The cover features abstract graphic elements: a thick black line at the top left, a grey line below it, and a prominent red line that loops across the middle and bottom right. In the bottom right corner, there are several black, angular shapes resembling stylized mountain peaks or a modern architectural structure.

Bureaucracy and
Rural Development
in **Mizoram**

Harendra Sinha

About the Author

Harendra Sinha obtained his MA (Political Science) and Ph.D. degrees from Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam. He is presently working as Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Government J. Buana College Lunglei, Mizoram. He is actively engaged in teaching and research works. He has contributed number of research papers and regularly contributes articles to various journals and present papers at seminars. He has written books on Indian Government and Politics, Major Political System, Political Theory, Western Political Thought and Public Administration (co-authored) published by Research and Publications Committee, Government J. Buana College.

Dr. Sinha is currently a member of Board of Studies of the Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Mizoram Academic Forum (MAF), Mizoram Political Science Association (MIPSA), Mizoram College Teachers Association (MCTA) and the Secretary of MCTA Branch.

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Harendra Sinha

Associate Professor & Head
Department of Political Science
Government J. Buana College
Lunglei (Mizoram)-796701



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Dedicated
to
my beloved wife
Late Nandita Sinha
(1976-2003)

Preface

Rural development has been one of the abiding concerns among policy-makers and planning experts as an apposite answer to the problems of poverty all-over the world. It is advocated as an essential strategy for social justice and economic development especially in developing countries. In a developing country like India where majority of population live in rural areas, rural development assumes immense significance. Hence, soon after Independence, the focal point of the planners both at the Centre and State levels was to eradicate poverty and to improve the standard of living of rural masses. The launching of Community Development Programme in early fifties and the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) later were the significant measures undertaken by the Government of India towards rural reconstruction.

The implementation of the Community Development (nomenclature changed) later as Rural Development Programme was characterised by division of the entire country into small manageable 'blocks' and a new bureaucratic model created in the form of 'block level functionaries' consisting of a generalist kingpin of the block—the Block Development Officer with a team of Extension Officers and Village Level Workers. With the exception of some good results at the preliminary periods, this model failed in discharging multiple rural reconstruction activities and to induce people's participation in the programme as was expected. Thus, a Committee on Plan Projects popularly known as Balwantrai Mehta Committee, after the name of its Chairman, was set up to enquire the working of the community development. The committee

recommended the introduction of three-tier system of PRIs to involve people in the development processes. Various committees, later on, headed by Ashok Mehta, V.P. Naik, P.B. Patil, G.V.R. Rao, L.N. Singhvi refurbish these institutions which gave necessary momentum to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 which revolutionise the Panchayats. The 73rd Amendment granted the Panchayats constitutional status and entrusted considerable number of functions and responsibilities in ensuring genuine participatory development process at the village level.

With the introduction of PRIs in almost all the States of India, rural development programme is undertaken and implemented by PRIs as well as with the coordination of the block level functionaries. In case of Mizoram, rural development programmes are being implemented by the block functionaries only as Mizoram has not introduced PRIs as local self-government. The State of Mizoram has been exempted from the 73rd Constitutional Amendment due to the existence of traditional local self-government bodies—the Village Councils. As the Village Councils are not as intense as PRIs, block level functionaries are vital for planning, implementation and to stimulate people's participation in the rural development programme.

There has several works on rural development and PRIs been done in various parts of the country. However, the remote and hilly State of Mizoram has been neglected in this manner by researchers on this very aspect. This study is the first of its kind in the disciplines of public administration and rural development which is focused on the block level functionaries and their role in rural development in the absence of PRIs, their role in planning and implementation, performance in motivating and encouraging people's participation in rural development programmes, their problems and the perceptions of the people towards these functionaries.

This book is organized in eight chapters. The first chapter deals with brief introduction, objectives and methodology and introduction of the study area. The second chapter deals conceptual framework of bureaucracy and rural development. The third chapter includes the democratic decentralisation in Mizoram, the District Councils and Village Councils. Chapter four is devoted to bureaucracy and rural development in Mizoram. In chapter five the author explained the problems and prospects of rural

development in Mizoram. The sixth chapter deals with the role and functions of the block functionaries and relationship between the generalist head of the block and his team of extension officers. The seventh chapter covers the role performance of the block functionaries and the perceptions of the people towards the rural functionaries. The last chapter presents the summary of major findings, suggestions and conclusions.

The present book "Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Mizoram" is mainly based on my Ph.D. thesis. This research would be of enormous help to the common people, policy-makers, government officials, future researchers and the non-governmental organisations who are engaging themselves in the upliftment of the rural poor in Mizoram.

Harendra Sinha

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Finally, I am deeply indebted to many eminent scholars and researchers of India and other countries whose valuable works I have drawn upon for this work. The blessing of information technology is highly acknowledged through which much information and materials were gathered. I am alone responsible for all the shortcomings in the book, if any and would welcome suggestions for future guidance.

