

P.K Bandyopadhyay

The Mizo Leadership



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Publication

An absorbing account of the Mizos the present book seeks to unfold the leadership and authority structure of those people in India's northeast. Various influences and pressures both from within and without have shaped the Mizo socio-economic and cultural spectrum. The Mizos have now lived down their turbulent past and gradually matured by the vicissitudes of history. They are veritable part of the Indian mainstream.

It is a fascinating saga from 1898, the year of the creation of the Lushai Hills District to the present day --- a search for a pan-Mizo identity with all its stresses and strains.

The writer studied the evolving society in various phases. First he carried out an intensive field study during 1979-83. He reviewed the position in 1987 after the Mizoram Accord and assessed the situation in 2003 in an effort to unravel the proverbial Mizo riddle ---- the undying mystery of the land of the Blue Mountain and the mystique of the folk figures like Chhura, Lalruanga and Liandova.

2004, XVI+320pp., 23 cm.

Rs. 800

A Ph.D. in Social Anthropology Pradipta Bandyopadhyay is a keen observer of the Mizo life and society in the northeastern part of India. His is a pioneering study on the leadership and authority structure in the evolving Mizo society with a strong historical sense.

Dr. Bandyopadhyay specializes in the study of the North East India and has made significant contribution to books like "The Tribes of North East India", 'Electoral Politics in North East India', 'Land Relations in North East India' and 'Linguistic Situation in North East India'.

Independently he wrote "Leadership Structure among the Mizos - An Emerging Dimension"; and 'Natha Cult and Mahanad - A study in Syncretism'.

Dr. Bandyopadhyay brings a multi-disciplinary approach and a humane touch to his sociological analyses. Grandson of the noted physician and litterateur of West Bengal, Late Dr. Pravash Chandra Bandyopadhyay has also penned several literacy pieces and poems.

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THE MIZO LEADERSHIP

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B.R. Publishing Corporation
[A Division of BRPC (India) Ltd.]
Delhi-110052

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ISBN 81-7646-441-4

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Printed & Published by:

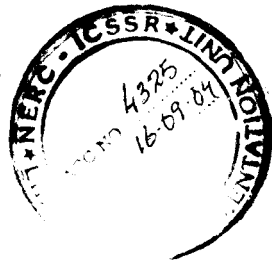
B.R. Publishing Corporation

425, Nimri Colony,

Ashok Vihar, Phase IV

Delhi-110052

E-Mail: brpcltd@del2.vsnl.net.in



Rs. 800

PRINTED IN INDIA



004325

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1

Introduction

Problem :

The present study seeks to identify and examine the leadership pattern obtaining in the ethno-cultural groups called the Mizos. Strictly it is based on micro-analysis of the authority and influence structure in four typical Mizo villages in Aizawl district of Mizoram—Seling, Sesawng (both are *Thlawhbawks* or temporary dwelling places), Thingsulthliah and Bilkhawthlir (Group Centres and big villages).

Leadership is a function of social interaction within a participant group. The social anthropologists probe into “the customary ways in which related people come to act collectively” (Slotkin, 1950 : 480). The Mizo society has come a long way from that state of “tribal society” which Lewis (1968 : 146) has described as “a primary aggregate of people living in a primitive or barbarous condition under a headman or chief”. Nor can the Mizos be described now as mere “residual category of stateless people”. The first influence is that of the missionaries and the process of evangelization. The process which started in 1894 had a snow-balling effect bringing about far-reaching changes in the society—its power structure and ethos. It led to a situation which McCall (1949)

aptly described as "Lushai Chrysalis". The impact of the consolidation of the British administration and later, introduction of the Constitution following India's Independence—especially the provisions of the Sixth Schedule was also immense. In 1954, passing of the Assam Lushai-Hills District (Acquisition of Chief's Rights) Act marked a watershed in the intra-group relationship. The study has tried to depict different phases of this fascinating evolution of social interaction and power relations—the traditional structure where the Chief's (*Lal*) clan (mainly *Sailo*), and the commoners (*hnamchawm*) were on a domination and subordination relationship—the chrysalis stage where two dimensional leadership situation—the chiefs and the new emerging class as a result of Christian education and contact of the British administration existed—and then the new leadership which led to the replacement of the indigenous traditional structure and gradually consolidated itself.

The study is a pioneering one in the field of rural leadership among the Mizos. This attempt at the micro-level analysis of the leaders and the non-leaders is relevant not merely from the theoretical angle but also from the point of view of understanding the development process and communication needs.

