which clearly portended a suicidal undertaking and hastening oneself to the grave. Cowed down as they were, as prospective householders declined one after another, they could only venture the repeated suggestion “Invite Zahmuaka, he has many sons.” Ultimately, when the party reached his house and the offer was made to him, Zahmuaka’s first reaction also was one of refusal. But his wife Lawilero interceded on the matter. She suggested to her husband that such an offer made to them, poor and humble they were, should be given a good consideration. Prompted by his wife, Zahmuaka relented. But after a short while, Zahmuaka was not happy and decided to go back to Seipui. But the Hnamte then persuaded him to stay on promising that he be given a share of the rice produce of each and every household of the Hnamte village (VL Siama, 2009, pp.11-12).

Thus, a milestone was laid in the annals of Mizo traditional history. The date of this important event has been estimated at around 1580-1600 A.D. (B. Lalhangliana, 2002, p.107). The contract between the Hnamte and Zahmuaka opened a new dimension

in social formation within the village and the tribal social structure that prevailed there. It affected a departure from the established norm where social relations and roles were considered and determined exclusively and inclusively within the framework of the clan. Most significantly, it was an endorsement of specialization that cut across clan affiliation. With the recognition of a paid chief the society began to enter into a new phase – a society with a defined polity where roles and functions become more delineated and professional; as against or in contrast to the simple one where one’s position and obligation in society stemmed out and was effectively determined from the familial relations and social fabric within the framework of the clan.

Zahmuaka’s chieftainship was particularly important as it heralded a new stage of social formation by providing a useful instrument of integration and amalgamation of people belonging to different clans. In one sense, one may say that it made the village more secular. Until the establishment of his chieftainship, each village was established by and for an exclusive clan (VL Siama, 2009:9). Therefore the unity of the denizens of the village was established through the worship of a common ancestor-through *Sakhua*. In this context, we may say that a village was also a religious community whose inhabitants were cantered round the worship of a common deity, namely the ancestor. However, while Zahmuaka did not belong to the *Sakhua* of the Hnamte, he was welcomed and endorsed as their protector. Therefore, the political exigency compromised the religious consideration. Tradition does not give any information to this little detail but it is unlikely that under these circumstances Zahmuaka was obligated to accept the *Sakhua* of the Hnamte. It is more likely that he continued with his own – namely that inherited (which means the Chhakchhuak *Sakhua*) from his father who was adopted by the Chhakchhuak clan. The result of this was that it allowed for different clans to live together in the village while retaining their own clan if they so chose. Before and after the emergence of chieftaincy, the Mizo social developments were characterized by lineage segmentations. There were about thousand

sub-clans and lineage segments in the Mizo society. Some clans were less segmented while other clans were segmented more than other clans. To illustrate the range of lineage segmentations, the Lusei clans were divided into twenty seven sub-clans and more than two hundred lineage segments (Liangkhaia, 2001:12). As already mentioned, there was the process of the powerful clan integrating the weaker clans through *Saphun* which seems to have been initiated by the Lusei.

However, this does not mean to say that *Saphun* as a system of absorption and induction into a clan became redundant and was abandoned. Rather, it continued to function and was practiced until the colonial period. What is important to note here is that chieftainship paved the way for the village to become characteristically a mixed population. Thus, as the situation demanded, it increased the scope for a village to augment itself by incorporating different clans under one banner, not of a religious kind but of a secular one. Therefore, significantly from the time that chieftainship gained popularity, the village was known by the name of the chief, not of the clan. On the other hand, without the support of a strong clan, it was impossible to establish a village of standing. In order to evince a strong village, it was important to take into consideration the various variables that could win one. In this, the chief and the dominant clan(s) had to great exercise wisdom and fortitude in order

to amalgamate the denizens into a cohesive unit. While the chief was the first citizen of the village, he had to be astute in the management and direction of manpower more by example than precept; likewise, the clan leaders needed to keep a good hold on their members as conflict at the clan level could easily result in chaos and self destruction.