Lunglei, Mizoram
Monday, 29 November, 2010

Harendra Sinha

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>List of Tables/Charts/Maps</i>	xv
<i>Glossary</i>	xvii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xix
1. Introduction	1
2. Bureaucracy and Rural Development	17
3. Democratic Decentralisation in Mizoram	55
4. Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Mizoram	80
5. Problems and Prospects of Rural Development in Mizoram	114
6. Block Level Bureaucracy: Their Role and Responsibilities	144
7. Assessment of Block Level Bureaucracy	180
8. Findings and Suggestions	210

Appendices

I. Questionnaire and Interview Schedule for Beneficiaries and Non-Beneficiaries	223
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II. Questionnaire for Grassroots Bureaucracy	226
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<i>Bibliography</i>	229
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<i>Index</i>	238
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List of Tables/Charts/Maps

4.1:	Projected Impacts on Income from NLUP	98
5.1:	Percentage of Total Workers and Main Workers, Marginal Workers and Non-Workers to Total Population by Residence and Sex of Lunglei District—1991 and 2001	116
5.2:	Percentage Distribution of Total Workers (Main and Marginal) by Category of Workers by Sex in State and Lunglei District 2001	117
5.3:	Abstract of Village Level Statistics as on 1st April 2003	117
5.4:	Percentage Distribution of Total Workers (Main and Marginal) as Cultivators, Agricultural Labourers, Workers in Household Industry and other Workers in State and Lunglei District by residence and sex 2001	118
5.5:	Land Utilisation in Mizoram 2006-07	118
5.6:	Major crops Cultivated in the Lunglei District along with production for the year 2005-2006 in Lunglei District	119
5.7:	Block-wise/Activity-wise Projection for the Year 2005-06 in Lunglei District	121
5.8:	Soil Conservation Engineering Practice Measures, Lunglei District 1992	125
5.9:	Horticulture Production in Lunglei District for the Year 2002-2003	126
5.10:	WDPSCA Micro Watershed Projection for the Tenth Plan in Lunglei District 2002-03	128
5.11:	List of Watershed of NWDP, Identified for Implementation during Tenth Plan 2002-03 to 2006-07	129
5.12:	Road Description during the year 2002-03 to 2003-04 under Lunglei Division	135

7.1:	Showing Percentage of BPL Families in Lunglei District RD Blocks: 1998	195
7.2:	Showing Percentage of BPL families in Lunglei District RD Blocks, 2003	195
7.3:	Showing Performance about the Services of BDO, Extension Officers, VLWs	197
7.4:	Showing Opinion of the Respondents on whether the Village People were Benefited from the Rural Development Programmes (last 10 Years)	201
7.5:	Showing Responses on the Method of Selection of Beneficiaries under Various Rural Development Programmes	201
7.6:	Showing Responses on the Priority on which of the area the block administration (BDO) needs to work in their area	202
7.7:	Showing the Responses from which source the Village People know Information about Rural Development Programme	203
7.8:	Showing Responses of Beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries whether the village people are happy on the selection process of beneficiaries of Rural Development Programmes	204
7.9:	Showing Responses on whether the Block Functionaries Visits the Village People Regularly	204
7.10:	Showing Responses on what are the Purposes the Block Functionaries Visit the Villages	205

Chart

4:1:	The Organisational Chart of Commissionerate of Rural Development (As in 1991)	90
4.2:	Organisational Structure of Rural Development Department (As on October 2005)	92

Map

1.1:	Mizoram with the Study Area—Lunglei district blocks.	9
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Glossary

- Bawi*: Dependants of the Mizo Chief
- Chakma*: A tribe belongs to eastern group of the Tibeto-Burman group and Budhists in religion having their own dialect
- Chichhiah*: Salt due payable to the chief
- Fathang*: Paddy due payable to the chief
- Gramin Awaas*: Village housing
- Gram Panchayat*: Village council
- Gram Sevak*: Village level worker
- Gram Sevika*: Lady village level worker
- Gram Swaraj*: Village self-sufficiency
- Hnatlang*: Rendering services for the community
- Indira Awaas Yojana*: Indira Housing Scheme
- Mizoram Intodelhna Project*: Project for Self-sufficiency in Mizoram
- Jawahar Rojgar Yojana*: Jawahar Employment Scheme
- Jhum*: Slash and burn method of cultivation
- Khuaichhiah*: A honey-due payable to the chief
- Lal*: A Mizo chief
- Lakher*: A particular clan also known as Maras of Mizoram inhabiting the southern part and having their own dialect.
- Mandal*: A revenue unit with a population of about 35000-50000.
- Mautam*: Mautam is a natural famine appears in Mizoram at an interval of about 50 years.

Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl: Mizo Women's Organisation

Mizo Hnam Dan: Mizo Customary Law

Mukhya Sevika: Block level female development functionary

Pawis or Pois: A particular clan known also as Lai dwelling in the south and south eastern part of Mizoram having their distinct dialect.

Panchayat Samiti: Block level council

Panchayati Raj: Rural democratic decentralisation pattern in India

Puithiam: Village Priest

Ram: The chief's land

Ramhual: Privileged villagers who had the first choice of the jhum site thereby paying more paddy dues to the chief

Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana: Prime Minister Village Upliftment Scheme

Sailos: Ruling clan of the Lushais (Mizos).

Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana: Complete Village Employment Scheme

Sachhiah: A flesh due payable to the chief

Sarvodaya: Well being of all

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana: Golden Jubilee Village Self-Employment Scheme

Swarozgari: Self-employed individual

Thirdeng: A village blacksmith

Thirdengsa: A flesh due payable to the village blacksmith

Tlangau: A village crier

Tlawmngaihna: The Mizo social and moral code by which every individual discharge his responsibility to the society

Upas: Chief's Council of Elders

Upa Pawl: Elders Association

Zalen: Privileged villagers who were exempted from paying paddy due to the chief but have to support him in times of need.

Zawlbuk: Bachelor's dormitory

Zila Parishad: District Level People's Council

Abbreviations

AAP	: Annual Action Plan
AARDO	: Afro Asian Rural Development Organisation
AEO	: Agriculture Extension Officer
AMDP	: Accelerated Maize Development Programme
ANP	: Applied Nutrition Programme
ARWSP	: Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme
BAC	: Block Advisory Committee
BADP	: Border Area Development Programme
BAFFACOS	: Bamboo Flowering and Famine Combat Scheme
BDC	: Block Development Committee
BDO	: Block Development Officer
BPL	: Below Poverty Line
BRTF	: Border Road Task Force
CADC	: Chakma Autonomous District Council
CADP	: Command Area Development Programme
CDP	: Community Development Programme
CIRDAP	: Centre on Integrated Rural Development of Asia and the Pacific
COPP	: Committee On Plan Projects
CRSP	: Central Rural Sanitation Programme
CSRE	: Crash Scheme for Rural Employment
CSS	: Centrally Sponsored Schemes
DDP	: Desert Development Programme
DIC	: District Industries Centre
DESBAPP	: Development of Sustainable Base for Pig Production
DLMC	: District Level Monitoring Cell

DLPC	: District Level Project Committee
DPAP	: Drought Prone Areas Programme
DRDA	: District Rural Development Agency
DVMC	: District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee
DWCRA	: Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
EAS	: Employment Assurance Scheme
EO	: Extension Officer
FFWP	: Food For Work Programme
GA	: Gramin Awaas
GoI	: Government of India
GoM	: Government of Mizoram
GNP	: Gross National Product
HYV	: High Yielding Varieties
Ha	: Hectares
IAAP	: Intensive Agricultural Area Programme
IADP	: Intensive Agricultural Development Programme
IAS	: Indian Administrative Service
IAY	: Indira Awaas Yojana
ICDS	: Integrated Child Development Programme
IDDP	: Integrated Dairy Development Programme
IEO	: Industry Extension Officer
IRDP	: Integrated Rural Development Programme
ITDP	: Integrated Tribal Development Programme
JRY	: Jawahar Rojgar Yojana
IWDP	: Integrated Wasteland Development Project
KBIB	: Khadi and Village Industries Board
KVIC	: Khadi and Village Industries Commission
LAD	: Local Administration Department
LADC	: Lai Autonomous District Council
MADC	: Mara Autonomous District Council
MCS	: Mizoram Civil Service
MDMP	: Mid-Day Meal Programme
MFAL	: Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers
MHIP	: Mizoram Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl
MIP	: Mizoram Intodelhna Project
MLA	: Member of Legislative Assembly
MNP	: Minimum Needs Programme
MUP	: Mizo Upa Pawl
MWS	: Million Wells Programme

NAEP	: National Adult Education Programme
NABARD	: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NES	: National Extension Service
NEHU	: North Eastern Hill University
NFBS	: National Family Benefit Scheme
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
NLUP	: New Land Use Policy
NIRD	: National Institute of Rural Development
NES	: National Extension Service
NOAP	: National Old Age Pension
NREGS	: National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
NSAP	: National Social Assistance Programme
NREP	: National Rural Employment Programme
NWDP	: National Watershed Development Project
OFWM	: On-Farm Water Management
OPP	: Oilseed Production Programme
PDS	: Public Distribution System
PHC	: Primary Health Centre
PIREP	: Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme
PMGY	: Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana
PO	: Project Officer
PRI	: Panchayati Raj Institution
PWD	: Public Works Department
RLEGP	: Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme
SC	: Schedule Caste
ST	: Schedule Tribe
SEO	: Social Education Organiser
SFDA	: Small Farmers Development Agency
SGSY	: Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SHG	: Self-Help Group
SITRA	: Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans
SLCC	: State Level Coordination Committee
SLMC	: State Level Monitoring Cell
SNP	: Supplementary Nutrition Programme
SUBACS	: Sustainable Development of Sugarcane Based Cropping System
TSP	: Total Sanitation Programme
TRYSEM	: Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment

US	: United States
VC	: Village Council
VCP	: Village Council President
VDC	: Village Development Committee
VEO	: Veterinary Extension Officer
VLMC	: Village Level Monitoring Cell
VLW	: Village Level Worker
VO	: Voluntary Organisation
WVDP	: Whole Village Development Programme
WRC	: Wet Rice Cultivation
WDPSCA	: Watershed Development Project in Shifting Cultivation Area
YMA	: Young Mizo Association
YMCA	: Young Men Christian Association
ZENICS	: Zoram Electronics Industries Corporation
ZIDCO	: Zoram Industrial Development Corporation
ZOHANDCO	: Zoram Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation
ZP	: Zila Parishad