The present work is based on field observation from June 1980 to April 1981. Available relevant data from the Government records, facts incorporated in the concerned books, key informants of the concerned areas like the Block Development Officer/Administrative Officer and respected members of the community have been utilised. Some of the methodological tools like the structured interview schedule apart from direct participant observation have been used, as discussed in a subsequent portion on Methodology.

The study carried out in the Mizo context further throws light on the general theoretical problems involved in the concept of leadership, and some issues relating to the identification of leaders as well.

An Overview of Previous Studies

The subject matter has been divided into two parts : (a) Theoretical studies on leadership and (b) Findings of different studies on the leadership situation in Indian villages. Leadership study has been an engaging subject-matter for the sociologists, social anthropologists and social psychologists for a long time. Leadership or the way how related people act and interact collectively is described as a "group phenomenon" (Bogardus). It is "the quality of the behaviour of individuals whereby they guide people or their activities in organised effort" (Barnard Chester :1949: 83). The leadership may be based either on the tenure of the office or the formal situation the person is holding, or on his personal qualities. In the former case, the leader represents social control, while in the latter he depends on his personal capacity to influence the people. Whatever be the source of power, a domination-subordination relationship develops in a given group when the interaction is not on a parity vis-a-vis a group policy. Slotkin (1950 :481-83) gives a table different kinds of this relationship of domination and subordination :

<i>Ground</i>	<i>Basis for Domination</i>	<i>Basis for Subordination</i>
1. Formulation	Aptness of programme	Concurrence
2. Prestige	Status	Emulation
3. Affection	Object of admiration	Accedence
4. Authority	Role	Deference
5. Coercion	Power	Submission

Leadership is ultimately a function of power relations. A number of scholars have discussed the concepts of power and authority. Smith (1960) has pointed out that authority is basically "the right to take a particular decision and to command obedience since the act of command always involves at least one such decision". Power is "the ability to act effectively on persons or things, to take or secure favourable

decisions which are not of right allocated to the individuals or their roles". While authority is limited "by rules which define its scope and sanctions and which also specifies the positive modes of its exercise, there are no legal rules which sanction power or positively specify its modes of exercise, although there is a considerable body of law which carefully defines the conditions of illegality in its operation". Power can be exercised through a variety of actions—ranging from coercion, force, manipulation of various kinds to persuasion and influence. While authority is, "a derived or delegated right", power is in a way, manifest or latent control or influence over the actions of people.

In organised and advanced societies, there are different patterns of distribution of power. The leadership pattern is intimately related to this power position. There are three models of power, viz, the pluralist model, the elitist model and the class-dialectical model.

The pluralist model as developed by Dahl (1961) as a reaction to Mills (1959) and Hunter (1953) speaks of multiple centres of power. There are several bases of power and influence in the society. According to the elitist model as propounded by Mills (1959), Mosca (1896 & 1939), Michels (1915 & 1949), Pareto (1901 & 1968) and Burnham (1942), power is concentrated in the hands of the elites who occupy the top positions in the centralised hierarchies. The class-dialectic model holds that power is exercised by the dominant class. So the elitist and the class-dialectic models hold that power is concentrated in the elite or the dominant class.

Allen Whitt (1979) has given a chart showing the characteristics of different models of power. The chart is as follows :—

Characteristics of Models

	<i>Pluralistic</i>	<i>Elite</i>	<i>Class-Dialectic</i>
Basic Units of Analysis	Interest Groups	Institutional Elites	Social Institutions: Social Classes.

(Contd. on next page)

	<i>Pluralistic</i>	<i>Elite</i>	<i>Class-Dialectic</i>
Basis of Group Power	Many bases : Organisational, Governmental, Economic, Social, Personal	Institutional Position: Common Social Background, Convergent Interests	Class Position: degree of class consciousness and organisation
Distribution of power	Dispersed among competing, heterogenous groups	Concentrated in relatively homogenous elites	Held by dominant class, but potentially available to subordinate classes.

The models as outlined above are relevant to the developed and highly organised societies. In rural and specially tribal communities such clear patterns of power distribution do not always exist. This is more so in respect of the tribe under study. However, there is certainly a relationship between the leader and the led and an interaction between the leader and the group.

It is difficult to find out an agreed definition of the terms 'Leader' and the 'Leadership'. Some scholars opine that leadership is a 'property of a group', while others consider it to be a 'Characteristic of an individual'.

The second approach, which may be called 'the trait' approach' is concerned with identifying the characteristics of leaders—the entire gamut of the physical, intellectual, and personality traits of the leaders as compared to the followers. Bird (1940) has compiled a long list of traits that differentiate the leaders from the non-leaders. Stogdill (1948) examined various studies of the traits of leadership and noticed contradictory findings. Gouldner (1950) also has revealed the inadequacies of the trait approach.

