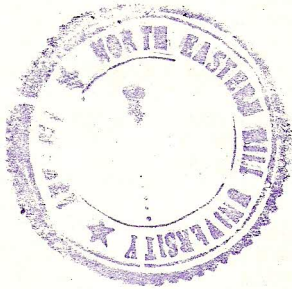


PEOPLE OF INDIA

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# MIZORAM

Volume XXXIII



## PEOPLE OF INDIA

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VOL.II	PEOPLE OF INDIA	THE SCHEDULED CASTES
VOL.III	PEOPLE OF INDIA	THE SCHEDULED TRIBES
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PEOPLE OF INDIA

# MIZORAM

Volume XXXIII

*General Editor*  
K S SINGH

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N N SENGUPTA



ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

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## A NOTE ON THE SERIES

There exists an information gap on a very large number of communities in India, and whatever information exists on them is scanty or needs to be updated. The Anthropological Survey of India (ASI) launched a project on the People of India on 2 October 1985. The objective of the project was to generate a brief, descriptive anthropological profile of all the communities of India, the impact on them of change and development processes and the links that bring them together. This was in accordance with the objectives of the ASI., established forty-five years ago in December 1945. The ASI has been pursuing bio-cultural research among different population groups from its eight regional centres. Its objectives have been redefined in the policy resolution, adopted in 1985, which commits this organization to a survey of the human surface of India.

The identification of the communities and their listing began at an early period of our history, with Manu. Regional lists of communities figured in Sanskrit works. Medieval chronicles contained a description of communities located in various parts of the country. Listings in the colonial period were undertaken on an extensive scale, after 1806. The process gathered momentum in course of the censuses from 1881 to 1941. In our compilation of the lists of the communities of India under the People of India project, we drew upon ethnographic surveys, the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes drawn up by the Government of India, the lists of backward classes prepared by Backward Classes Commissions set up by various state governments, and the list that exists in the Mandal Commission Report. We were able to put together about 6748 communities at the start. This list was taken to the field, tested and checked, and finally 4635 communities were identified and studied.

Unlike surveys in the colonial period, which covered British India and a few princely states, our project covers the whole country, bringing within its ambit also those parts that had not been ethno-

graphically surveyed earlier or where the survey had been done in a perfunctory way. Each state and union territory was treated as a unit of study. It was decided to start with the investigation of the least-known communities, and then move on to a field study of the lesser-known and better-known ones. Investigators for the survey were identified for each area on the basis of their experience and expertise. Teams of investigators of the Survey, as well as local scholars, were set up for each state and union territory to plan the surveys, seek the co-operation of local scholars, generate and evaluate findings, etc., etc. Later, editorial boards consisting of local scholars — one or more of these were nominated as co-editor/s for each local volume — were set up for each state and union territory. We sought the co-operation of the state governments in implementing the project, and this we received in ample measure, particularly from the welfare and backward classes departments of the state governments, local officers of the Census of India, tribal research institutes, university departments of anthropology, other departments of local universities, etc. Local scholars participated enthusiastically in our project as well as in the seminars held by us.

The progress in the investigation and coverage of communities from 2 October 1985 to 31 March 1992 was steady and impressive. We were able to identify, locate and study 4635 communities in all the states and union territories of India, out of the 6748 listed initially. As many as 600 scholars participated in this project, including 197 from 26 institutions. About 100 workshops and rounds of discussions were held in all the states and union territories, and in these about 3000 scholars participated. The investigators spent 26,510 days in the field, which works out to 5.5 days per community studied in the various states and union territories of India. Our scholars interviewed a large number of people, out of whom we have recorded only the key informants, i.e. 24,951. This works out to about 5 'informed' informants per community. Of the informants, 4981 were women. Our instruction to the investigators was to study a community at two or three places, and in at least two or three cultural regions into which the larger states of India are divided. Interviews were conducted in connection with the study of the communities in 3581 villages, mostly multi-community villages, and in 1011 towns and cities spread over almost all the districts of India, i.e. 421 districts and 91 cultural regions. We were able, thus, to study on an average a community at about two places. It should be noted that most of the smaller communities could

be studied at only one place since they are not located in more than one area.

A major achievement of this project was the preparation of cartographic maps showing the distribution of the communities and the location where they were studied. About 4000 maps were prepared. Yet another achievement was the visual documentation of the people of India as part of the field operations. About 21,362 photographs were generated, most of them in black and white, and a substantial number in colour, by amateur photographers.

At an early stage of our project in March 1985 we decided to transfer the data to a computer. We were subsequently able to develop probably the first software in the country — and one of the first in the world — in ethnography, in close collaboration with the National Informatics Centre. From 28 May 1988 we started transferring the quantitative data collected in computer format to floppies. Simultaneously, the transfer of descriptive data (abstracts etc.) on to the computer also started at almost all the regional centres. We succeeded in computerizing an enormous mass of data, and also in producing the first results of univariate analysis, by March 1990.

The descriptive material, running into 120 manuscript volumes, and the quantitative data contained in 257 diskettes, were released on 1 October 1990 by Sri Chimantbhai Mehta, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, in the presence of a distinguished audience in Delhi, for use by scholars at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, and at eight regional centres of the ASI.

The phase of more elaborate analysis started in July 1991, in collaboration with the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. This resulted in a voluminous output of analysed data, which have been presented in a comprehensive matrix consisting of the four categories of populations, the constitutional, religious, occupational and locational. These sets of data, together with a map, were released by Shri Arjun Singh, Minister of Human Resource Development, on 24 December 1991. The last workshop on the People of India project was held at the Indian Institute of Social and Economic Change in Bangalore, where the preliminary results of the analysis presented by the ASI were discussed by distinguished scholars.

It should be noted that the study of the communities has been conducted in 3581 villages and 1011 towns situated in 421 districts of the States and Union Territories of India. The information was

collected from about 25,000 of the 'learned' informants by our scholars, 500 of them, over the period 1985 to 1992. Therefore, the observations relate to this limited time frame and to the universe of the ethnographic project titled People of India. The percentages relate strictly to the responses made by the informants to the questionnaire contained in the schedule guideline and computer format, and to the queries made by the investigators at the places of investigation. The responses have been supplemented with the observations of the investigators, the secondary material from the census, ethnographic records etc. The material has been checked and cross-checked by scholars, particularly local scholars, at many levels with other sources of information.