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Rural development has specifically been given prime importance in the development plans as 75 per cent of the worlds poor live in rural areas.¹ Any attempt at bringing overall development should lay greater importance on rural development especially in developing countries, which are characterised by high incidence of rural poverty. The increasing height of rural poverty in these countries is a matter of grave concern. Therefore, the primary goal of planning and development strategies in these countries has been directed towards tackling under-development and rural poverty. Bureaucracy occupies an important role in the formulation and implementation of these development plans and programmes even in the new economic order in which a reduced governmental intervention in the economic sector, thus implying a reduced role for the bureaucracy in the process of development is expected. However, at any rate, bureaucracy is a considerable segment of it, an inescapable obligation to inculcate a disposition towards work in the field—more especially in the rural areas and amongst the vulnerable sections of the population.² The vital requirement for bureaucracy now is to get away from the sluggishness to give a thorough response to the challenges posed by the new economic order.

The role of state intervention in the overall development of the population in developing countries are indispensable where the challenges of mass poverty, lack of infrastructure, unemployment, ill-health, illiteracy and inequality needs to be

dealt with. For this, good governance through e-governance, transparency, democratic decentralisation, accountability, efficiency and productivity and people's participation has now been acknowledged to be the basic requirements of administration in improving the quality of life of the people—especially the rural poor. In India, rural development has been one of the important objectives of planning since independence. The launching of Community Development Programme (CDP) in early fifties and the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) later were the significant measures undertaken by the Government of India towards rural reconstruction.

The implementation of the CDP was characterised by division of the entire country into small manageable 'blocks' and a new bureaucratic model created in the form of 'block level functionaries' consisting of a generalist kingpin of the block—the block development officer with a team of extension officers and village level workers. With the exception of some good results at the preliminary periods, this model failed to discharge multiple rural reconstruction activities and to induce people's participation in the programme as expected. Thus, a Committee on Plan Projects popularly known as Balwantraji Mehta Committee was set up to enquire the working of the community development. The committee recommended the introduction of three-tier system of PRIs to involve people in the development process. Various committees, later on, headed by Ashok Mehta, V.P. Naik, P.B. Patil, G.V.R. Rao, L.N. Singhvi refurbish these institutions which gave necessary momentum to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 which revolutionise the Panchayats. The 73rd Amendment granted the Panchayats constitutional status and entrusted considerable number of functions and responsibilities in ensuring genuine participatory development process at the village level.

With the introduction of PRIs in almost all the states of India, rural development programme is undertaken and implemented by PRIs as well as with the coordination of the block level functionaries. In case of Mizoram, the programme has been implemented by the block functionaries only as Mizoram has not introduced PRIs as local self-government. The State of Mizoram has been exempted from the 73rd Constitutional Amendment due to the existence of traditional local self-government bodies—the Village Councils. As the Village Councils are not as intense as PRIs,

there is heavy reliance on grassroots bureaucracy in the overall upliftment of the rural poor and it is, in fact, vital for planning, implementation and to stimulate people's participation in the rural development programme.

In this context, it is important to focus attention on the role of grassroots bureaucracy in rural development in this remote underdeveloped state.

Importance of the Study

In India where about 72 per cent of the population lives in rural areas, the development and progress of the country lies in the development of its villages. Any progress of growth and development that does not fulfil the needs of rural area and its people, especially the poor cannot be claimed as development. Mizoram is an under-developed state. It is highly mountainous with rugged topography, is a primary producing state. Shifting cultivation (*jhum*) has been widely practiced in the state causing soil erosion, damage soil fertility, creates environmental and socio-cultural problem, denudation of forest cover, etc. Agriculture (*jhum*) is the sole occupation but the local agricultural products could substantiate only about 25 per cent³ of the states requirements despite about as much as 70 per cent of the workers engagement in agricultural activities. The region is at an infantile stage in the field of industry. Whatever industry, it may be called; at present is only small-scale industry, fed by indigenous agricultural produce covering only a small market zones.⁴ The situation in respect of allied sector is in no way better. The potential in animal husbandry, a common subsidiary activity, is grossly under utilised and meat, eggs, fish come from outside the state.⁵

In Mizoram, facilities like transport, communication, irrigation, industry, etc. are not adequate. The state depends largely on other states for essential commodities. In spite of the massive efforts of the government to develop the rural area, the success has been minimal. According to the 1990 Survey Report of the Rural Development Department, 52 per cent of people in the state were living below poverty line. It is a paradoxical situation that, more than ever the threats of poverty loom large in the hearts of the working class despite the fast growth in developmental expenditures since 1972.⁶ With the existing structure of Mizoram

economy, precarious state of agriculture (no fertile, intensive type of crop-land easily amenable), slow growth of alternative employment avenues in rural areas, lack of industries, poor communication facilities, there is low possibility of absorbing the fast expanding labour force. The cultivable land and other traditional rural enterprises have a limited scope for supporting the fast emerging population. This has forced more people to seek their fortunes in the urban areas, which have its own repercussions on the economy.⁷

Inequality in economic status in Mizo society has been very much evident with the emergence of elite rich class. One of the main reasons is unequal distribution of the fruits of development in the state. While launching New Land Use Policy (NLUP) by dissolving the Mizoram Intodelhna Project (MIP), the Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla sounded a warning that if the present trend of widening gap between the rich and the poor is not reversed, there may be discontent amongst the poorer sections leading to social tensions, disharmony and violence to the extent of causing bloodshed in Mizoram.⁸