Several reasons may be attributed to this inadequacy :

(a) Difficulties in reliable and proper measurement of the leadership traits.

(b) Traits for effective leadership in one group or situation may differ from those for another group or situation.

(c) It is also found that certain 'minimal abilities' required for leaders are available in the non-leaders as well.

These deficiencies in the 'Trait Approach' have led to a 'new view' of leadership which may be termed 'the Situational Approach'. Scholars like Barnard (1938), Cattell (1951), French (1949), Gibb (1947), Likert (1959), Lippitt (1940), Redl (1942) and Stogdill (1950) have supported the point of view. According to the situational theory leadership is not an isolated phenomenon, a mere presence of certain qualities in certain persons. It is related to a particular group or community. Situational aspects like the structure of the group of the community, the nature of its goals, the needs and expectations and achievements have to be taken into consideration in the leadership study. The interaction among members of the group or the community and different plans also comes under this purview.

The present study has taken into consideration both the trait and the situational approaches. It has analysed the qualities of the leaders vis-a-vis the non-leaders. At the same time the evolution of the leadership structure in the Mizo society has been presented in the socio-historical perspective. Stogdill's comment that "leadership is an aspect of organisation rather than an attribute of individuals" was also kept in mind.

By and large there are two concepts for measuring leadership. Cattell (1967) used two terms for these concepts: One is 'Syntality' and the other 'Structure'. He said that the existence and nature of leadership would be found either in the

group syntality or in the group structure. Syntality evaluation indicates measurement of performance of the group under the guidance of a leader. A leader, therefore, is a person who has considerable influence upon group syntality. As Cattell said, "And we measure leadership by the magnitude of the syntality change (from the mean) produced by that person, i.e. by the difference between syntality under his leadership and the syntality under the leadership of the average or model leader".

By 'Structure' Cattell means establishment of the leader and the follower relationship through observation of "internal inter-action". In that process the leader is recognised by "a formal office, by his influence on other individuals, or by his being named by others as the most popular or indeed as the leader".

Cattell is in favour of measuring leadership at the group syntality level rather than at the structure level. But it is only the case of small, organised groups that Cattell's concept can be adequately utilised and his procedure in leader measurement be followed. It is well-nigh impossible to adopt the method in respect of rural communities, tribal groups which are not necessarily organised and streamlined groups. This is more so in the rural areas under study. So the 'Structure Method' has been adopted in the present case. The 'Structure Method' has three sub-divisions :

- (a) the Positional method
- (b) the Action method and
- (c) the Reputational method.

A detailed description of the methods has been given in the portion on Methodology. Here only a brief mention is made :

The Positional Method

The method is based on the relationship between position holding and decision making. The number and types of

organisational positions held, and the type of organisation are studied to identify the important community leaders. Lynd (1969), White (1950) and Gerth (1958) are some of the writers who used this method exclusively or in combination with other methods.

This method has, however, been subject to criticism. The first difficulty is to judge the relative 'importance' of different positions. The personality of the position-holders is also lost sight of. There may be wide variation in the exercise of power by different formal position-holders. Moreover, the method is based on the assumption that position-holders are also the decision-makers.

However, a leader exercises power by virtue of occupation of a position or influence in his personal capacity. So position-holding provides at least one of the many dimensions of leadership. In the present study, a survey of the positions and organisations has been made to trace out the formal structure of authority.

The Action Method

This method examines the decision making process and finds out the key people involved. Scholars who have written about this method include—Freeman (1960), Kimball and Pearsall (1955 : 58-63).

Despite certain theoretical and methodological limitations, this is a more direct approach to the study of leadership.

The Reputational Method

This method determines the leadership position according to the recognition and acknowledgement by the respondents. Hunter (1953) used this method effectively. Scholars like Dahl (1958 : 463-69), Kaufman and Jones (1954 : 205-12), Polsby (1960 : 474-484), Wolfinger (1960 : 636-44), Schulze (1957 : 290-96) and Form and D' Antonio (1959 : 804-14) have criticised this method. Bonjean (1963 : 672-81),

Blankenship (1964 : 207-216) etc have found this method quite useful.

From various studies it was found that no single method is adequate. A number of scholars like Harjinder Singh (1976) and Avtar Singh (1973) have adopted a combination of two or the three above noted methods in their leadership studies.

Rural Leadership situation in India

India is a land of wide diversity. There are various types of villages with different demographic, social, economic, political and cultural aspects. Naturally there cannot be uniform finding on the leadership situation in different parts of the country. Scholars in the field have come to different conclusions about the rural leadership in different areas.