### 3. Conclusion

The Lusei were also indulged in squabble among themselves, but, they devised various ways of confrontation within their group without necessarily indulging in manslaughter. They even welcomed other groups into their fold by adopting *Sakhua* and *Saphun*. It worked very well in their favour. As the Lusei inducted members of other clans within their fold through this innovation, they also learned the advantage of forming a bloc against other clans and usually succeeded in the tussle against other kin groups. While they prevailed with little damage inflicted to each other, they also, from time to time, were able to form alliances against other clans. The success of the Lusei seem to rest upon three important principles – one was that they had better unity and were more able to uphold and sustain cohesion amongst themselves, second was that they devised a means to augment their strength in a village, and third was that they endorsed the office of a political chief.

### Endnote:

- <sup>1</sup> *Saphun* is a term to describe a process in which a member of a clan changes his clan membership from one to another by adopting the name and religion of the imitated clan. The term is derived from two Mizo words- 'Sa' means guardian spirit of the village, 'phun' means to affiliate

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# A Comparable Study on Prevalent Traditional Practices related to Death and Funerals before and after the Outbreak of Covid-19 in the Mizo Society

Lalchhanhima\*

## ABSTRACT

*Most of the prevalent traditional practices of the Mizo related to death and funerals are rooted in their pre-Christian society. These practices are in used to this day with slight modifications after the outbreak of Covid-19. These practices are an important part of their culture as well as tradition for the Mizo without which they would have lost their identity.*

**Keywords** – Mizo, prevalent traditional practices, death, funerals, Covid-19.

## 1. Introduction

The *Mizo* have a way of showing their condolences which is slightly peculiar to other society. The following practices will be briefly explained since their efficacy in helping the bereaved and their relevance in the present day have shown positivity in the society amidst Covid-19.

## 2. Prevalent Traditional Practices related to Death and Funerals

Following are some of the traditional practices related to Death and Funerals and their modifications:

**2.1. Mitthi Lumen:** It can be understood as death-watch. It is practice when the time of death of a person is too late for the body to be buried on the same day. The body is kept overnight to be buried the next day and particularly young men and women will come together to comfort the bereaved family by singing all night long except for occasional prayers and short preaching. According to the present practice, if a person died before 10:00 am, the funerals have to take place the same day.<sup>1</sup>

But after the outbreak of Covid-19 only a handful of people including the Young Mizo Association<sup>2</sup> members and the deceased family with some relatives are allowed. Community singing is prohibited as of now but in one locality name ‘*Ramhlun North*’ a group of musician used to play instrumental to comfort the bereaved family.<sup>3</sup>

**2.2. Thlan Laih:** It literally means ‘grave digging’. It is the duty of every young men of the locality to participate in this grave digging without expecting any kind of reward. This kind of act of not expecting any kind of reward for doing something good for others is a part of what the *Mizo* has called ‘*Tlawmngaihna*’. The young women will served the young men with some refreshment while digging the grave.

There is no fixed regulation on how much depth the grave should be dig but in normal condition the grave is usually six feet deep or so. The depth of the grave to most people depends on the deceased person. For instance, an unmarried adult person’s grave, called ‘*Lenglaithlan*’ is expected to be deeper than others.<sup>4</sup> Also, people tended to dig deep when a person of good reputation or a person of highly respected in the society died. They do this to show respect and

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gratitude to the deceased person for the services that he/she had done for the society.<sup>5</sup>

In the post Covid-19, few people including member of the YMA and the deceased family members will be involved in *thlan laih*.

**2.3. *Mitthi Vui*:** It is a funeral service conducted at the house of the deceased person except for the Ordained Church Elders and Ministers (clergy) whose funeral service is conducted in the Church. Normal service is also conducted by the Church and normally the prescribed time for funeral is 1:00pm for those who are buried without *mitthi lumen*. For those *mitthi lumen* is done, funeral is at 12:00pm and there are cases in which funeral have to take place later than the prescribed time, in such cases the Church and the YMA usually take the decision.