We are presenting the material assembled under the People of India project in two parts which are interrelated. The first consists of the ten-volume national series, five of which contain an abstract on all communities across the length and breadth of the country. The data generated in this respect has been supported with the addition of information from census and other secondary sources. These volumes include two on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, prepared as part of the celebration of Dr B R Ambedkar's birth centenary; three on all the communities of India, and two containing data on the languages and biological structures of Indian population. The remaining volumes contain description of the quantitative profile, an annotated list of communities and their segments, community-specific languages and the biological structure of Indian populations.

The second part comprises the state/union territory volumes, with detailed descriptive accounts of each community of India. The contributors to the national volumes on the SC, ST and all communities are listed in the last volume, Volume 6. The Glossary given in Volume 6 is common to all the national volumes. At the end of each account we have given references to the texts from which we have quoted, or references for further reading. This is only illustrative. An exhaustive bibliography appears at the end of the national volumes, in Volume 6.

A consortium of publishers has been set up to publish the material on states and union territories. Seven volumes each for the northern states, southern states and the islands, the central and western states are being published respectively by M/s Manohar Publishers and Distributors (New Delhi), M/s Affiliated East-West Press Private Limited (Madras) and M/s Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd. (Bombay). The eleven volumes on the north-eastern and eastern states are being

published by M/s Seagull Books Private Limited (Calcutta), which has already published the introductory national volume. The other national volumes are being published by the Oxford University Press.

I trust this series on the People of India, which is based on a comprehensive anthropological survey of the country, will be found useful by all sections of our people, including students, researchers, teachers, social activists, administrators and political leaders. I hope we have laid the groundwork for a comprehensive ethnography of the people of India which needs to be continually updated and built upon by successive generations of researchers and scholars.

K S SINGH

## FOREWORD

An interesting feature of Mizoram has been the consolidation of the Mizo people into one distinctive political and territorial identity, and the emergence of Mizoram as a state. While the constituents of the old Kuki tribe, outside Mizoram still call themselves as such, those within Mizoram have rechristened themselves as Mizos. The 'Mizoisation' of the tribes or sub-tribes within Mizoram is a continuing process. The terms Chin (a man with a basket) in Burma and Kuki (wild hill people) are considered offensive and even the term Lushai, first used by the missionaries and colonial authorities, have been discarded along with the two terms, in Mizoram. A parallel process is the emergence of a transnational concept of the Mizo people with the Zomi, "the people of the cold, breezy hills" (T. Gougin) encompassing the Kuki-Chin peoples living across international borders. The Zomi unlike the Nagas are described as a homogeneous people, linguistically and culturally. The traditional hereditary chieftainship has been abolished. Under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India, a District Council was set up in 1952. With the attainment of the Union Territory status in 1972, the District Council was abolished and the three autonomous regions became autonomous districts. As a state, Mizoram like Nagaland, now enjoys a measure of autonomy which has been granted under the Constitution of India to safeguard its distinct ethnocultural identity.

Under the People of India project, the communities of Mizoram were studied for the first time in their cultural, biological and linguistic dimensions. The All India Anthropometric Survey was extended to Mizoram, but the data is still under analysis. The preliminary analysis suggests that the people of Mizoram are short to below medium in stature with a round head.

Mizoram, a small state is linguistically heterogeneous with as many as fifteen languages spoken by its people. Most of the Mizo communities speak their own languages that belong to the Tibeto-Burman subfamily of Tibeto-Chinese family of languages such as Bawn, Biata, Hualngo, Lai Hawlh, Lakher (Mara), Magh, Paite, Pang, Ralte, Riang, Thadou. The Thadou communities have claimed Duhlian-Twang as

their mother tongue. The Khasi language belongs to the Austro-Asiatic language family. The Chakma and Nepali are of the Indo-Aryan family of languages.

Lushai/Mizo is spoken by 365,813 persons (1981 Census). Other important languages spoken are Hmar (6,498 persons), Lakher (16,059), Paite (1,800), Pawi (11,640) and Tripuri (19,948). There are 2,301 Santali speaking immigrants. The nontribal languages are Bengali (43,707 persons), Hindi (9,586), Malayalam (1,942). There are 8,074 persons who speak Gorkhali/Nepali.

Among the tribes bilingualism is high. The Lushai/Mizo speakers know English (27,824), Hindi (14,115), Paite (2,145), Bengali (1,401), Lakher (262), Pawi (443), Tripuri (373), Hmar (205) and Nepali (23). The Hmars are also bilingual and know Lushai (2,713); the Lakher (6,376), Paite (303) and Pawi (7,359) know the Lushai language. The Santali speakers know Hindi (1,346), and the Tripuri know (3,984), Bengali (1,060) and Hindi (214). The non-tribes are also bilingual. The Gorkhali/Nepali speakers are bilingual and know Hindi (3,806), Lushai (1,138), and English (284). The Bengali speakers are bilingual in Hindi (1,825 persons), Lushai (979), English (712); the Hindi speakers in English (1,660), Gorkhali/Nepali (435) and Lushai (204 persons). Devanagari and Roman scripts are commonly used in Mizoram. //

Seventeen communities were studied in Mizoram out of which as many as sixteen are scheduled tribes. There are nonMizos like the Gorakhas/Nepali and other traders (from Silchar) who have conducted spice trade from the colonial times and Santal the labourers who worked with the Border Roads Task Force. A section of Mizos claim to be Jews, tracing their origin to one of the lost Hebrew tribes who found their way to Mizoram through China, Thailand and Myanmar. Some Jews of Mizoram have also been recognised by Israel and permitted to migrate to that country, but a number of them could not go as they were not formally converted to Judaism.

Most Mizo communities (14) identify themselves locally and also as communities spread over regions in Assam, Tripura etc. There are also some communities who identify themselves with their kinsmen across the international borders. Most of these communities have ethnographic and historical accounts. All of them recall their migration to the present habitat from distant places.

The Mizo communities live in the ecological niches characterised by hilly terrain with dense forests having low humidity, high rainfall

and having moderately warm summers and not too cold winters. There are two cultural subregions: the first is dominated by the Mizo and the Mizo way of life which is mostly influenced by Christian norms (15); the second region is inhabited by the Chakma, Magh and Riang who follow a way of life that represents a mixture of Hinduism (2), Buddhism (3) and tribal beliefs and practices (4). In 1953, an autonomous region called the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was formed. The Hmars have been demanding an autonomous council.

The communities have nonvegetarian food and rice is their staple food which is supplemented by maize (6) and wheat (1). Roots and tubers are widely consumed. Animal fat (16) and mustard oil (14) are used for cooking. Most of the communities take alcoholic drinks (zu) either made at home (17) or purchased from market. Consumption of milk and milk products has increased in recent years.