Main (1871) made systematic attempts at the study of villages in India. He wrote about the role of the Council of Elders and headmen in Indian villages. Powell (1890) studied the impact of geographical, climatic and ethnic antecedents on the formation of different types of village groups.

Lewis (1958 : 127) studied a Jat village in Northern India and found extension of the leadership pattern in the extended family to the village level. Wealth, age, personality traits, education, connection and influence with people outside the village, numerical strength of the family, reputation are important characteristics of leaders.

Dhillon (1955) found three types of leaders in a South India village : Primary leaders, Secondary leaders, and Tertiary leaders. The primary leaders are important leaders of the village who occupy pre-eminent position in the village Panchayat. The secondary leaders who are faction leaders centre round primary leaders, while the tertiary leaders representing small kinship groups are affiliated to the secondary leaders.

Dube (1965 & 1961) has studied the rural leadership in transitional societies and examined correlation between dominant caste and village leadership.

S.N. Singh (1966), Sumati Mulay (1966), Udai Pareek and T.K. Moulik (1963), B.N. Singh (1966), Singh and Arya (1966) examined the leadership in North Indian villages—the traditional as well as the emerging type. For example, S.N. Singh found five different categories : traditional, political, opinion-maker, decision-maker and caste leaders. Khare (1969 : 188-210) has discussed the changing pattern of political behaviour in North Indian Gopalpur—various groups and the process of political change obtaining in the village.

Beteille (1966 & 1969) has examined Caste dynamics in relation to power structure. In his analysis of power structure in villages of Tamilnadu he has highlighted the inadequacy of the concept of dominant Caste. Beteille adds “Today the political system is becoming increasingly differentiated. This does not, of course, mean that it is unrelated to caste and class or that it will be so in the near future, But as the political system becomes more and more differentiated, new loci of power develop and these tend to acquire a weight of their own.”

Hitchcock (1959) has shown in his study of a North Indian village that high caste and close rapport with the local administration are essential characteristics of village leadership.

Bhouraskar (1964 : 329-340) discussed village leadership in a village in Madhya Pradesh. He has classified indigenous village leadership into two categories, namely official and non-official. Non-official leadership has further been subdivided into two, namely, formal and informal.

Indra P. Singh (1968), Harjinder Singh (1976) and Avtar Singh (1973) studied the rural leadership in Punjab. Indra Singh noted three kinds of leaders in a Sikh village,

'noble', 'religious' and 'scoundrels'. Harjinder Singh studied the characteristics of leaders and non-leaders, not merely personal and socio-economic characteristics, but also psychological (opinions, attitudes, sentiments and goals) and cultural (belief-orientation and values) aspects in two Sikh villages. Avtar Singh adopted the positional, action and reputation approaches and examined the leadership position in six villages of Punjab.

Orenstein (1959), Salvi (1957) and Patil (1968) have examined the leadership structure in villages in Maharashtra. Orenstein has classified the leaders into two—formal and informal. The informal leadership has been further classified into 'sanctioned' (those who exercise influence over others) and 'unsanctioned' (those whose leadership is based on 'force') categories. Salvi observed 'informal', 'formal' (caste headman, Panchayat, village Cooperative leaders) and professional (like school teachers) leaders in his area of study.

Bose and Saxena (1966 : 121-130) examined the opinion leaders in a village in west Rajasthan. Maheshwari (1963) also studied the leadership patterns in a Rajasthan village.

Mc Cormack (1959) has studied factionalism in a Karnataka village and found three types of leaders, hereditary or traditional (village ceremonial chiefs caste headman etc), wealthy leaders factional leaders and (non-hereditary). Beals (1960) in his study noted formal (headman, persons on elected village councils) and traditional (landlord) leaders. He also found 'factions' and 'cliques' in that Karnataka village. Bachheimer (1959) in his study of an Andhra village suggested that despite outward changes leadership follows a fairly traditional patterns. However, growth of political consciousness is bound to take place leading to the gradual erosion of the traditional leadership.

In his study on leadership in Kerala Panchayats, Nair (1967) found leaders mostly well-off and engaged in agriculture. Harper (1959) examined the political organisation and leader-

ship in a Karnataka village. Leadership roles are performed by Havik Brahmins, and feud, friendship, faction and party play their part in determining the leadership position.

Sachchidananda (1964 : 116-131) studied leadership and culture change in an Oraon village in Bihar. With the introduction of Bihar Gram Panchayat Act in 1952 and the Community Development Programme, new concepts of education, public health and economic development spread and different modes of political organisation and activities were introduced. This led to the emergence of new leadership roles. While the old leadership was ascribed, the new one is achieved. The new leader has to function in a democratic system. So obviously his freedom in decision making is limited.