The Churches do not have formal regulation for funeral service but there is a well-established norm of conducting the funeral. The funeral service is marked by community singing, prayer by the minister, speech by the representative of bereaved family informing the gathering account of the deceased person and the funeral sermon from the minister of the local church elder. The service usually lasted for an hour after which the body is taken to the cemetery and a final prayer took place before the burial.<sup>6</sup>

Since gathering of any kind is prohibited by the government after the outbreak of Covid-19 only a selected few including member of YMA, church elders, Pastor and family members can attend the funeral service with extreme precaution.

**2.4. *Mitthi Ralna*:** *Mitthi ralna* means the condolence money and other materials that are given to the deceased's family. This act of giving condolences of money or materials is taken place after the burial of the deceased person. However, in certain places a container is placed near the entrance of the house of the bereaved family and anyone can drop a certain amount of money in it. This is done so in order to give more convenient for the people since it is difficult for everyone to meet the bereaved in person amidst the big crowd. People also used to give their condolence after a long time after the burial as they could not attend the funeral service which is a common practice these days.

*Mitthi ralna* is also done with extreme precaution as it involves gift giving.

**2.5. *Khawhar Lenpui*:** A condolence visit to the bereaved is known as *Khawhar Lenpui*.<sup>7</sup> It can be done by both individual and group/organisation. Immediately after the body is buried many people including the relatives of the deceased family will gather at the house of the bereaved and this gathering is marked by community singing, prayers and anyone can preach or have a speech about the deceased person. A more formal condolence meeting is held by the YMA at the night following the burial day which is known as "*Ruang Thlak Zan*".<sup>8</sup> In many localities, this condolence meeting of the YMA lasted for three consecutive nights after the burial day. The day after the burial day is known as "*Thlan Nghah Ni*"<sup>9</sup> where people come together to comfort the bereaved. In this meeting, community singing is practised for the initial days and night but after four or five days, the condolence meeting is characterised by casual conversations.

As we have already mention in *mitthi vuina* only a few people are allowed to gather, so only a handful of people are allowed to give their condolence visit at once. People used to ask the bereaved family upfront on when they are allowed to visit.

**2.6. *Khawhar In Riah*:** Whenever a person dies, a group of young men of the locality come together to sleep overnight in the house of the bereaved family. It lasted for three consecutive nights after the burial. But some of them used to stay longer than three days. The purpose is to comfort the bereaved family. They come together at night and go to their respective work in the morning. This practice is however not practice anymore except for some villages.

**2.7. *Mitthi Thing Khawn*:** It is a practice of collecting stick or firewood from each household of the locality to compensate the bereaved family. Usually young women go round the locality where death takes place and collect firewood to give it to the bereaved family. However, this practice became irrelevant due to the increasing use of LPG gas and other means of electronic stove. In many places rice or money is collected in lieu of firewood.<sup>1010</sup>

Laldinpuii, K. (2013), *Mizo Chin Dan Thenkhat*, Tribal Research Institute, Lois Bet Print & Publication, Aizawl, p-49.

This practice was initially suspended in the wake of the outbreak of Covid-19 but as of now this practice got resume in some places.

**2.8. Pangpar Pek:** It means placing the wreath or a bouquet of flower and it is not exclusive to the *Mizo* society. It is of a recent practice. Artificial flower are used for this and is being commercialised now.

Covid-19 had a slight effect in *pangpar pek* as it is an act of giving and resulted in reducing the number of *pangpar pek*.

**2.9. Puan a Tuam:** It literally means covering with a cloth. It means giving a cloth to the bereaved family to show respect, care and love for the deceased person. The *Mizo* highly valued this cloth and they used to distribute it to their relatives to show their appreciation for comforting them in times of their need.

The outbreak of Covid-19 does not seem to have an effect on this practice. For instance, my Grandmother's brother died during the initial period of lockdown due to Covid-19 but he received 52 cloths which are much more than what his son's got who died a year ago.

**2.10. Lungphun:** It literally means erecting a stone for the deceased person. This is also one of the practices that the *Mizos* had adopted since time

immemorial. The bereaved family will call together their relatives and dear ones to have a ceremony which include community singing and preaching or speech by anyone. This ceremony ended with a feast and lasted for one day. They did this to show that they always remember the person.