Many communities have derived their names from nature. Names of individuals commemorate the achievements of their ancestors, grandfather and father. Most of the communities claim to follow the norms of clan endogamy, though in recent years this is not being practiced rigidly. Intra-clan marriages are increasingly reported among the communities (15), who seem to practice both clan endogamy (15) and clan exogamy (16). A Mizo may now marry a girl of any clan including his own. Cross cousin marriages are reported by a few communities (4). Junior levirate is permitted (6), as is senior sororate (6) and junior sororate (9). Monogamy and adult marriage are followed. The common mode of acquiring mate is by elopement (13), negotiation (11), and courtship (11). Brideprice prevails, even though it is only symbolic. Exchange of gifts is common during marriages. Both spouses have the right to divorce and remarry. Most of the communities follow patrilocal rule of residence. The Mizo have a patrilineal system with male ultimogeniture (10), male equigeniture (5), and male primogeniture (3) being the governing rules of inheritance. Both nuclear and extended types of family exist. The eldest son acquires the authority of the family.

The Mizo women as in any other similar society, enjoy a measure of respect, freedom and even social equality. They do not suffer from any discrimination. However, despite their high education and contribution in all activities in economic, social, religious and political spheres, women do not enjoy any right of property. They have a right to maintenance only. A widow can only look after the property but can not inherit or bequeath it.

Most of the communities pursue their traditional occupation of shifting cultivation (jhum) which is now being considered unproductive. They are also switching over to terrace (5) or settled cultivation (8), side by side. Other related activities are hunting and gathering (12), fishing (16), horticulture (6) and trapping of birds and animals (1). The people are engaged in cottage industries such as carpentry, blacksmithy, tailoring, knitting, bakery, basketry, and weaving.

The Baptist Mission which recently celebrated hundred years of its arrival in Mizoram played a major role in the westernisation and even modernisation of Mizo people. In the first flush of westernisation, the Mizos tried to make a conscious break with the past. Thus traditional rituals were given up. Many crafts decayed. The bachelors' dormitory, *zawlbuk* became extinct. On the positive side, Christianity imparted education in the local language written in Roman script. It developed the Lushai dialect into a distinctive language having a literature. The new class of Mizo pastors and catechists, who entirely manned the Mizo church formed part of the emerging elite who changed the old order, represented by the chiefs. Christianity gave the Mizos a new sense of identity. The Mizos are among the most literate people. The Mizos are known for their excellence in western music. The carols sung by Mizo cultural troupes is known across the country. The Mizos have now began to rediscover their roots, and their folk traditions include folkdances that have come down from generations the best known and most popular being the bamboo dance. The *zawlbuk* is being revived to perform a new role in the changed circumstances.

The development process has picked up. The rural development programme has made headway. People favour formal education for both and girls who go in for higher education. Modern medical facilities and indigenous health practices coexist. The communication network has expanded, the roads have penetrated almost every settlement, but demand the railway is yet to reach their area.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The book is a result of the joint efforts of the scholars of the Survey belonging to the North-East Regional Centre, Shillong, and the Mizo scholars. Among the first category mention may be made of Shri N. N. Sengupta, Asst. Keeper and state coordinator for Mizoram, Shri S. K. Bhattacharya, Asst. Anthropologist (P), and Late Shri N. N. Kundu, former Asst. Anthropologist (C). Director General Dr. K. S. Singh visited Aizwal in March 1986 and held discussions at the Tribal Research Institute with local officers and scholars on the ethnographic situation in Mizoram. The discussions helped us in the identification of the communities of Mizoram. Later when field investigation was conducted during 1985-86, the village leaders and others extended cooperation. We were touched by their warmth and hospitality. The people wanted us to stay on till we had completed our work.

The data collected and the papers prepared were presented at a number of workshops held at the North-Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong. At a later stage, Dr. B. B. Goswami, Joint Director, went through the material. A Mizo scholar, Dr. C. Nunthra, Reader in Sociology, North Eastern Hill University joined us as an editor. Dr. Gopal Krishan has prepared the note about the bio-anthropological information. Ratna Dhar has assisted in editing the material in Delhi.

K. S. SINGH

## INTRODUCTION

Mizoram is situated in the north-eastern part of India, and has Bangladesh and Tripura in the west and Burma in the east and south. In the north it shares its boundary with Manipur and Cachar district of Assam. It occupies a very strategic position in the north-eastern corner of India, having an international boundary of about 650 miles with Burma and Bangladesh. Mizoram is the new name given to the picturesque mountainous region that was formerly known as the Lushai Hills and brought under British rule in 1891. At that time the north Lushai district was attached to Assam while the south Lushai Hills district formed part of Bengal. In 1898, the two districts were amalgamated and brought under Assam. On popular demand, the name of the district was changed from Lushai Hills to Mizo Hills District by an Act of Parliament, to Lushai Hills District (Act 18 of 1954) on 29th April 1954. Again, with the implementation of the North-Eastern Reorganisation Act (1971), Mizo Hills District ceased to be part of Assam and became a union territory on 21st January 1972, with the new name Mizoram. Recently, with the fiftythird Constitution Amendment Bill and the State of Mizoram Bill (1986) passed by the Parliament on August 7 1986, Mizoram became a state on February 20, 1987 and was recognised as the twentyfourth state of India.

Mizoram lies on the tip of the northeastern border of India, between 21.58° to 24.35° north latitude and 92.15° to 93.29° east longitude. The Tropic of Cancer passes through the southern periphery of Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. It covers an area of 21,087 sq.km. with a population of 4,93,757 out of which 2,57,239 are men and 2,36,518 are women (according to Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, 1987). The sex ratio of number of females per 1000 males is 919. The density of population is 23.24 per sq.km. The total number of towns and villages in the state are 6 and 736 respectively. The percentage of urban population in respect to the total population is 24.67. The six towns are Aizawl with a population of 74,493, Lunglei with a population 17,205, Saiha with a population of 7,018, Kolasib with a population of 8282, Champhai with a population of 7477 and Serchhip with a population of 7329. The literacy rate is 59.88% and is regarded as one

of the highest among the states of the country, out of which male literacy is 64.46 % and female literacy is 54.91%.