Under these circumstances, the state is facing with the uphill task of elimination of shifting cultivation (*jhum*) and in achieving self-sufficiency in foodgrain production. Therefore, development strategies of the Government of Mizoram has been mainly towards agricultural development and to protect the land from degradation, to protect burning of forests for *jhuming*, encouraging permanent cultivation in achieving sustainable development in eco-friendly manner vis-à-vis to find out alternative way of livelihood for the *jhumia* families. The Government of Mizoram launched various programmes for rural development other than the Centrally Sponsored Schemes like NLUP in 1990-91, revived in 2009-2010 and MIP during 2002-2003, BAFFACOS during 2005-2006, etc. to wean away the *jhumia* families from shifting cultivation by providing them alternative means of livelihood. Bureaucracy is the focal point of administration, planning, and actual ground implementation of these rural development programmes. The present position of the Village Councils in Mizoram may be compared with the Panchayats of Indian States before the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act 1992. Socio-economic development is beyond the scope of the Councils due to lack of financial and political power. Although the Councils are being

involved in the process of rural development, their role is limited by the fact that the bureaucracy assumes more power and influence. It is bureaucracy that made the actual ground implementation of all the schemes of rural development in the absence of PRIs.

The study of bureaucracy especially at the block level and its role in rural development in Mizoram assumes significance in the above context.

Review of Literature

The present study is concern with the role of bureaucracy at the grassroots level in the rural development in Mizoram where the Panchayati Raj Institutions not introduced. There is enormous trust vested on bureaucracy in the implementation of rural development programmes as the existing local governing institutions are not intense and bureaucracy easily overrides the local democratic bodies in Mizoram. Researches on bureaucracy and rural development in a state where the Panchayati Raj Institutions not introduced are few although there have been numerous studies carried out on the various facets of bureaucracy and rural Development.

R.K. Sapru⁹ (2003) in his book '*Development Administration*' suggested that a developing country like India can realise its developmental goals only through its instrument of action, namely, the civil service and there is need of bringing about reforms in the civil service system through better recruitment procedures, sustained training, more rational organisation and improved administration capacities. The state should have a clear developmental programmes for the future not only in terms of goals and objectives in various spheres of socio-economic development and nation-building and policies required to achieve these goals, but also in terms of a civil service system with such organisation, personal and procedures as would help it implement those programmes and policies and enable the state to achieve its developmental goals.

N.R. Inamdar¹⁰ (1992) in his book '*Development Administration in India*' pointed out the need of modifications in the Indian model of development administration and politics in practice. Both political and bureaucratic components have to be

more active taking more energetic efforts to reach the development outputs to the marginal and poorer peasants, artisan and labourers.

Debidas M. Muley¹¹ (1987), in his book '*Rural Development Administration*' suggested realistic plan formulation and the effective implementation of plans depends on sound and viable local government structure, which at the same time needs smaller and larger units to reconcile democratic aspirations a strong executive to carry out development programmes and policies.

In their book '*Village Development in India: A Sociological Approach*' G.R. Madan and Tara Madan¹² (1988), given emphasis on the problem of village development from a sociological point of view in all the major aspects of the problem—economic, technological, social, religious, cultural, political and administrative so as to understand the problem in proper perspective.

S.R. Maheshwari¹³ (1985) in his book '*Rural Development in India*', opines that a large amounts of public funds are presently disbursed under the various programme of rural development, leakages and seepages have become noticeable and corruption in rural development administration has become a serious problem today. The media and the opinion leaders in India are, as a rule, notoriously urban oriented both by training and temperament, and happenings in the rural sector are not reported at any great length or discussed.

B.S. Khanna¹⁴ (1991), in his book '*Rural Development in South Asia, India*', opines that block development administration began to be weakened from about the middle of the decade of sixties onwards with the decline of community development programme and rise of separate sectoral programmes of rural development.

A.K. Agarwal¹⁵ (1991), in his article 'Dynamics of Rural Development in Mizoram', stated that administrative infrastructure for programme planning and implementation is weak in the state as it is found in the North East as a whole. Lack of training facilities within the region is to a great extent responsible for poor motivation of grassroots staff.

S.G. Deogaonkar¹⁶ (1980), in his book '*Administration for Rural Development in India*' opines that success and failure of the rural development depended on village level workers at the grass root level and hence selecting the right man and equipping him suitably and sufficiently to do his work was the crux of the problem.

In their book '*Problems in Rural Development*' (1985),

Ramashray Roy, T.M. Vinod Kumar and V.B. Singh¹⁷ gave importance on developing planning process at the block level.

E.D. Setty¹⁸, in his book '*New Approaches to Rural Development*', (2002), evolved some guidelines for the block staff in assisting the Panchayat Samiti and the Village Panchayats in diagnosing village problems and in developing plans and programmes for village improvement.

Shiv Raj Singh¹⁹ (1989), in his book '*Bureaucracy and Rural Development*' evaluated and made an assessment of the performance of all the bureaucrats at block level including bureaucrats of development departments, peoples participation in Panchayat, IRD Programme at the Pachhad Block and Chopal Block of the districts of Shimla and Sirmour of Himachal Pradesh and opined that block bureaucracy should be committed to rural development. This can be possible in case the block bureaucracy has its social roots in the rural soil.