Since gathering of huge crowd is prohibited post Covid-19, only a handful of people including the bereaved family and some of their relatives used to attend this ceremony.

### 3. Conclusion

There are few other traditional practices that are worth mentioning here. But, they are not included due to their irrelevance in the present day's *Mizo* society. *Zualko* was which means for conveying the Notification of death to relatives of the deceased who lived faraway. This was done by young men who delivered the message and it was an important social obligation. But, it is now replaced by telephone and other communication devices.

To conclude, all the traditional practices that we have mentioned are undergoing changes in one way or the other, added by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. There is a need for serious and proper evaluation of all the traditional practices related to Death and Funerals to ascertain the viable and practical way of providing the most effective pastoral care to the bereaved families.

### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Central Young Mizo Association, *Chhiatni Thatni Kaihhruaina*, p-4-6.

<sup>2</sup> Young Mizo Association, from now on refers to as YMA which is the short form of it.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Lalrinmawia, one of the Leaders of Young Mizo Association, Ramhlun North Branch.

<sup>4</sup> Sangkima, (2004), *Essays on the History of The Mizos*, Spectrum Publications, p-33.

<sup>5</sup> Tribal Research Institute, (1993), *Mizo-te khawsak phung*, G.M. Printing Press & Block Making Industry, Aizawl, p-37.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with an ordained Minister from Ramhlun East Presbyterian Church in Mizoram who had ministered a number of funeral services.

<sup>7</sup> Tribal Research Institute, (1993), *Mizo-te khawsak phung*, G.M. Printing Press & Block Making Industry, Aizawl, p-40.

<sup>8</sup> Literally 'the night when the corpse is dropped'.

<sup>9</sup> Tribal Research Institute, (1993), *Mizo-te khawsak phung*, G.M. Printing Press & Block Making Industry, Aizawl, p-33.

<sup>10</sup> Laldinpuii, K. (2013), *Mizo Chin Dan Thenkhat*, Tribal Research Institute, Lois Bet Print & Publication, Aizawl, p-49.



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## Coping and Social Support of Bereaved Families of Drug related Deaths in Aizawl, Mizoram: A Case Study

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Prof.C.Devendiran\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*Mortality related to abuse of drugs is increasing in Mizoram. The data from Excise and Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram shows that a total case of overdose death recorded till date as 1492. This figure does not include the cases in which overdose deaths reported as accidental deaths such as heart attack or other drug related illnesses. There is under-reporting and lack of acknowledgement of cause during death. This translates into the fact there are few services available for coping with the bereavement. Support groups for bereaved families are nonexistent and in many cases. The paper attempts to explore coping, bereavement and social support in families who have lost a member due to drug related deaths through selected case studies using a qualitative approach.*

**Keywords:** Coping, Social Support, Drug, Bereavement

### 1. Introduction

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), 'drug-related death' refers to deaths happening shortly after consumption of one or more psychoactive drugs, and directly related to this consumption. Often these deaths are referred to as 'overdoses', although equivalent concepts are also 'deaths directly related to drug use', 'poisonings' or 'drug-induced deaths'.

Any drug-related death is a tragedy. Loss of a loved one through addiction is treated by society in a much different manner than a death from any other cause and it creates unique bereavement needs (Feigelman, 2011).

The drug-death bereaved often face social stigmatization from family, friends, co-workers and

acquaintances, the drug-death bereaved offer more reports of stigmatization than those whose children had died from accidents and natural causes. *What sets these mourners apart from most other bereaved parents is the scarcity of drug death-specific literature to guide them along their difficult healing journeys following their children's deaths* (Feigelman, 2011).

The mid-1980s in India witnessed an epidemic of heroin injecting in north - eastern states of Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram. During 1990s, a new epidemic of pharmaceutical drug injecting notably with buprenorphine occurred in major cities of India (Chowdhuri AN, Chodhuri S. 1990).