The hills of Mizoram run north to south in parallel series, separated from one another by narrow valleys. The hills are very steep and more so on the western sides of the ranges. The average height of the hills is about 900 metres on the west, rising to about 1,500 metres further east and in places crossing 2000 metres. The highest peak is called *Phawngpui* (Blue mountain), towering to about 2,157 metres above sea level, situated in the south Chhimtuipui district. The other main mountain peaks are *Lengteng* (2,141 metres), *Sur Tlang* (1,967 metres), *Lurh Tlang* (1,935 metres), *Tan Tlang* (1,929 metres). In general, the hill ranges towards the east are higher than those towards the west. The hills of Lunglei district are generally smaller and more fragmented by small brooks than those in the north. The hills are all covered with forests or bamboo jungles, except where they have been cleared for *jhum* cultivation. A peculiar feature of Mizoram is that they rise more or less abruptly above the plains. The hills are extremely rugged and steep and are separated by rivers flowing north to south cutting deep and precipitous ravines. Besides the hilly region, there are a few small level stretches of ground in the state, situated in the midst of hills and narrow valleys. The largest of these plains is Champhai, situated on the eastern border of the state, bordering Burma, which has a length of about 11 kms. and at the widest part is nearly 5 kms. across. At present the whole of the plain has been converted into permanent rice cultivation area. Another plain Vanlaiphai, situated about 140 kms. in the southeast of Aizawl, is about 9 kms. long and nearly 1 km. wide. The other major plain is at Thenzawl, about 90 kms. south of Aizawl. The major part of this plain has been converted either into rice fields or fruit plantations.

There are many rivers in Mizoram but only a few of them are large enough to be mentioned. The rivers of northern Mizoram flow towards the north and ultimately meet the Barak river of Assam plains. The rivers in south Mizoram flow towards the south. The important rivers which flow in the northern portion of the state and eventually fall into the Barak are Tlawng (Dhaleswari) which is about 185.15 kms. long, Tuirial (Sonai) about 117.53 kms. long and Tuivawl about 72.45 kms. long. The southern hills are drained by the Chhimtuipui (Kolodyne) about 138.46 kms. long and its tributaries, the Mat (90.16 kms.), Tuichang (120.75 kms.), Tiau (159.39 kms.) and Tuipui (86.94 kms.), while Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli), about 128.08 kms. long

with its tributaries Tuichawng (107.87 kms.), Kau, De, Phairuang and Tuilianpui form the western drainage system. It is interesting to observe that the Kolodyne enters Mizoram from the Haka area of Burma and flows in the northwestern direction till it joins the river Mat. Thereafter, it takes a half-circle bend towards the south and flows again to Burma (Arakan). Except the Kolodyne, all the rivers are fed by monsoon rain only. They swell rapidly during the rains and recede abruptly shortly after the rains. In winter many rivers dry up. Only the Tlawng, Tuirial and the Khawthlangtuipui are navigable throughout the year.

Vantawngkhawhtha la (750 feet), on the river Vanva, is the highest waterfall. The name is derived from a legendary hero Vantawnga, who died in this river after a great fall. The hills are dotted with idyllic lakes (*dil*), the famous ones being Tamdil, Palakdil and Rungdil. Tamdil is situated about 65 kms. to the east of Aizawl, between Saitual and Tuaibung villages, whereas Rungdil is situated near Suangpuilawn village in the northeastern part of the state and consists of twin lakes, more or less alike. Palakdil is situated in the southeastern part of the state and is oval in shape. These lakes are the abode of aquatic birds, but these are becoming few nowadays.

Dense fogs prevail in Mizoram from the middle of November to February. These fogs remain till midday. They appear in the morning like masses of white vapour or a sea of white cottonwool between the hill ranges and river courses. A report of 1891 describes the geology of Mizoram in the following way, "The whole mass of the Lushai Hills, on the line traversed, consists of sandstones and slates of tertiary age thrown into long folds, the axes of which run in the nearby north and south direction; the surface of the sandstone beds frequently show fine example of 'ripple marking', denoting that they were probably laid down in comparatively shallow water; indeed, the whole character of the deposits is such as to render the supposition probable that they were laid down in the delta and estuary of an immense river rising from the Himalayas to the northeast of Assam during the tertiary times and following due south through the country now occupied by the Naga and Lushai Hills" (Tom. D. La Touche vol. XXIV part-II 1891). Geologically, the hills in Mizoram are comparatively young and mostly composed of soft sandstone and slate. The soil-type generally found in the state is a clayey loam mixed with broken angular shales of varying sizes. Though there is a fair percentage of clay in the soil, the water-holding capacity of the soil is very low and due to this, the top soil

becomes very dry during winter. In the southern portion the soil is more clayey and deeper than in the north. Due to the continuous washing away of alkaline soil by rainwater, the soil of Mizoram is generally acidic in nature but the soil in the plains is rich alluvial.

As a whole, with its moderate height and fairly heavy rainfall, Mizoram has a pleasant climate, moderately warm in summer and not very cold in winter. Barring the winter frost in some places, there is no snowfall on the hills of the state. The temperature ranges between 11° C to 21° C in winter and 20° C to 30° C in summer with heavy monsoon rain from May to September. The entire territory is under the direct influence of the monsoon. The average rainfall is 217.50 cm. per annum in Mizoram. (Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, 1987).

The forest clad mountains are beautiful and rich having a great variety of flora and fauna. They are filled with bamboo groves and wild plantains, at the lower altitudes. As the hills rise higher, the woods grow denser with canes and creepers. Since Mizoram became a union territory, the forests under the erstwhile District Council were brought under the direct control of the state's forest department. Out of 21,087 sq. km. of geographical area, 7127 sq. kms. is under tree cover and has the reserve forests. Thus, approximately 30% of the total area is under the control and management of the state forest department. Besides, three Districts Councils have their own reserve forests. The principal species of trees in the forests are *Lagerstroemia flos reginae* (Jarul), *Artocarpus chaplasi* (Cham), *Heritiera acuminata* (Baroi), *Canarium bengalense* (Dhunarata), *Michelia Champaca*, *Terminalia* species. *Pinus Kesyia*, *Schima wailichii* (Bonak) scattered over the forests of the northern portion of Mizoram, are very useful for plywood manufacturing. Besides these forest species, bamboos are found in abundance. There are seventeen species of bamboo (Mau) so far identified in Mizoram. The most common species are *Melocanna bambusoides* (Muli), *Teinostachyum dulloa* (Dolu), *Bamboosa tulda*, *Dendrocalmus stricta*, and at the Tripura border is found *Bamboosa pallida*. So there is scope for establishing paper pulp industry, rayon industry and various cottage industries based on bamboo. It has been observed that some of these bamboo species die down periodically after fifty years, bearing flower and fruit. At this time the number of rats increases so much that they devour the grains causing famine (*mahltam*). The last great famine was in 1960. Mizoram is considered to be fairly rich in canes and medicinal plants. About thirtynine species of medicinal plants or *damdawi* have so far been identified. The major varieties of canes are

*Calamus goruba*, *Calamus tenuis* and *Calamus latifolius*. Orchids of various colours and shapes, sparkling clusters of rhododendrons, sunflowers of different varieties and other wild flowers lend delightful contrast to the greenery of Mizoram. About 150 varieties of orchid have so far been identified. The name of some of the orchids are *Acridas odoratum*, *Acridas vandaram*, *Arundina graminifolia* (lolen), *Anoechochilus sikkimensis* (hnah mawi), *Dendrobium fimbriatum* (chhungdum), *Dendrobium formosum* (lawhlei), *Vanda Coeruleseena* (lowlengte).

