



**GEOGRAPHY**  
**OF**  
**MIZORAM**

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Rintluanga Pachuau



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# GEOGRAPHY OF MIZORAM

First Edition, 1994  
To My Grandfather  
Ztu Zaku  
Who exhorted  
to learn for the sake of  
the country

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RINTLUANGA PACHUAU,  
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

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## FOREWORD

Mizoram, lying in the extreme north-eastern corner of India, is a relatively unexplored area. There is practically no systematic study on the geography of the State, and whatever little information hitherto available is fragmentary. A comprehensive knowledge of the geography of a country or a State is a must for proper management and development of its resources.

The present book, "Geography of Mizoram" highlights the different aspects of the geography of this north-eastern State. Dr Rintluanga Pachuau, the author of this book, has a long years research experience on the region, and his commitment as a pioneer author of the geography of the relatively least known area of India is appreciable. It is to be considered as one among the latest contributions towards regional geography of India. It is needless to say that more in-depth studies are needed to bring out detailed information. I hope the book will generate interest for such studies. And I believe that those who are interested to know Mizoram and those who intended to take up further studies on the geography of Mizoram will greatly benefit from this book.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
North Eastern Hill University,  
Mizoram Campus.  
Aizawl : 796002

R. Lalthantluanga

## Preface

Geography has trod new paths and travelled great distances since the Age of Discoveries. Man's search for truth, explanations for phenomena and exploration of the whole globe will continue so long as the earth exist to function in its orbit. Scholars of the third world are, however, severely handicapped in their studies and research because of lack of quick access to official statistics. More pronounced is the case, if the field is confined to north eastern parts of India, especially a state like Mizoram.

This book, the first of its kind, records and illustrates the regional characteristics of Mizoram from a geographical purview. I believe this small book would serve the purposes of the scholars, students and elite citizens in some specific fields; and the general readers to a considerable extend. The book contains five sections. The first section traces the historical and socio-cultural traits, as well as the earlier political administration in the present state of Mizoram. The second section describes and illustrates the physical geography of the state under its allied attributes. The next section embodies the economic conditions of the area. Population characteristics of the region is analysed in the fourth section. The text is also supplemented with maps, cartograms and tables at significant places. The last section accounts the summary of the book and concludes with brief comments and suggestions.

My commitment as an author in this field entails much efforts and endeavours. Unless this task is challenged, the region would remain *terra incognita* to the rest of the world. A task of this nature calls for devoted field works, tedious scanning of data, application of cartographic techniques, and an unbiased interpretations amidst scanty statistical environment. Nevertheless, one would find the simplicity, inadequacy, imbalances of the chapters, and as to the date statistics

based for analysis—all these pose, to scholars and writers, an invitation to make ends meet.

In fabricating my efforts into the present form, I am indebted to certain resource persons; without whose heterogeneous contribution my dream would never see the light of the day.

Professor R. Lalthantluanga, Pro-Vice Chancellor, North Eastern Hill University, Mizoram Campus, Aizawl is kind enough to peruse through the manuscript, and keen for imparting useful suggestions. His service for the cause of academy is gratefully acknowledged.

The untiring help rendered by Mr.B. Vanlalhlana in cartographic works is commendable; and the wilful services of Mr.T.T. Zothansanga in typing the manuscript is valuable. Acknowledgements are heavily due to them. The supports and services bestowed to me by close friends such as Lalmawia, Lianchungnunga, Vanlalmuana, Lalmachhuana Pautu and K. Laldailova are even more contributing. Their sincere endeavours can never be the least in making the manuscript into a book form. Acknowledgements are also due to members of the *Society of US*.

Despite my best efforts, no reader would find the book complete or prototype. Whatever surmount its deficiency, I repeat this task has been pioneered, with a hope that it may provoke the unprecedented interests of the scholars and writers to unveil their potentials—so that the little known facts about Mizoram Geography be diffused into a wider sphere. Comments, constructive criticisms and suggestions for the improvement of this book is welcomed.