The common drugs of abuse in Mizoram are dendrite, sedative pills, cocaine, Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), Ganja, Nitrozepam, Heroin, Spasmoproxyvon, Parvonspas, Letane, Nitrovet, Codeine, Pethidine, Fortwin, Cough Syrup, and

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Alcohol (Mizoram Social Defence & Rehabilitation Centre, 2005).

Cannabis is one of the commonly abused drugs, because of its availability and low cost factor. Heroin users are mostly from higher socio-economic background; probably due to its high cost factor. Spasmoproxyvon became the most widely abused drugs after heroin, probably due to higher cost of heroin and its erratic supply chain. Other drugs like Cough syrup containing codeine and prescription drugs are often abused for recreational purposes; users are mostly females. In the last 3 - 4 years, a younger population groups commonly abuse prescription drugs, (Chawnglungmuana, 2012).

Mortality related to abuse of drugs is increasing even in Mizoram. The data from the database of Excise and Narcotics Department, Govt. of Mizoram shows that the first case of overdose death recorded was in 1984 due to *heroin with a* total case of overdose death recorded till date as 1492. This figure does not include the cases in which overdose deaths reported as accidental deaths such as heart attack or other drug related illnesses. It is, however, common knowledge that there are many drug-related deaths that occur in Mizoram, there is under-reporting and lack of acknowledgement of cause during death. This however also translates into the fact there are few services available for coping with the bereavement. Support groups for bereaved families are nonexistent and in many cases, the families try to hide the fact that they have a substance abuser in the family.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

This study is to explore coping, bereavement and social support in families that have lost a member to drug-related deaths through select case studies using a qualitative approach.

This study profiles the characteristics of drug-related deaths that have occurred and explore the causes that have led to substance abuse related deaths. It attempts to understand the lived experiences of grief and bereavement in relation to drug-related deaths and identify the coping mechanisms used by the family members and study

the availability of the support systems for families bereaved due to such deaths.

## 3. Methods

Multi-stage Sampling was adopted. In the first stage, Aizawl was purposively selected due to the fact that it records the highest records HIV/AIDS (MSACS) related deaths in Mizoram. In the next stage, three urban localities with highest drug related deaths in the stipulated timeframe were selected from the Mizoram Excise and Narcotic Deptt. (Drug Related Deaths (Year-wise) w.e.f 1984).

In the third stage of sampling, a final sample was selected using proportionate sampling to keep gender and the localities represented. The family members of the identified families were contacted. Consent was sought for the study after the purpose of the study was explained and one or more family member each (spouse/parent/sibling or adult son or daughter of deceased member) were interviewed based on their voluntary participation. In all, a total of 20 in-depth interviews were conducted for the five case studies that are presented.

A guide which was constructed to develop a profile of drug-related deaths, document family particulars, nature of death, and history of bereavement, coping and social support. Help was sought from Texas Revised Inventory of Grief (TRIG) by Faschingbauer, 1981 to guide the issues to be raised.

## 4. Case Studies

Five case studies have been conducted with respondents' age varying from 26 years to 52 years. One or more family members were interviewed for one case. The cases are presented in narrative manner in first person account. The case studies are titled *The Weeping Widow, The Praying Mother, The One That Loves, Father of One and Brothers*. This renaming lends itself better to the narrative used and protects identity.

The weeping widow mentioned that she found it difficult to get along with certain people after the death of Peter, especially Peter's father because of

the relationship they had, which was mostly blamed to be the cause of Peter's addiction and his death. Losing interest in social activities was also part of the grieving process for her.

The praying mother said that it was mostly difficult for her in the morning. It reminded her of the time she found Robert dead on his floor; she mentioned that opening her shop in the morning was the routine she discontinued for a very long time.

The respondents admit that they felt anger and difficulty in sleeping, loss of appetite and cannot keep up with normal activities within the following three months of losing their loved ones. Being upset and crying was the most common form of expressing their emotions. The male respondents contributed that hiding tears was one of the ways they have responded to the painful memories while the female participants expressed that pre occupation with thoughts of the deceased brought back painful memories of the deceased.