Wild animals used to be numerous in the less populated areas of the state, but they are becoming very scarce now. *Panthera tigris* (Saki), leopard, *Banthera pardus* (keite), wild pig, *Hylobates hoolock* (hauhuk), sloth bear, *Melursus ursinus* (savawm) and barking deer are said to be found in the less populated forest areas but are few in number. Animals like *mithuns* and bisons are no longer found. Birds have also become few. A few varieties of jungle fowls, hornbills (*Vahai* or *Kawlhai*), wood pigeon (*bulkut*) are still seen in the jungles. Snakes (*rul*) are not many. Cobra (*rupui*) and viper (*rubngan*), are of the poisonous group, but are very few in number. More than 300 varieties of colourful butterflies are found in the state. Though not officially declared, hauhuk is considered as the state animal.

Prompted by an awareness of the need of wild life preservation, sanctuaries have been set up at Dampa (681 sq. kms.), Ngengpui (110 sq. kms.), Phawngpui (60 sq. kms.) and Tawi (60 sq. kms.). The bird sanctuary at Rengdil is also worth mentioning. Similar kinds of sancturies have been proposed at Murien and Palak. A zoo-cum-botanical garden has been set up by the Forest Department at Bethlehem Veng, Aizawl, in 1978 for the preservation of wild life.

The term Mizo is a generic term and it stands for several major and minor tribes in the area. A number of communities have preferred to identify themselves as Mizos from the time when Lushai Hills District (change of name) Act 1954, was passed by the Parliament of India. Nowadays those who call themselves Mizos desire that the Mara, the Pawi, the Chakma and the Riang also should consider themselves as a part of the generic Mizo community.

The term Mizo is difficult to explain. There are many ways in which the word has been explained. According to one, 'Mi' means person and 'Zo' means highland. So Mizo means highlander or people living in the high hills. Lalthangliana (1975:71) says 'Zo' may also mean cold region and therefore Mizo signifies people of the cold region. An-

other explanation is that the people were named thus after the area of habitation that they built for themselves around 1765. The area was called Zopui and was about thirtythree kilometers to the west of Tiau valley. There is evidence, mostly in folksongs, that the people of the big area of Zo (*pui* in the Mizo language means big) were successful in raids on the enemy and therefore were proud to refer to themselves as people of Zopui i.e. *Mi of Zopui*, hence Mizo. According to another interpretation the word 'Zo' is traced back to the Burmese language. In Burmese, *Yaukkya* means man, and is supposed to have been derived from the Tai Chinese word *Yoe*. The word is pronounced *dzo*. Tom Lewin (1896) had confirmed that the Lushai called themselves *Dzo*. B. S. Carey, who was then the political officer of the Chin Hills said in his accounts of the British invasion of Chin Hills that the Chins used to call their race by the general name *Yo* (pronounced as *zo*). The meaning of 'zo' may thus be man in the English language. But the above interpretations of the word do not appear to be philologically sound. The argument that the word comes from the name of the village Zopui is also not sound because various Chin groups and Lushai use the word 'zo' for themselves and all these Chin people do not come from that village. About the translation of *zo* as cold, Lehman (1963) writes, stems from an error of understanding on the part of missionaries and administrators". Lehman (1979) thinks that the word *zo* has a basic meaning relevant to the symbiotic context of the plains cultivation of Vai. "The Chin are described as Zomi because they lack the civilization of the Burman whose culture they envy, however, still will not emulate" (Lehman:1963:55). So by this account *zo* means, 'uncultivated, relatively crude and unsophisticated'.

The mythical belief of the Mizo people is that originally they came out from *Chhinglung* which means 'covering rock', which may perhaps be a place now called Silung in China, bordering the Shan state in the east. Recently there has been an attempt to interpret the legend rationally. "Chhinglung is said to mean not a cave but is the name of the Chinese prince Chin Lung. He was the son of Huang Ti of the Chin dynasty, who built the great wall. The prince incurred the displeasure of his father and left his kingdom and settled in Burma" (Rochunga Pudaite 1963:21-22).

(In the absence of written documents it is difficult to give a chronological history of Mizo migration. From various collateral evidence sometimes supported by folktales, we may attempt to narrate the chronology of their migration. Regarding the history of the Mizo

people, it is conjectured that they might have been part of the people who once inhabited the Tao valley of Kansu province in northwest China. Due to disturbances, they moved towards the border of Tibet and Burma probably around the seventh century A.D. Then they moved to the Hukawng valley around the tenth century. But details regarding the route which they took and the time that the process took to reach Hukawng valley in Burma, are not known. Then they came to the Chindwin belt. K. Zowla (1965) in his book, on the ancient history and culture of the Mizo people, written in Lushai, suggests this to have happened around 996 A.D. They lived here for barely two hundred years. They confined their settlement to the Kabaw valley specially around Khampat. Due to the Shan penetration they left the Kabaw valley for the Chin Hills and settled on the Than range. In the late fifteenth century they again moved to the Len range near Tiao river. Around 1700 A.D., owing to the pressure from other dominant groups, they crossed the Tiao river and settled in the southern part of present day Mizoram. Soon after, they moved out of Burma and built their biggest village at Selesih (1740 A.D.), a few days march from the present capital, Aizawl. The village later on broke up and they started moving further west. During their migration from one place to the other and after their settlement in Mizoram, different groups fought against one another for supremacy. The most powerful person in the group became the chief. In course of time, chieftainship became hereditary. Of these different communities, Sailos were the most powerful and almost all the famous Lusei chiefs belonged to the Sailo lineage. In the year 1780, the strong Sailo group migrated from the south to the north and drove before them the Kukis. They established themselves in the area now known as North Mizo District. After that, various branches of the Sailo and other ethnic groups were frequently at war for several years fighting for supremacy until the British interfered and put an end to it. It was in the course of their expansion in all directions from Burma that they met with the British in the years between 1800 and 1890.)