Sinha (1967 : 222-227) has discussed Santal leadership in Hazaribagh area of Bihar and analysed the traditional pattern vis-a-vis the coming of new influence.

Chaudhuri (1964 : 641-644), Sengupta (1968 : 159-166), Danda and Danda (1970) studied the leadership situation in villages in West Bengal. Chaudhuri observed formal (Panchayat, school, Cooperative Societies) and voluntary (in organisations like sports associations) categories of leaders. Sengupta analysed opinion leaders in two villages in Burdwan district of West Bengal and examined the concepts of polymorphism and monomorphism in rural leadership. Danda and Danda has discussed the changing authority structure in a Burdwan district village of West Bengal. The change was brought about by a process of democratic decentralization through Panchayati Raj.

Saran (1978) has examined rural leadership in some villages in Bihar in the context of India's modernization.

As regards the North Eastern India, Saikia (1963 : 92-99) collected data from six villages, one in Tripura and the others in Assam. Three are purely tribal, two are non-tribal and the

remaining one has a mixed population of tribals and non-tribals. His purpose was to study the importance of the traditional leaders and the role of the emerging leaders under the impact of recent changes. Saikia concludes :

“If there is a sincere man with initiative, he can inspire and lead the villagers, irrespective of his official or economic position. Even with official authority and a majority of votes at the time of election, a sponsored leader may not be able to inculcate a new outlook among the rural folk if he lacks sincerity and ability. In tribal areas, however, the traditional leaders still exercise considerable influence, and in the execution of any economic development they ought to be associated”.

From the foregoing survey it appears that in India, the leadership position and the characteristics of leaders vary from region to region and even from place to place. Effective leaders must practise what they profess with regard to new ideas and practices. Srinivas (1959 : 1-16) thinks that ‘dominant Caste’ is a significant factor in power relations in rural India. Rout (1967 : 15-16) in his study of Panchayat leaders of Orissa noted that most of them were from high castes, high economic level and within the age category of 41-50 years. Pande and Jain (1966 : 13-14) found that most of the leaders in some villages of Uttar Pradesh were big land-lords and businessmen and from upper castes. Dube (1961) noticed that power remained concentrated in some individuals and not necessarily diffused in the caste. Singh (Harjinder) (1976) in his study on Punjab villages found that most of the leaders were from upper caste, young age category, better education level and big land owning class. The findings of Barnabas (1958) were also the same. Valunjkar (1962), noted that the leaders had less ‘caste bias’ in their perceptions than non-leaders.

Srivastava (1965) : 151-171) studied rural leadership in the context of directed social change at intervals—1947, 1953 and 1959. His observation is that leaders are fairly aged and

they belong to upper strata. Honesty, education, boldness, initiative were considered important attributes. While studying in the traditional culture pattern, value orientation and personality traits, Srivastava observed stresses and strains between the existing traditional norms and values in society and the new concept of socialistic pattern of society. These strains are evident in the leadership pattern of rural India. In certain villages the traditional pattern of group leadership rather than the emerging leadership has remained quite strong.

Several studies have been made on this changing pattern of leadership. Some of these have already been mentioned. Gupta (1966) and Beals (1960) have studied these changes. Jadeja (1964) examined the trends in village leadership in three villages of Gujarat. Asthana (1967) found new bases of leadership in the case of Kshetra Pramukhs—the emerging leaders. From the earlier pattern of 'centralised' or 'singular' leadership, a change has taken place towards the 'diffused' or 'plurality' pattern. Roy (1965) analysed the characteristics of emergent leaders and found that the new leaders come from higher economic level, they have better education and good contact with extension agencies, and a large family. Age and caste are no longer important factors in determination of leadership. The emerging leaders have also comparatively secular and rational view of life and society.

Findings of these studies confirm the position that influence and power of the traditional leaders are on the decline. Various socio-economic influences introduced marked changes in the bases of leadership and strategies of exercise of power. The present study of the Mizo leadership structure shows how a new pattern emerged and the old power relations gave way to the new tide. It also analyses the roles of the new leaders and their perception of roles vis-a-vis the non-leaders.

Methodology

Of the three districts in Mizoram, Aizawl district has been considered to be the ideal district for the research study—

the identification of the leadership structure, and the pattern of power relations. There are several reasons. Out of 608 villages throughout the Union Territory of Mizoram, Aizawl district alone accounts for 352 villages, while Lunglei district and the Southern district of Chhimtuipui accounts for 136 and 120 villages respectively. More than 70% of the total population of Mizoram live in Aizawl district. As per the Statistical Hand Book of Mizoram the total population of Mizoram as on 1.1.1978 is 4,38,052. (The provisional population figure as per 1981 Census comes to 4,87,774).