For the first few months after the death of a family member each respondent reported they were in denial and difficulty in accepting the cause of death was mentioned by '*father of one*.' They all agreed to the fact that nothing will replace the deceased and that loneliness will be part of their lives.

## 5. Conclusion

In **conclusion** the following have been observed.

Drug related death is often sudden death that brings particular feelings and issues. Shock and disbelief are caused by the unexpected and devastating nature of the experience. While one can never feel completely prepared for a death, a sudden death leaves a person feeling particularly vulnerable.

The most overwhelming and common reaction to a drug related death is shock and uncertainty. This result in feeling disconnected to their feelings or to other people; which is interpreted by the respondents as if they are living in a dream.

The initial news and stages of grief of the respondents could be characterized as disbelief,

accompanied by feelings of numbness or a belief that the deceased is still present.

The unexpected nature of the death had left them with an "*absent grief*", as if the event has not occurred or the significance has not registered or yet been acknowledged. Not only they are subject to the usual grief feelings, but they had been deprived of the opportunity to prepare for the death. They reported that they were not able to gradually understand, cope or adjust to the possibility of the death or say their goodbyes in a personally satisfying way.

The common feelings expressed by the respondents are feelings of unfinished business and missed opportunities, and regrets for things not done or said to the person who has died. The families have encountered tremendous feelings of guilt, believing and wishing there was something they could have done to prevent the death. It is a common feeling expressed to blame themselves or to search for answers and meaning by seeking the cause of death in something or someone.

Strong feelings of helplessness had been manifested in displays of anger, agitation or immobilization. A delayed grief reaction resulting from the difficulty of being able to initially comprehend the events or meaning of the death had been experienced.

Younger bereaved persons experience more difficulties after a loss than do older bereaved persons. These difficulties include more severe health consequences, grief symptoms, and psychological and physical symptoms. The reason for this age-related difference may be the fact that younger bereaved persons are more likely to have experienced unexpected and sudden loss. However, it is also thought that younger bereaved persons may experience more difficulties during the initial period after the loss but may recover more quickly because they have more access to various types of resources (e.g., social support) than do older bereaved persons.

In general, men experience more negative consequences than women do after losing a loved one. This research might suggest that the mechanism for this difference is the lower level of social support provided to bereaved men than that provided to bereaved women.

The available social support systems were also learnt and from the study it can be seen that Mizo society grieve as a community which has its advantages as well as its disadvantage. Grieving in groups have helped the bereaved family to feel not alone and finding social belongingness and solidarity as a society. However this made it difficult to find closure in grieving as an individual.

It was also learnt that there are pattern of 'social exclusion' involved in the bereavement process when the causes of death are unnatural. This social exclusion comes from the bereaved families even though it is a social norm that everyone is treated with equality, the bereaved families felt that the nature of death does justify to the social support systems that are available in the society. Society also played their role in social exclusion by their perception and attitude towards drug addicts and drug related deaths.

This study on drug-related deaths has been a very new area of research and it documents the lived experiences of persons who are bereaved. Interestingly all the case studies preponderantly discuss the issue of loss of a very dearly loved member and the struggles associated with a past that was full of bitter frustrations.

To conclude, it does appear that most families look towards each other for strength and support. Secondary and tertiary support even when available is not adequate. A dominant theme that emerges is also the relationship with God being a coping strategy. It seems to offer a perspective besides reinforcing positive energy and offering solace and comfort. Summarily, the study offers some suggestions within a social work perspective based on the understandings gleaned from the case narratives. Social Support groups would go a long way in helping families in the bereavement. Self help initiatives of this nature may be initiated by social work professionals or facilitated by them. Such groups would provide a platform for discussion, help in catharsis but also help people deal with issues of guilt, shame and stigma that arise in the aftermath of a drug-related death. Strengthening secondary and tertiary sectors for care-givers to allay burdens faced in dealing with drug abusing members for families is indicated. While a member is alive itself, primary caregivers require a lot of help. This would involve networking with Non-Governmental Organizations, Community Network Organizations, and Faith Based Organizations etc. Church elders and faith based organizations in particular may offer best support in the absence of primary social support. Research on various aspects of death, dying and survival and coping is required.