“Shady Shelter”

Venghlui, Aizawl

Dt. 11th. January, 1994

RINTLUANGA PACHUAU

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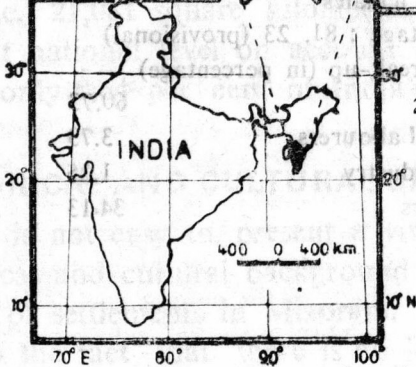
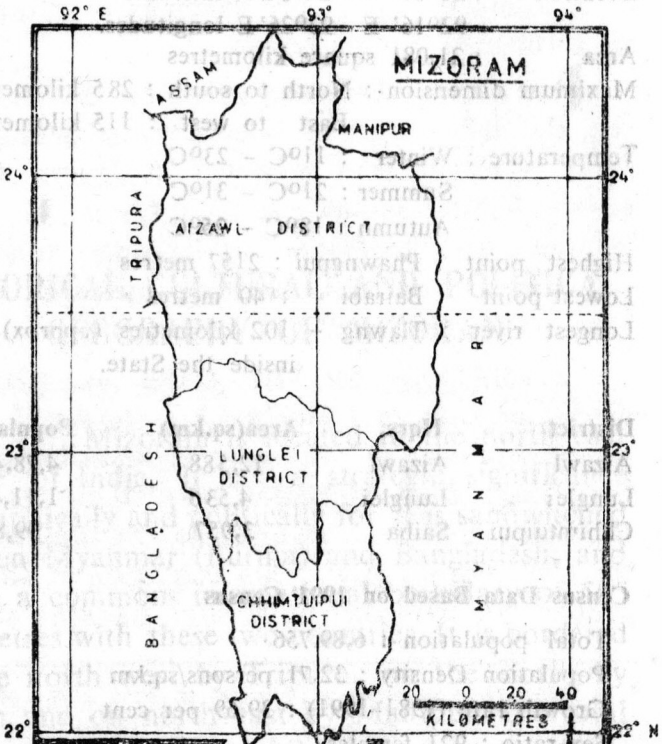
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Fig 1

# LOCATION OF MIZORAM



## EXACT LOCATION

Latitudes

21° 56' N – 24° 31' N

Longitudes

92° 16' E – 93° 26' E

## Some Facts of Mizoram

**Location** : 21°56' N - 24°31' N latitudes  
 92°16' E - 93°26' E longitudes.  
**Area** : 21,081 square kilometres  
**Maximum dimension** : North to south : 285 kilometres  
 East to west : 115 kilometres  
**Temperature** : Winter : 11°C - 23°C  
 Summer : 21°C - 31°C  
 Autumn : 18°C - 25°C  
**Highest point** : Phawngpui : 2157 metres  
**Lowest point** : Bairabi : 40 metres  
**Longest river** : Tlawng - 102 kilometres (approx)  
 inside the State.

District	Hqrs.	Area(sq.km)	Population
Aizawl	Aizawl	12,588	4,78,465
Lunglei	Lunglei	4,536	1,11,415
Chhimtuipui	Saiha	3,957	99,876

### Census Data Based on 1991 Census

Total population : 6,89,756  
 Population Density : 32.71 persons/sq.km  
 Growth rate (1981-1991) : 39.69 per cent  
 Sex ratio : 921 females  
 Literacy percentage : 81.23 (provisional)  
 Occupational break-up (in percentage)

Cultivators	60.73
Agricultural Labourers	3.73
Household Industry	1.25
Other Workers	34.13

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Historical, cultural and political studies of Mizoram reveals that the settlement in the region is the outcome of recent migration down to the west somewhere from China. Due to dearth of integrated historical records, the accounts on culture, selection of sites for settlement, political administration in the past and the like can only be described from folklores and folktales, legends and place names etc. In spite of all these difficulties, it is undeniable that the Mizos are the Mongoloid stock of racial origin who speak the languages belonging to Tibeto-Burmese family of language.