(The relations of the Mizos with the British consisted of a series of raids on the inhabitants of the British Indian districts and counter actions by the British Government. Prior to the advent of the British, the Mizos also frequently raided the adjacent plains. The first British expedition to the Mizo hills was led by Colonel Lister in 1850. They destroyed the village of Lalngura Sailo, who was one of the chiefs connected with the raids. This action kept the chiefs quiet for some

years. But in 1862, they initiated a fresh raid and the diplomatic efforts that followed had little practical effect. In 1868-69 raids were made in Manipur and Sylhet and the tea factories of Loarband and Maniarkhal were burnt down. An expedition was despatched into the hills but it failed to inflict punishment due to bad climatic conditions. In January 1871, a determined raid was made in the Hailakandi valley. The village of Ainakhal was burnt and twentyfive persons were killed, the Alexandrapur tea factory was destroyed and a British tea planter, Mr. Winchester, was murdered and his six year old daughter Mary was kidnapped. At the same time, raids were made on four other tea gardens in the adjacent areas of Sylhet, Tippera and Manipur. Such violent raids provoked strong retaliation from the British. Two army columns were sent to the area then known as the Lushai Hills, one from Chittagong and the other from Silchar. Mary Winchester was recovered from the chief Bengkhuaia in 1872. The expedition was successful and peace prevailed in the region until 1888, when two serious raids were again committed by the chiefs in the Chittagong Hill tract. The Mizos continued to make sporadic forays, until the whole territory officially came under British rule in 1895. The South Lushai Hills area was under the Assistant Political Officer of Chittagong, while the North Lushai Hills was controlled by the Assam government. As stated earlier, the North and the South Lushai Hills were amalgamated as one district in 1898, under the charge of one Superintendent in Assam. Under the provision of the Government of India Act of 1935 the Lushai Hills was declared as a "totally excluded area" from the operation of the Provincial Legislature. The main purpose of this arrangement was to safeguard the culture and social customs of the Mizos and to encourage them to develop themselves according to their own competence and genius. During the British period, administration was carried out with the help of the village chiefs.

With India's Independence and the framing of the new Constitution, the jurisdiction of the provincial legislature had been extended to the districts. Under the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, a District Council was set up in 1952 that had executive and legislative powers for managing the internal affairs of the tribes which included their customs and land rights and also primary education and road construction. In the southern part of Mizoram, an autonomous body called the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was also set up in April 1953. This Council had similar powers within the Pawi-Lakher region. The traditional hereditary chieftainship had been

abolished and the rights and interests of 259 Lushai chiefs and the 50 Pawi-Lakher chiefs had been acquired by the government with effect from 1st April 1955 and 15th April 1956 respectively. The land under these chiefs had also been handed over to the District or Regional Councils. The District and Regional Councils consisted mostly of elected members and a limited number of nominated members. Later on the District Council was abolished and the Pawi-Lakher Regional Council was superseded by three new District Councils. The three District Councils are the Pawi District Council with its headquarters at Lawngthlai, the Lakher District Council with its headquarters at Saiha and the Chakma District Council with its headquarters at Chowngte.

The state has witnessed vast constitutional, political and administrative changes during the last thirty years. As already mentioned traditional chieftainship was abolished and the responsibility of the village administration was vested in the elected Village Council. Presently Mizoram has three districts, viz. Aizawl with its headquarters at Aizawl, Lunglei with headquarters at Lunglei and Chhimtuipui with headquarters at Saiha. Aizawl the capital of Mizoram, is situated about 180 kms. away from Silchar. Aizawl town is classified as a Class II town (1981 Census). Out of 736 villages, Aizawl district alone has 419 villages. More than 70% of the total population of Mizoram live in Aizawl district. There are broadly two types of villages in Mizoram. The first category consists of the old recognised villages and the other category is one that has temporary dwelling places, known as thlawhlawk. Large scale village re-grouping was done as a counter-insurgency measure, following the outbreak of disturbances in 1966. 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 adapted for grouping into various centres. These were called 'Protected and Progressive Villages' (P.P.V.S). The second phase of grouping was done in the north, east and west of the northern part of Mizoram in 1968, under the new ordinance that was known as Assam Maintenance of Public Order or A.M.P.O. Then, orders for the third phase of grouping of villages in the central and southwestern part of the state was issued under the same ordinance. However, due to the stay order issued by the Guwahati High Court in this regard, no action was taken. So the southern part of Mizoram did not come under the grouping operation and the village set up remained without changes. Apart from the P.P.V.S. re-grouping centres, there are three more categories of grouping centres, such as New Group Centres (N.G.C.)

in areas bordering Bangladesh, Burma and Tripura, Enlarged Loop Area (E.L.A.) in the areas along Manipur and Burma border and Voluntary Group Centres (V.G.C.) in some pockets. The village regrouping resulted in a lot of inconvenience to the villagers and the social fabric began to show signs of disintegration. The villagers in the big grouping centres found that there was not sufficient land for cultivation within close quarters. In such cases some of them were allowed by the administrative authorities to go back to their former homes in order to enable them to work on their *jhum* fields. After sometime the villagers settled again in these areas. Such dwelling places are called *thlawhbawk*. After the peace accord, many of them moved to their former localities and established villages again. However, quite a large number of villagers decided to stay on in the grouping centres.

Most of the old recognised villages are uni-ethnic in nature, particularly in the southern region of Mizoram. Recently formed regrouping villages are mostly multi-ethnic. Several communities live side by side and carry out their socio-cultural activities peacefully in these villages. A typical village falls under the 'shapeless cluster type' (Bandyopadhyay, 1985), where a number of houses are clustered in a convenient way according to the nature of the terrain. Generally the villages are situated at the top of hill slopes. Village pattern has undergone a change after the regrouping of villages following the disturbances of 1966. A number of villages are grouped with a big village near the roadside. This has led to the emergence of the linear cluster type of villages on both sides of the main highway. They are not compact and the houses are connected to one another by footpaths called *hawng*, which branch out from the main road. Most of the villages have a lower primary school and at least one church or *biakin*. Many of the big villages have a Middle English School or High School and many churches of different denominations. The villages have their own cemetery or *thlan mual*, generally situated at a certain distance away from the main village. Most of the houses are built on the slopes and are supported by wooden or bamboo posts. Cross-beams are fastened against these posts and over the beams long solid bamboos are laid. Bamboo matting is then laid over the bamboo frame and the floor or the *chhuat*.