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## Obituary: Sunderlal Bahuguna (1927-2021)

Dr. Suwa Lal Jangu\*

Sunderlal Bahuguna passed away suddenly on 21 May 2021. Sunderlal was an outstanding environmental philosopher and leader of environmental movements with a wide range of contribution across the whole environmental spectrum, from Himalayan ecology to future environment conservation scenarios. Sunderlal was of founders of environment movement in the post-Independence India and played a key role in founding of *Chipko* movement and nurturing strong peoples' ecological practices in India. Sunderlal worked as environment philosopher and practitioner in various ways for more than 50 years.

The *Chipko* movement began with the idea of the right of villagers over forests. Then, the thinking arose that the forests were being destroyed for commercial exploitation. The idea of the *Chipko* movement was advised by his wife. He fought for the conservation of forests in the Himalayas, he joined the *Chipko* movement as a member in the 1970s, and later he led the anti-*Tehri* Dam movement during the 1980s – 2004. Sunderlal Bahuguna was one of the early environmentalists of India.

After the *Chipko* movement, he and others associated with environmental issues across India. The large dams were main target of his environmental movements. His environmental activities included dams' development, peoples' ecology, water harvesting, soil health, forest management, purity of water reservoirs and so on. He was a regular visitor of Banaras Hindu University, for Sunderlal, it was laboratory and place of learning science of environment. He was the principal author of two books in Hindi: *Bhu Prayog Men Buniyadi Parivartan Ki* and *Dharti ki Pukar*. He was co-author of three books in English: *India's Environment: Myth and Reality* with Vandana Shiva and Medha Patkar; *Environmental Crisis and*

*Humans at Risk: Priorities for action* with Rajiv K. Sinha; and *Ecology is Permanent Economy: Activism and Environmentalism of Sunderlal Bahuguna* with George Alfred (2013).

Bahuguna refused to receive the Padma Shri over the government's refuse to cancel the *Tehri* dam project despite his protest in 1981. He was awarded by Jamnalal Bajaj Award for his contribution to environmental and social works in 1986. Bahuguna was honoured with Right Livelihood Award for his role in the *Chipko* movement in 1987. IIT Roorkee conferred him Honourary Degree of Doctor of Social Sciences in 1989. In 2009, Padma Vibhushan award by government of India honoured him. The parvatiya Navjeevan Mandal Ashram that started in the hunt became the centre of Gandhiji's principle of non-violence. Sunderlal Bahuguna used to play the *Chipko* game with students and teach how to connect with ecology and rural economy.

Early on, Sunderlal Bahuguna fought against untouchability and later organizing women in his anti-liquor drive during 1965 – 1970. Bahuguna who left politics and dedicated his life to social service, came up with the idea of focusing on forest conservation while the folk singer Ghanshyam Sailani came up with

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the name of *Chipko* for the movement through a song he wrote. On May 30, 1967, Sunderlal Bahuguna decided to declare May 30 as forest day. He appealed to everyone besides his *Sarvodayi* colleagues to join him. In 1968, Sunderlal Bahuguna brought out a booklet titled *Parvatiya vikas aur van neeti* (Mountain Development and Forest Policy) to commemorate the day. He said that forest, agriculture, animal husbandry and cottage industries provide at least 300 days of employment throughout the year.

Bahuguna was a social discipline of Dev Suman, who was a well-known person for his non-violence in hills. Before India's independence Bahuguna also mobilized people against colonial rule. He adopted Gandhian principles in his life and married Vimla with the condition that they would live in ashram among rural people. Sunderlal Bahuguna campaigned for a liquor ban in hills during 1969-1971. He walked through Himalayan forests and hills from Kashmir to Kohima on foot during 1981-1983 village to village, gathering support for the movement. He observed the damage done by mega developmental projects on the fragile ecosystem of the Himalayas and subsequent degradation of social life in hill areas.