Historians are of the opinion that migration from China towards the present habitat takes place since the beginning of the 15th Century A.D., following different routes at several haltages, at different periods in successive batches. The first batch of migrants to the present Mizoram seemed to reach their destination during 1600 A.D to 1700 A.D.

The conflicts between clans and ethnic groups, as is common in earlier tribal societies elsewhere, led the foundation of chieftainship among the Mizo society. The chief then ruled the village with his own capacity to see that peace and justice is restored in the society.

The Mizos are comprised of seven different broad tribes with as much as fifty-nine different clans and about three hundred sub-clans. Although these tribes and clans have had their own area of settlements before reaching the present Mizoram, the migrations towards the present setting have caused intermixing and intermingling which led to the adaption to a common language and tradition. At present there is hardly any distinction in culture and customs; although certain minority groups are well maintaining and preserving their own cultural traits and customs.

The official administration started as late as 1890 with the separation of the erstwhile Mizo Hills into Assam and Bengal during the British rule in India; the northern part of Mizo Hills with headquarters at Aijal was annexed to Assam, and southern part was administered by Bengal. The separated regions were again merged into a district known as Mizo District under a Superintendent in 1898. This marked the settled administration in the district.

The region continued to remain as one of the districts of Assam, known as Lushai Hills district till India attained independence in 1947. The name was later changed to Mizo District,

till its formation into Union Territory of Mizoram on 21st January, 1972.

Prior to this, the region was swept by political turmoil; peace security was upset. This was due to the uprising of Mizo National Front, who tried to secure an independent state of Mizoram—the state to be administered by the sons of the soils for the welfare of the settlers. The MNF turned rebellion and declared unlawful by the constitution of India. After several talks have failed to find agreement between the MNF leaders and the Indian government, an agreement was signed on 30th June 1986. Upon the agreement, Mizoram was conferred statehood and became the 23rd state of India on 20th February, 1987.

In spite of the fact that the aim of MNF was the ideals of a distant goal; and the cost numerous with lost of lives, bloodsheds, arsons; and the political outcome with meagre distinctiveness, one can appreciate the MNF movement for retrieving the feeling of Mizo as a nation, and the notion of Mizo identity among the younger generations.

The Mizo National Front became a recognised political party and won the first Mizoram State Assembly election which has a total of forty MLA seats. The MNF, however, failed to hold its full term. The next election was won by Congress-I and held its full term. In the last election held on 30th November, 1993, the Congress-I securing 16 seats supported by two

independents, formed a coalition government with its ally Mizoram Janata Dal who secured 8 seats. The Mizo National Front who obtained 14 seats along with its supported two independents took the opposition bench.

The author calculated the exact geographical location of Mizoram at  $21^{\circ}56'N - 24^{\circ}31'N$  latitudes and  $92^{\circ}16'E - 93^{\circ}26'E$  longitudes. The tropic of cancer passes the state near Champhai and Chhawrtui in the middle part of the region. The area of the state is 21,081 square kilometres with a population of 6,89,756 persons.

The geological structure is exemplified by rock formations consisting mainly of sandstone and shales of tertiary rock, thrown into long folds. Three main rock formations identified are - Bokabil, Bhuban and Barail.

Mizoram is predominantly of mountainous terrain, inclining mostly north to south direction. The topographic features can broadly be classified into Mountainous Terrain, Ridge and Valley Province according to altitude. The western part of the region is dominated mostly by wide valleys and ridges.

There are numerous rivers which drain the region; with flow directions either north or south. The important rivers are Tlawng, Tuirial, Chhimituipui, Langkaih etc. The region, owing to its tropical location, enjoys a pleasant climate and falls within the influence of the south west monsoon. It receives an adequate amount of rainfall of about 250 cms annually. The southern

and western part receive heavier rainfall. The autumn temperature is usually between 18°C to 25°C; while winter records temperature between 11°C to 23°C. Summer temperature is between 21°C to 31°C. It can be seen that there is not much fluctuation of temperature throughout the year. The summer or rainy season is longest, while winter and spring share about three months of the year respectively.