Generally the walls of the house or *bang*, are also of bamboo matting, fastened to the outer posts. There are cross-bars which are fastened to the tops of outer posts and it is on these cross-bars that the

roof of the house rests. The roof or the *inchung*, consists of solid as well as split bamboo frames covered with a thick layer of straw. Cane is generally used for tying the joints together. The doors and windows are usually of bamboo matting. In some houses instead of using plaited bamboo matting, wooden planks are used for making the floor, windows and doors. A typical Mizo house is rectangular in shape. The entrance of the house opens out on the road along the breadth. Normally the houses have two-sided roofs (*dochala*). In some places, houses that have four-sided roofs (*charchala*) are also found. The interior of the house is a single rectangular structure. It is partitioned into a number of rooms by screens of bamboo matting. In the houses where both married and unmarried persons live together, separate sleeping cubicles are provided by partitioning the room. The hearth (*tapchhak*) is always in one corner of the house, usually near the front door. It is made of stones or an iron platform raised about six or eight inches above the floor. Above the fire place is hung a rectangular bamboo frame (*kapchung*) which is kept suspended from the ceiling. Various things like chillies (*hmarcha*) dry fish (*ngha*), meat (*sa*), salt (*chi*) and onion (*purun*), are kept in the bamboo frame. In the opposite corner is a place for storing water called *tuivum hmun*. In most cases, after the gate, a covered verandah called *leikapui* is made where agricultural tools and firewood are kept. An enclosure for fowls is made along with baskets for them to lay their eggs.

Apart from this there are also modern Assam type houses in many of the villages. These houses are not uniform in shape and structure. They are different from one another. The most important feature that differentiates the latter house type from the common one is the permanent division of the interior into a number of rooms. Besides, a number of people use C. I. Sheets for the roofs. Recently, in many of the roadside villages and towns, some modern buildings have also been constructed using concrete or bricks.

In most houses the front room is generally reserved for the guests and outsiders. This room is more or less well furnished with table (*dawhkan*), chair (*thut-na*), benches (*thutthleng*), small stools (*thutthlenghnim*) and in some cases there are shelves full of books and pictures. Plates, cups and other valuable utensils are also kept here. In the kitchen, they keep vessels (*bel*) of various sizes and shapes, made of various metals like brass, aluminium and even steel. Bamboo pipes (*vaibel*) and gourds (*tuithwal*) generally used for storing water, are kept in the corner opposite the hearth. This place is also used for

purposes of washing. At another corner of the kitchen, a shelf is set up, where utensils of daily use are kept. Wooden boxes (*thingnem*) and sometimes big square shaped covered baskets (*bakbau*) containing valuable goods, clothes and ornaments are generally stored in the bedroom. Beside this, a large number of baskets of various sizes and shapes are placed either on the verandah or in the kitchen. The baskets are generally made of bamboo and cane. The baskets for carrying firewood are called *paikawng*, those for keeping and carrying rice and other cereals are *paiem*, those used for preserving seeds are called *dawrawn* and those used for keeping fowls are *arbaum*. Circular bamboo plates of various sizes called *chhihri* circular sieves or *faikhiat* that are both big and small, are found in most of the houses. Nowadays they sleep on wooden cots called *bang*. Most of the households have their own big aluminium reservoir called *thuikhva*. It is a tin drum to store rainwater for the dry season. In some houses they keep mortar (*sum*) and pestle (*suk*) for grinding cereals in the covered verandah. The Mizos are very fond of hunting and shooting. Previously during the war or hunting expedition they generally used arrows (*thal*), spear (*fei*), sword (*ngunhnam*), scythe (*chem*), spear with barbed head (*feikebar*), as well as guns made locally (*silai*). Nowadays they generally use guns. Another noteworthy item is the locally made wooden trolley known as (*taulailir*). It is mostly used for transportation of harvested *jhum* products from the fields and also for carrying water or firewood from far-off places. The village houses do not usually have attached latrines. A little distance from the house, there are usually pit-hole latrines on the slopes.

Of late, there have been many changes in the dress of the Mizos. In the olden days, the only apparel worn by the women was a kind of skirt, called *siasuap*. It was a small piece of cloth, woven from the reeds or bark of trees. It was tied round the waist reaching only above the knee. Men's clothing was made of the same material, but the items were woven in larger pieces and the dress was known as *hnawkhal*. It was used to cover the upper part of the body. This was subsequently replaced by *puan hlap* an ordinary cloth made of cotton and this was the common apparel of men. Later on *dowlremkawr* was added to the women's attire. Later, they also began to use *kawppui zikzial*, an embroidered handwoven cloth. Nowadays, the typical traditional Mizo dress for both men and women that has been described above is completely out of use. They generally wear mill-made clothes. Men wear shirts, trousers and coats and on special occasions they use neckties. While working in the fields,

they wear old clothes. Women, both young and old, wear blouses and skirts. Frocks are also worn by children. A piece of cloth or *puan* is always worn over the frock and skirt and in some cases a shawl is placed over the shoulder. Women have special dresses, especially the *puan*, woven by them with colourful threads and exquisitely designed to wear on festivals and other occasions. Young educated Mizo girls sometime wear modern western clothes like miniskirts, trousers and shirts. In winter, they generally wear woollen sweaters and shawls. Both men and women use footwear of various types, during festivals and ceremonies, specially while attending church ceremonies.

Earlier men used to keep long hair like women. But nowadays they have short hair. Women as usual keep long hair which they draw back into a knot. Men wear no ornaments except on occasions. Ornaments worn by Mizo women include bracelets of silver (*ngun*), rings (*zung bun*) of gold or silver, earrings (*beng beh*) made of beads and necklaces (*thihna*) and also of beads and hairpins (*thimkual*) of silver. Previously, both men and women used to wear earrings (*saiha bengbeh*) made of ivory and necklaces made of valuable stones. Young educated Mizo girls do not much wear ornaments. However they like to use different kinds of cosmetics, such as face powder, cream, lipstick and eyebrow pencils.