Sunderlal Bahuguna made special efforts to promote social ecological programs of soil conservation, food sustainability, *khadi* garments, trees plantation, and water harvesting across India. One of Sunderlal Bahuguna's notable contributions is the *Chipko* movement and to environmentalism in general. He coined a slogan during the *Chipko* movement, "ecology is permanent economy". It was Sunderlal Bahuguna who brought recognition for the movement from across the globe with slogans, one of which is: "What do forests bear? Soil, water and pure air, soil, water and pure air are the basis of life."

Sunderlal met to the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and that meeting with her was fruitful in the passing of the Forest Conservation Act in 1980. Bahuguna led the anti-Tehri Dam protests for decades. He used Gandhian method of Satyagraha and many times sit on hunger strikes at the banks of Bhagirathi River as a sign of his protest. In 1995, 1997 and 2001 he went on long fast at Gandhi Samadhi, *Raj Ghat*, Delhi and two prime ministers

gave him personal undertaking of the reviewing Tehri Dam and despite a court case which ran in the Supreme Court for over a decade, finally the work of Dam construction resumed in 2001.

The works of Sunderlal reached Southern states and Madhya Pradesh. Environmental and social activists in the rest of India were taking inspiration from Sunderlal Bahuguna. Among many environmental and social activists some were Baba Amte, Sidhraj Dadha, Lepcha brothers, Bina Lakshmi, Akhil Gogoi and so on. He visited the southern states in 1979 to help in the campaign against the proposed Bedthi hydroelectric power project. In September 1983, Pandurang Hegde, an environmental and social activist in Karnataka, launched the *Apiko* (*Chipko* in *Kannad*) movement to protest against cutting of trees, introduction of monoculture farming and deforestation in the Western Ghats.

He was inspired by Sunderlal Bahuguna's environmental philosophy, the *Chipko* movement and Anti-Tehri Dam movement. After the *Apiko* movement launched, Bahuguna and Pandurang walked across many districts of southern states promoting conservation of the Western Ghats' ecology. The results of *Appiko* movements and Save the Western Ghats movement are seen in a moratorium on felling trees across the region in 1989. Sunderlal Bahuguna was an environmental activist and as a passionate non-violent fighter of not only environmental causes but also plight of Himalayan people.

According to Bahuguna, Himalaya is a land of penance. Nothing in the world can be achieved without penance. "I am doing this on behalf of all who are working to save our decessing Earth planet. Why should a river, a mountain and forest or the ocean be killed, while we still to life?" He was a guard of the ecology of Himalaya. He alerted us just some days before his last breath: "Dams, *Char Dham* road as Pancheshwar and Koteswar are paying the way for calamities and expressed concern that lakhs of trees would be cut down. In Bahuguna's words," We are doing violence towards the earth and towards nature. We have become butchers of nature." Environmentalist N. Badusha who had a close

friendship with Bahuguna said, “Bahuguna guided the environmentalists in South India.” Further he said, “We should not bank on government funds for environment protection activities and we should only depend on people for carrying forward the activities.

The environment philosophy of Bahuguna was based on the Gandhian principles, ecological ethics and social practices. He used Gandhian principles of non-violence, *Satyagraha*, simple life as use of *khadi* and self-reliant. His ecological ethics were protection, preservation, promotion of seeds, soil, water, forest, food and so on. He used various social practices as women leadership, youth voluntary, community participation, educational institution, Chipko game and songs. All these made him Mahatma of environment

in India. He was voice of hills and forest. He designed the socio-ecological engineering of sustainable uses of fibre, food, fruit, fodder and fuel. The people of northeast states also lost him as an intimate friend.

Bahuguna died on May 21, 2021 due to Covid-19 complications. Shortly after, he was commemorated by one of India’s largest global brands “Amul” in one of its public awareness advertisements. Sunderlal Bahuguna’s environmental works are deep rooted and people oriented, and he will be remembered as a dear friend of environment in India and abroad. His departure is certainly a great loss to the environment community, particularly to the hills community in India. Bahuguna leaves behind his hill and forest, *Chipko* and *Appiko* communities in India.

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