In his book '*Development Administration in An Indian State Guide Book Evolved for Block Development Officer in Orrisa*' (2002), Dr. Taradatt²⁰, suggested number of guidelines and duties of the block development officer in relation to Panchayat, relation to block level functionaries.

Kalpana Das²¹, in her book, '*Rural Development in Mizoram*' (2004), focusing on the various ramifications of the IRDP administration and suggested to build motivation of the personnel at the cutting edge through a system of continuous appraisal, performance based rewards, and special postings in remote areas and need to build professionalism.

The above studies on bureaucracy and rural development are different from the present study. Because of the absence of Panchayati Raj Institutions and its geographical location where the villages are scattered with different socio-economic structure, the policy recommendations that are applicable to other parts of the country may not necessarily be suitable for the state. It is in this background that an assessment towards block level bureaucracy and their role on rural development has been carried out.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to focus mainly on bureaucracy at the block level which is involved in the implementation of rural development

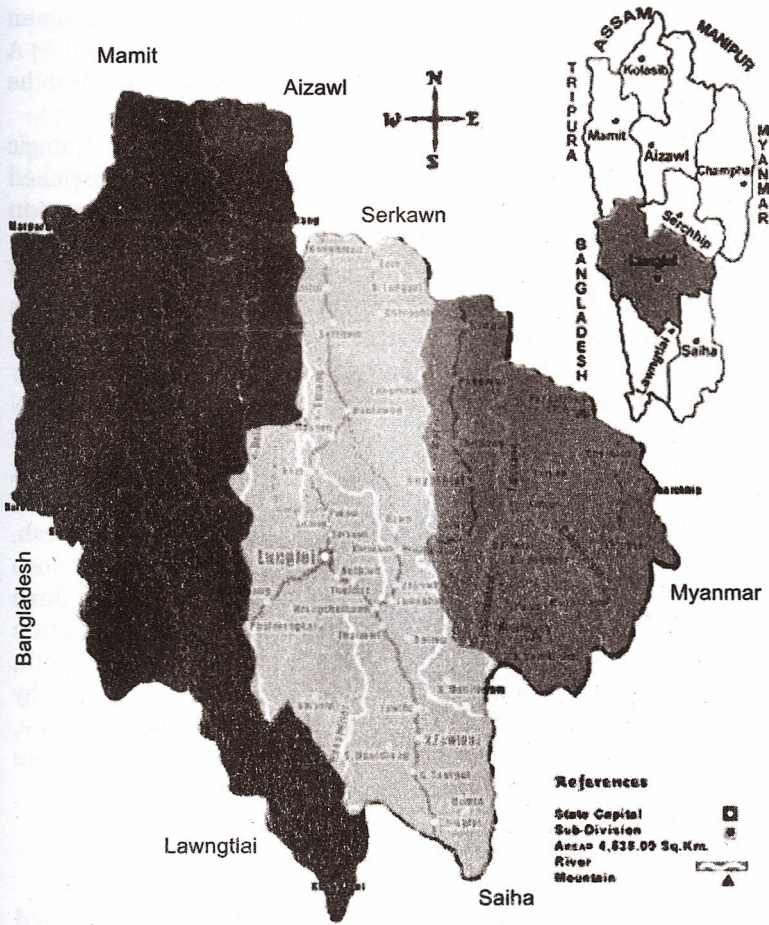
programmes in Mizoram. In the absence of Panchayati Raj Institutions, where the existing local self-government system is irrelevant today, grassroots bureaucracy is the key in overall development of rural Mizoram. Accordingly, the specific objectives of the study have been set:

1. To make an assessment on the performance of the grassroots bureaucracy and their role in the execution of rural development programmes.
2. To highlight the implementation of various rural development programmes towards upliftment of the rural poor in Mizoram, its impact and the role of bureaucracy in it.
3. To obtain the perceptions of the people—the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of rural development programmes towards the rural bureaucratic functionaries as well as the perceptions of the rural bureaucrats, their difficulties and challenges.
4. To explore the problems and prospects of rural development in the study area and to suggest suitable measures.

Hypothesis

To meet the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses are formulated for empirical verification in the study.

1. The existing rural bureaucracy at the block level has failed to execute the task of rural development to the extent needed.
2. There is lack of motivation of rural bureaucracy to the extent required and belongingness in their department, hence, failed in the task of motivating the village people.
3. The existing local self-government is irrelevant and its role in rural development is insignificant in the absence of Panchayati Raj Institutions.
4. There is very modest impact of rural development programmes initiated in the blocks.



Map 1.1: Mizoram with the Study Area—Lunglei district blocks.

Source: Economics and Statistics Department, Lunglei, 2010.