The district wise breakup is as follows :

<i>District</i>	<i>Population</i>
1. Aizawl	3,10,656
2. Lunglei	75,760
3. Chhimtuipui	51,636

Aizawl district, therefore, remains the most important district from the demographic point of view. It is practically the nerve-centre of the socio-political activities of the Mizos. The district dominated by the Lushais' the more advanced sub-tribe can provide the best theatre for multi-dimensional operation of the power structure.

Moreover, the district as distinguished from the Chhimtuipui district inhabited by myriad sub-tribes by and large constitutes—

- (a) A socio-culturally homogeneous unit.
- (b) The districts has a net work of leadership institutions, voluntary organisation/welfare associations. Power distribution pattern is manifest.
- (c) The district has had exposure to various socio-political-economic influences over the years, specially after the advent of the British. It is also more exposed to different development programmes of the Government.

After selection of the district, we took up selection of the villages suitable for the study. The list of villages in the Union Territory was available with the Department of Economics and Statistics, Government of Mizoram. The Statistical Hand Book of Mizoram 1978, the latest available so far came to our ready help. At present there are broadly two types of villages in Mizoram. One category is the old recognised villages and the other "*Thlawhbawk*" or temporary dwelling places. For purpose of analysis and understanding of this division, let us have a look at the recent history of re-grouping of villages.

Following the outbreak of disturbances in Mizoram in 1966, the Government embarked on a large scale grouping of villages as a counter-insurgency measure. The first phase of grouping was carried out in the early part of 1967. The villages situated along the main Silchar-Aizawl-Lunglei road were adopted for grouping into various centres. These were called P.P.V.S. or protected and progressive villages. The order for grouping was initially based on the authority of Defence of India Rules. Later on in 1968 the then Governor of Assam promulgated an ordinance known as the Assam Maintenance of Public Order (A.M.P.O.) 1968, which was to be invoked as the legal base for continued grouping of villages. Accordingly the second phase of grouping of villages in the North, West and East of the Northern part of Mizoram was carried out under this new ordinance. Then order for the third phase of grouping of villages in the central and South-Western part of Mizoram under the Assam Maintenance of Public Order 1968 was issued. However, on reference of the matter to the Gauhati High Court by some individuals, the Gauhati High Court issued a stay order to the Assam Government. In the same manner, order for grouping of villages in the Southern part of Mizoram was also stayed. So the Southern part of Mizoram did not come under the grouping operation, and remained free from any such change in the village set-up. Apart from the P.P.V.S., there are three more categories of grouping centres :

- (a) N.G.C. (i.e. New Group Centre of Sectors in areas bordering Bangladesh, Burma and Tripura.
- (b) E.L.A. (Enlarged Loop Area in areas along Manipur and Burma border.
- (c) V.G.C. (Voluntary Group Centres in some pocket areas).

The grouping of villages confined by and large to the Northern part of Mizoram, however, started showing signs of disintegration. In some cases the villagers left their grouping centres for their old places. A large number of villagers settled in big grouping centres found to their dismay that there was no sufficient land within walking distance for their jhumming (shifting cultivation) every year. In some cases they had to walk even 10-15 Kilometres to reach their jhum sites. This resulted in a lot of inconveniences to the villagers, and they were allowed to go back to their old places to enable them to work on their jhum. These old places where the villagers settled again are called '*Thlawhbawk*' which means temporary dwelling places. However, quite a large number of villagers also decided to stay on in the grouping centres.

Thus two types of villages have come to exist in Aizawl district; firstly old recognised villages and group centres and secondly '*Thlawhbawk*'. In the former category there are regular village Councils consisting of members duly elected by the villagers under 'The Mizoram (Election to village Councils) Rules, 1974, whereas in '*Thlawhbawk*' there are no such village councils. However, the villagers themselves have set up Committee called village Committee to look after community work and other welfare activities of the village. These are not recognised by the Government.

Selection of the villages was done from among both the categories of villages. Three criteria were fixed :

- (1) Villages should have an infra-structure of leadership institutions, fairly developed in respect of educational institutions, voluntary bodies etc.

- (2) Villages having population below 200 are left out because such villages are rare and less than six per cent of Aizawl district population live in those villages. These are located in the deep forest terrain with near absence of exposure to modern influences.
- (3) Location of the villages should be such as to facilitate thorough field work. Mizoram, being a place affected by insurgency, this aspect was taken into consideration for our study. Apart from this, easy communication considering remoteness and isolation of the villages was also a point of requirement.