The physical factors has led to an abundant growth of vegetation although much of the original growth have been exploited. Three broad forest types—viz—Tropical-wet-Evergreen Forest, Tropical-Semi-Evergreen and Mountain-Sub-Tropical Forests are found with variety of economically useful species.

The analytical study reveals that Mizoram remained socio-economically backward, in spite of its natural resources. For instance, the local agricultural products could substantiate only about 30 per cent of the state's requirement, despite as much as 64 per cent of the workers engagement in agricultural activities. This shows that the jhum system, which is prevalent in Mizoram, is not only uneconomic in terms of work load and subsequent yield, but also wasteful in terms of vegetation and top soils lost in the method. The system needs modification in cropping patterns; Concentration in horticulture and terrace cultivation may prove fruitful, although radical change in the present system may take a longer or lesser period.

Despite a good prospect for development of hydro power, only 2.3 MW have been generated from hydel. With the import of 10 MW from Assam and 22.7 MW generated locally from Diesel generators, Mizoram has a total power installation of only 35 MW which covers only 45 per cent of the total rural population.

Transport network is a problem in the hill regions. Mizoram is connected by only one National Highway (NH No 54) from Silchar (Assam) and is the only inlet into the state. The state highways within the region totals about 545 kilometres.

The region is still at an infantile stage in the field of industry. Whatever industry, as it may be called, at present is only small scale and cottage industry, fed by indigenous agricultural produce, covering only a small market zones. The local vegetal resources like bamboos, woods and reeds seem sufficient to feed a medium size paper and pulp industry. This prospect would only become practical when the region has other basic infrastructures. Mizoram, thus remained socio-economically backward, amidst its rich natural resources. Infrastructural facilities for economic growth are at their minimal level, mainly due to isolation and nature of terrain and population quality as well.

Density of population is very low, not only because of limited habitable area, but also due to political factor. Migro-regional variation of density is mostly decided by geographical factors:

Unlike the rest of the country, Mizoram is unique in its dominance of a single religion and a single language. Christianity is the religion of more than 80 per cent of the residents of Mizoram, where Mizo language has the speakers accounting for 76 per cent of the total population. The scheduled tribe population comprised as much as 94 per cent.

The region witnessed a rapid population growth during the last two decades. Male population grew at a faster rate as indicated by a fall in sex ratio. However, in respect to literacy, Mizoram is well above the national figure. The ageing index analysis proved that the present age structure (1991) is conducive to higher population growth in the immediate future.

Till 1981 census, population confined in rural areas comprised as much as 75 per cent leaving only 25 per cent in urban areas. However, the 1991 census figure depicts a sizeable change in the figure, indicating 53.80 per cent living in the rural areas, and 46.20 per cent in the urban areas. While this phenomenon is an indicative of the addition of new towns by census classification, the natural growth and migration into town areas from rural areas also contributed to growth of urban population. This shows that the region is making a great progress in urbanization, and in fact, stood the most urbanised state in all India if total population of the state is taken as parameter. Migration, however, remained not significant due to the regulation of "Inner Line"

regulations. But it would be seen that a fairly large percentage of migrants from Myanmar being registered when the details of 1991 Census is available.

The geographical identity of the region, thus, may largely be attributed to the present condition of Mizoram in respect to economy, politics, demography, social behaviour and settlement patterns. As the economic system follows settlement pattern, drastic changes may not be conducive to social harmony because the settlement pattern is intricately linked, not only with the economic system, but also with political and religious spheres.

In spite of some major change in the political behaviour and developmental schemes emphasizing an all Mizo pattern, traces of traditional holds are very strong. Any attempt at introduction of major changes in terms of economic and political system, settlement patterns etc., has, therefore, to be preceded by development of infrastructures like network of roads, schools, man-power etc., otherwise it will always result in societal disharmony with harmful consequences:

New York.

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