Red = Lungsen block, Yellow = Lunglei block
Blue = Hnahthial block, Green = Bungmun block

Study Area

For an in depth study of this nature requires limiting the geographical parameter of the study. This was done taking up four

rural development blocks—Lunglei, Lungsens, Hnahthial, Bnghmun rural development blocks in the Lunglei district of Mizoram.²² A brief description of the physical and socio-economic features of the area in which the study was conducted is given below.²³

Mizoram located in the northeast corner of India has a strategic significance geographically and politically for it is sandwiched between Myanmar and Bangladesh; and shares a common international boundary of 585 kilometers with these two countries. Its total area is 21,081 square kilometers having a population of 888,573 of which 50.35 per cent rural and 49.65 per cent urban, as per 2001 census. The erstwhile Lushai Hills District became Union Territory on 21st January 1972 and got statehood on 20 February 1987. The state is geographically located between 21.58°N to 24.35°N latitude and 92.15°E to 93.29°E longitude.²⁴ The state is highly mountainous and has rugged topography with high ranges trending north south direction. Barring few patches of flat land along the valleys and the area bordering the plains of Cachar and Bangladesh, the topography of Mizoram is composed of steep hills and deep gorges.²⁵ Mizoram is divided into eight districts now (earlier three districts—Aizawl, Lunglei and Chhimituipui before the reorganisation of administration in late 1990's)—Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha, Mamit, Kolasib, Champhai, Serchhip, Lawngtlai. The state is inhabited by ten main tribes including the Lusei, the Ralte, the Hmar, the Paite, the Pawi, the Lakher, the Chakma, the Riang and others. There are twenty-three rural development blocks at present.

Profile of Lunglei District²⁶

Lunglei district lies on the south-western part of Mizoram situated between 22.30N-23.18N Latitude and 92.15E-93.10E Longitude. The 'South Mizoram' has been used to refer to Lunglei Division which comprises the present three districts of southern Mizoram, namely, Lunglei, Lawngtlai and Saiha. It is bounded on the north by Mamit district, on the east by the district of Aizawl and Saiha on the South by Myanmar and on the west by bordering Bangladesh. The district has international borders of 35 kilometers with Myanmar and 107 kilometers with Bangladesh and the total area of the district is 4,536 square kilometers. It is the largest district of Mizoram in terms of area. The district derives its name from the town of Lunglei which is also the district headquarter. As

per the 2001 census, the total population of this district is 1,37,223. The male population is 71,403 and female 65,821. The rural population of the district is 79,2672 and urban 57,956. The density of population per square kilometer is 30 and the literacy is 84.20 per cent. The present Lunglei district has three sub-divisions Lunglei, Hnahthial, and Tlabung and four rural development blocks—Lunglei, Lungsen, Hnahthial and Bunghmun. Lunglei is 235 km (via Hnahthial) and about 165 km. (via Thenzawl) far from Aizwal. Agriculture is the predominant activity in the district. The general condition of rural population is poor.

Profile of Blocks and Villages²⁷

- (a) Lunglei is one of the biggest rural development blocks in Lunglei district which covers inside and neighbouring villages of Lunglei town. The number of rural population is 20904 with 4227 households. The number of cultivator (*jhum*) is 3282 and 161 wet rice cultivators. The block office is located at Chanmari, in Lunglei town. Dawn (85 households, population of 367) which is 25 kms away from Lunglei town, Thualthu (227 households, population of 588)—31 kms, Tawipui (143 households, population of 620)—40 kms, Mualthuam N (271 households, population of 1253)—70 km and Mamte (100 households, population of 524)—80 km and Thingfal (254 households, population of 1374)—68 kms away, were selected from this block for the present study.
- (b) Lungsen is one of the backward blocks in Lunglei District with a rural population of 38814 with 8104 households. The number of cultivator (*jhum*) is 6236 and 912 wet rice cultivators. The block office is located at Lungsen which is 58 km away from Lunglei town. Hmunthar (36 households and population of 177) which is 118 kms away from Lunglei town, Belthei (102 households and population of 429)—42 kms, Lungsen (475 households and population of 2218)—58, Tuichawng (1521 households and population of 2750)—95 km and Rangte (125 households and population of 746)—59 kms, Tipperaghat (155 households and population of 911) 100 kms away, were selected from this block for the present study.

- (c) Hnahthial block is situated 60 kms away from Lunglei town. Under this block total number of rural households is 4268 and total population is 23351. The number of cultivator (*jhum*) is 3210 and 210 wet rice cultivators. The block office is located at Hnahthial. Thingsai (452 households with population of 2801) which is 227 kms away from Lunglei town, Leite (177 households and population of 885)—47 kms, Darzo (243 households and population of 1417)—79 kms, Rotlang E (127 households and population of 696)—53 kms away, were selected from this block for the present study.
- (d) Bunglei block is one of the most backward blocks in Mizoram. Under this block total number of rural households is 3657 and total population is 18768. The number of cultivator (*jhum*) is 3297 and 129 wet rice cultivators. The block office is located at Bunglei which is 140 kms away from Lunglei town. Serte (85 households with population of 450) which is 40 kms away from Lunglei town, Bunglei (242 households and population of 2019)—140 kms, Belkhai (153 households and population of 773)—167 kms, Dengsur (71 households and population of 402)—56 kms away, were selected from this block for the present study.

The four blocks of the Lunglei district and the sample villages almost shares the same characteristics. Out of the four blocks, Lunglei block, being nearest to the district headquarter is relatively in a better position due to the facilities available. The economic status and the standard of living of the villages which are located nearby block headquarters are also relatively better than those remote villages because of the market accessibility and other facilities like health, education etc. which are available near to them in the towns. Otherwise, the overall economic condition—dependence on agriculture (mostly *jhum*), communication constraints, market accessibility, scarcity of essential commodities and lack of facilities like irrigation, power supply, etc. are almost the same.