After thorough study of the demographic pattern, administrative structure, geographic and socio-political factors, the following villages which fulfil the above noted requirements were finally selected. Before final selection there was thorough discussion with the concerned Block Officials, prominent villagers and opinion leaders of the places.

Thingsulthliah and Bilkhawthlir, were selected from among the old recognised villages and group centres. Thingsulthliah is by the Aizawl-Lunglei Highway, and Bilkhawthlir is located by the Silchar-Aizawl road. From among *Thlawhbawks* Seling and Sesawng were selected for the study.

Determination of the methods :

Identification of leaders and influentials has posed a veritable problem to the social anthropologists and social scientists. From an appraisal of the leadership studies done by various social anthropologists, we can broadly trace three approaches to the problem :

- (a) Positional method,
- (b) Action method,
- (c) Reputational method.

Before dwelling on the method adopted for the present study let us briefly analyse the three methods—their scope and limitations.

Positional Method :

The positional method is primarily based on the premise that persons holding formal positions, offices in the community are the decision makers and opinion leaders and they play a dominant role in community actions. In this method the leadership is a function of office, holding positions as distinguished from the informal which exercises influence without occupying any formal position. Social scientists are required to find out positions in any given community and identify the leaders on that basis. Before the fifties this method was quite popular. But with more field studies and research the method is found to be inadequate. Firstly, there is no unanimity in selection of the formal positions. Lynds (1959) and Mills (1959: 4), obviously following in the footsteps of Marx have given weightage to economic position and identified the economic dominants as positional leaders. Stouffer (1955), on the other hand chose civic and political positions. Schulze and Blumberg (1957 : 290-296) gave importance to economic dominance in determination of local power-elites, while Jennings (1964) considered officials, civic staff and economic dominants as positional leaders.

The Action Method :

The action method is known by different other names such as 'Event Analysis', 'Decisional Methods', 'Behavioural Approach', 'Issue Participation Approach'. Basically the method consists of the analysis of the decision making process in the case of certain given community actions. Those who actually take part in the decision-making process are considered to be influentials and elite. The influence is seen in the real life situation. Here 'power' can be measured from the directly observable behavioural pattern. The first step here is to identify the community actions over a certain period

of time and then to find out the persons who are actively associated with the decisions. Thereby the structure of power relations is identified.

Reputational Method :

This method is perhaps the most commonly used and bitterly criticised method of finding out the leadership structure. The method first used by F. Hunter (1953) in the *Community Power Structure* enjoins the respondents to name the influentials. The respondents may be selected on random basis from a cross section of a given community. They may also be taken from a panel of knowledgeable. Those who obtain a larger number of mentions above a certain determined point are considered to be the leaders and the elite in the society.

From a detailed analysis of the three methods it appears that none of the methods is foolproof. These are, in fact, supplementary and complementary to one another. Each one can function as a check against the other. So it was decided to use more than one methods in the research study.

There are two aspects of the leadership pattern. One is based on influence and the other on the office one holds. The leadership both formal and informal can, therefore, be identified with the help of the 'Issue Specific-Reputational Method' and the 'Positional Method'. We omitted the merely reputational method, because that method alone will not be very useful. Firstly, it can, at best find out reputation for power instead of real power structure. Secondly, in our area of study it was found through a preliminary survey that the replies may be subjective and there are chances of the respondents being unable to perceive the power structure correctly and there is also the possibility of a divergence in understanding the precise connotation of the leadership and power between us and the respondents.

Collection of data

Data in respect of the study was collected through the following means;

(a) *Non-controlled Participant observation*

The behavioural pattern and the process of decision making in the given community was studied by intermittent visits to the areas and participant observation. This was with a view to gaining a higher degree of insight into the inter-personal relations and the dynamics of the community. The field observation was carried out during the period June 1980 and April 1981.

Meetings where key community decisions were undertaken, interaction among various opinion-leaders were special points of study.

(b) Interviews with the Influentials.

(c) *Structured Interview Schedule*

A structured Interview Schedule was prepared incorporating the issue-specific-reputational method. The Interview Schedule was broadly divided into three parts :

- (1) Reference Category Characteristics of the respondents : leaders and non-leaders. This elicits information regarding age, sex, education, religion, occupation, income and standard of living of the respondents.
- (2) Identification of leaders : This part seeks information on the community actions and the persons exercising substantial influence in the decision-making process involved in the community issues.
- (3) Attitudes, Behaviour, Beliefs and Disbeliefs.

This portion contains questions on respondents' opinion, sentiments, support, expectations, belief orientation and value standards in relation to different referents.