Methodology

The present study requires both primary and secondary data. The

primary data has been collected from the fieldwork through questionnaire and interview schedule. Total of 20 villages—10 nearby and 10 remote villages (six villages each from Lunglei and Lungsen block, four villages each from Hnahthial and Bunglemun block) from the block headquarters were selected. A previously prepared schedule was used to acquire information from the respondents of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of rural development schemes. A stratified sampling method was used in selecting individuals. Total of 240 individual (including SHG) members was obtained. Detail interview with block functionaries was done with a previously prepared schedule with total of 19 functionaries selected. A simple tabulation method in terms of percentage was made to analyse the data collected for the study.

The secondary data is mainly collected from published and unpublished works on the related topics, books, articles, journals, souvenir, Potential Linked credit Plan of NABARD, Mizoram, publications of the Government of India and Government of Mizoram, records available in the Directorate of Rural Development Department and concerned block offices, Mizoram and Reports, Acts, Rules and Regulations. In addition, web sources were also an important source of secondary information. In addition, personal interviews and informal discussions were also done with government officials to know their reactions and suggestions related this study.

Chapterisation

The introductory chapter deals with a brief introduction on the topics, importance of the study, objectives of the study, hypothesis, brief introduction of the study area and methodology applied. It also reviewed a number of literatures on the subject, limitations of the study and the organisation of materials.

Chapter 2 deals with conceptual framework of bureaucracy and rural development, approaches and strategies of rural development in India.

Chapter 3 deals with democratic decentralization—the PRIs, District Councils and Village Councils in Mizoram.

Chapter 4 deals with the bureaucracy and rural development in Mizoram.

Chapter 5 deals with the problems and prospects of rural

development in Mizoram.

Chapter 6 deals with the block level bureaucracy and their role, duties and responsibilities in rural development.

Chapter 7 presents an assessment of the block level bureaucracy in Mizoram.

Chapter 8 presents the findings and suggestions.

Limitations of the Study

Researchers generally come across many constraints and barriers in the course of their studies. The present study on the role of bureaucracy and rural development in Mizoram is not a straightforward task where the villages are scattered over a wide geographical area. The following are the main limitations of the study:

1. Almost all the four rural development blocks in the Lunglei district do not maintain proper and uniform record. Moreover, there is shortage of officials in all the blocks. Gathering of adequate information is difficult although the researcher managed to draw together as much information as possible for the purpose of data analysis. Here, the researchers very good command in Mizo language (the researcher a non-Mizo) as well as the supportive and sociable nature of the Mizo people helped.
2. The conclusions drawn from the present study may not be applicable to other states where Panchayati Raj Institutions are introduced as local self-governing institutions which are involved in the implementation of rural development programmes in coordination with the rural bureaucracy.
3. As the study was carried out mainly in the sample villages of Lunglei district blocks, some of the generalisations may be at variance with other parts of the state. Moreover, all the aspects relating to bureaucracy and rural development in the state cannot be covered in the present study leaving scope for further research in the field. However, genuine efforts have been made to make the study meaningful— which may serve as a highlight for further studies in the field.

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Bureaucracy is the dependable machinery all over the world including India through which the states implement development programmes. In fact, bureaucracy is an integral part of the execution of rural development process in India. However, the failure of bureaucracy to enthuse people's participation and successful implementation led to decentralisation of authority and power to local self-governing institutions—the PRIs to have the entire charge of developmental works. While rural development programmes are now implemented with the coordination of 'rural bureaucracy and PRIs', in case of Mizoram, since PRIs not introduced (exempted from 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act) and the existing Village Councils not viable as PRIs, the State is depend on bureaucracy which assumes more power and influence. Block level bureaucracy in particular, occupies a decisive role in the implementation of rural development programmes and to stimulate people's participation in development. However, it failed to bring significant changes in the living conditions of the village people as expected and could not live up to the expectations of the rural people. In this context, the present book "Bureaucracy and Rural Development in Mizoram" acquires much significance. It has an in-depth assessment on block level bureaucracy conducted in Lunglei district of Mizoram. It also examines the perceptions of grassroots bureaucracy, democratic decentralisation, problems and prospects of rural development in Mizoram and suggested suitable measures. This book is expected to enrich the scanty literature on bureaucracy and rural development in the region.

Harendra Sinha obtained his MA (Political Science) and Ph.D. degrees from Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam. He is presently working as Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Government J. Buana College Lunglei, Mizoram. He is actively engaged in teaching and research works. He has contributed number of research papers and regularly contributes articles to various journals and present papers at seminars. He has written books on Indian Government and Politics, Major Political System, Political Theory, Western Political Thought and Public Administration (co-authored) published by Research and Publications Committee, Government J. Buana College.

Dr. Sinha is currently a member of Board of Studies of the Department of Political Science, Mizoram University, Mizoram Academic Forum (MAF), Mizoram Political Science Association (MIPSA), Mizoram College Teachers Association (MCTA) and the Secretary of MCTA Branch.

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