Unit of Study :

It was decided that the household head would be the unit

of the study. In case the leaders identified through observation and the positional method do not happen to be the household heads, the Interview Schedule was also administered to them. The purpose of the study was explained to each respondent in the local language elaborately, so that he or she did not have any inhibition and hesitation to answer the questions in the Schedule. The list of the household heads was collected from the Block Development Officer/Administrative Officer as well as from the village Council/village Committee, whichever was applicable in the villages under study.

Selection of the respondents :

To be more accurate, it was decided that the procedure of sampling to be adopted should be such as to give a correct picture of the leadership situation. Samples ranging from 25 to 50 per cent were taken depending on the size of the village. From a preliminary survey and direct participant observation, it was found that the number of positions in most of the leadership institutions remain almost the same irrespective of the village as shown in the chapter on the formal structure of authority.

Preliminary survey also indicated that some of the non-leaders as distinguished from the leaders identified through the positional method gave almost identical replies. So ultimately it was decided to select 33% of the respondents from the list of the household heads at Bilkhawthlir. Out of 475 household heads and others, 159 respondents were taken. At Thingsulthliah 25% of the total household heads were included. This was 163 out of 649 household heads. At Seling and Sesawng 50% of the total household heads were selected. The figures for these villages are 44 (out of 88) at Seling and 54 (out of 107) at Sesawng respectively. If and when the influentials/leaders identified through the positional method and direct observation were left out, they were also included in the sampling. This eliminated the chances of omission of any influential from the purview of the sampling. While selecting the respondents every care was taken to ensure that the sample is not biased, or clouded by prejudice.

Table 1.1.
Number of Respondents in the Sample

	<i>Village</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Thingsulthlah</i>	<i>Bilkhawthlir</i>	<i>Seling</i>	<i>Sesawng</i>	
Per cent Sample drawn	25	38	50	50	
Number of Persons in the sample	163	159	44	54	420

Pre-testing of the Schedule

The schedule was pre-tested with 19 people in the four villages under study. The purpose was to check the validity of the questions and to find out whether required information were elicited through the schedule or not. After the process of pre-test some modifications in the questionnaire were made to eliminate unnecessary and irrelevant questions.

Role of Key informants and positional method

Identification of the positional elite and formal leaders was carried out with the help of the key informants and what is commonly known as Positional Method. Important individuals like the Young Mizo Association President and Secretary, village council President and Kristian Thalai Pawl President were interviewed to gather detailed information about the formal leadership structure. Certain information and background materials were also collected from the Block Development Officer/Administrative Officer, and the offices of the village councils. Some selected leaders in each village were also interviewed to get further information about the source and strategy of leadership.

Selection of Community issues

Selection of the community issues was one of the most

important aspects of the study. The lists of such issues were prepared with the help of the Block Development Officer/ Administrative Officer and other Key informants of the concerned villages. Community actions undertaken during the past five years were taken up in the study. The community issues were selected keeping in mind the following criteria :

(a) The action must relate to the common goal/benefit of the community.

(b) The action must pertain to either of the following sections :

Social, developmental, economic and educational.

(c) The action must involve a decision by the concerned people.

Issues fulfilling all the above criteria were listed and the respondents were asked to designate persons who exerted substantial influence in each of the issues. Persons getting more mention was included in the leadership pool in order of gradation depending upon the mention level.

The final list of the community issues prepared in respect of the villages under study includes the following actions :

Seling

1. Cleaning and clearing the village streets.
2. Construction of the Public well.
3. Construction of a Playground.
4. Construction of a Health Sub-Centre Building.
5. Building for Lower Primary School.
6. Building of the Presbyterian Church.
7. Community work in building a widow's home.

Sesawng

1. Community work in the Public well.
2. Construction of the building for a Health Sub-Centre.
3. Building of Lower Primary and Middle English Schools.
4. Approach Road for Lower Primary School.

Thingsulthliah

1. Construction of the Isolation Ward in Public Health Centre.
2. Construction of the Bazar Shed.
3. Repair and extension of the Playground.
4. Construction of Doctor's Training Hostel.
5. Construction of Medical staff quarters.
6. Demolition and Re-construction of the local Presbyterian Church Building.

Bilkhawthlir

1. Construction of the road to Chemphai paddy field.
2. House for widows and Disabled persons.
3. Cleaning of the Young Mizo Association Park.
4. Widening of the Playground.
5. Cleaning of the Graveyard.
6. Cleaning and widening of the Road side.
7. Construction of Public urinals.
8. Fencing of the well/water/point and building hut for the Reservoir.
9. Construction of the Church Building of Dawrveng.

MIZORAM