Rice (<sup>chaw</sup> *chaw*) is their staple food. Besides, they also eat different kinds of cereals like maize (*vaimim*), wheat and millet. Millet is sometimes cooked and eaten by them but generally it is used for brewing ricebeer (*zu*) when rice is a scarcity. Maize is also eaten either after being pounded or cooked. Along with rice, vegetables and meat (*sa*) are taken. The rice and vegetables are prepared in different ways. Sometimes they are cooked in water only, sometimes in oil and sometimes in the typical Mizo way that is called *bai*. Some of them eat lentils also. Vegetables include both wild and garden varieties. The wild varieties are pumpkin leaves (*maian*), a jungle variety of beans (*behlawi*), *changkha* leaves, *antam* and *chakawk* leaves. The other types of vegetables are cabbage (*zikhlum*), cauliflower (*par bawr*) potato (*alu*), brinjal (*bawkbawn*) and lady's-finger (*bawrsaiabe*). Meat (*sa*) is also very popular among them. Though it is not eaten everyday, it is taken at least once or twice a week. All kinds of meat, like pork (*vawksa*), beef (*bawngsa*), chicken (*arsa*) are generally eaten. They also take fishes (*sagha*) of various types including dry fish. Some of them keep dry fish for a long time in hollow bamboo pipes. For *bai*, or the typical Mizo way of cooking, lard (*saum*) is commonly used. Chilly (*hmarche*), ginger

(*sawthing*), onion (*purun*) and salt (*chi*) are added to curry for taste and flavour. Nowadays, among the modern educated families, oil and spices available in the market are used for cooking. They also eat different kinds of fruits, like banana (*balhla*), orange (*serthlum*), mango (*theihai*), papaya (*lamkhuang*), pineapple (*lakhuihlhei*) jack-fruit (*lamkhuang*), guava (*kawllhei*) and watermelon (*dawnfawh*). Meals are usually taken three times a day—one shortly after sunrise, one at midday and the last after sunset though the office-goers generally eat twice a day. They drink tea (*thingpui*) with milk several times, along with some snacks made locally, like those from rice powder (*chhangban*), from maida powder (*chhangper*), *lawng* and *nimki* in the afternoon. Milk (*bawhnute*) is not a favourite drink. Only the young children prefer to drink milk nowadays. *Zu*, the local ricebeer is a common drink. Both men and women smoke. Even small children smoke freely. Tobacco is grown in their *jhum* fields and is very strong and has a good flavour. It is generally rolled in pieces of old paper, called *meizial*. Sometimes men use pipes called *vaibel*. These have bamboo bowls with long straight stem. Women's pipes called *tuibur*, have bowls of clay which look like miniature *hookahs*.

(The Mizo code of ethics or dharma revolves around *Tlawmngaihna* which means that everyone should be hospitable, kind, unselfish and helpful to others. *Tlawmngaihna*, to a Mizo stands for that compelling moral force which finds expression in self-sacrifice for the service of others. It is the core of their philosophy of life. In war or peace, in dealing with individuals or in the midst of a crowd it is this spirit which guides their thoughts or actions.)

Mizoram is inhabited by a number of ethnic groups. They are of Mongolian origin and distinctly exhibit all the features of this race. The present population is composed of fifteen broadly divided communities. The other communities, which were mentioned in the history by several authors, have lost their separate identities and have mingled with larger groups. None of the groups like Ngente, Khiangte, Chawngthu, Renthlei, Zawngte and Khawlhing are considered as separate groups having identities of their own. Broadly there are two distinct cultural regions in the state, though the people live in the same natural environment. The first group follows the Mizo way of life which is mostly governed by the Christian ethic. The description given above relates to the first group only. The second group, consisting of Chakma, Magh and a section of the Riang, follows a way of life which is governed by a mixture of the ideals of Buddhism and animism.

The communities that still maintain a sort of identity of their own are Lusei, Hmar, Paite, Pawi, Mara, Bawm, Tlau, Ralte, Pang, Hualngo, Biate, Thadou, Riang, Chakma and Magh. This report contains anthropological profiles of each of these communities.

As stated earlier, the Chakma, Magh and Riang are quite different from the other communities and have their own distinct way of life. The other ethnic groups, though different from each other, have many cultural similarities amongst them. The basic social unit among all the communities is the village, around which revolves the life of the people. All the communities have distinct dialects of their own but have no script. In most of the communities the missionaries introduced the Roman script. Broadly the language belongs to the Tibeto-Chinese family. Though they have distinct dialects of their own, some of the community members have totally forgotten their own mother tongue and now they speak the Duhlian dialect. Duhlian the dialect of the Lusei, is considered to be the state language and is now the lingua-franca of Mizoram. The Mara, Chakma, Riang and Magh still maintain their separate languages. Besides their mother-tongue, a large section of the people can speak English and Hindi. A few among them can read, write and speak in Bengali also.

Prior to 1899, when the first Christian missionaries introduced Christianity, the Mizos were animists. They believed in a benevolent spirit called *Pathian*, who was supposed to be the creator of everything. They also believed that the hills, the trees, rocks and streams were inhabited by malevolent spirits and demons who took delight in troubling men in many ways. So the sacrificing of animals and the offering of their meat to the spirits by way of propitiation were the main features of their religious activities. Paradise is known as *pabral* and the land of the dead is *mithikhua* by them. All the religious activities were conducted by a priest called *puithiam*. The *puithiam* were of two kinds, *sadawt* and *bawlpui*. The *sadawt* used to perform the religious rites of the village and were largely employed by the chief or the privileged people of the village, whereas *bawlpui* used to propitiate spirits outside the village. A sacrifice called *bawlpui* consisted of the offering of two fowls and eating of a pig in the jungle. No part of the sacrifice could be done in the village. All these old religious practices have now been discarded and forgotten as the people have now become attached to the new religion i.e. Christianity. They embraced this new faith with such dedication and submission that it brought about a tremendous change in their thought processes and social life.

Present Mizo society, both urban and rural, is influenced and guided by the church organization directly and indirectly and their notion of ritual values have also undergone drastic changes.

The first Christian missionary activity started at Aizawl in 1894. Rev. J. H. Lorrain and Rev. F. W. Savidge of the Arthington Aborigines Mission first came to Aizawl. They learnt the Mizo language and translated part of the Bible and also prepared a grammar book and dictionary in 1898. The first Mizo grammar was written by a Bangali Christian named Brojonath Yalva in 1884. Later, Rev. D. E. Jones of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission came and joined them. After their continuous efforts two Mizos were converted to Christianity for the first time in 1899. In the meantime the London Baptist Missionary Society concentrated their activities in the southern part of Mizoram. Gradually the two missionary groups divided their area of work. The northern part was looked after by the Welsh Presbyterian Mission with its headquarter at Aizawl and the Baptists confined themselves mostly to the southern area with their headquarters in Lunglei. Initially the people and chiefs were anti-Christian. The missionaries were ridiculed and looked down upon. Many people could not tolerate songs sung by the missionaries to woo people. A number of songs called *Puma zai* or *Tlanglam zai* were popularised by the people around 1908 to oust Christian hymns. These songs were sung with feasts and communal dancing. The missionaries however prevailed upon the people and their hymns became very popular and the evangelization process progressed rapidly through mass conversion into Christianity. Presently a number of different church denominations, namely the Roman Catholic, Salvation Army Corps, United Pentecostal, Seventh Day Adventist and Presbyterian churches are active in Mizoram. The majority of the Christians of Mizoram are Protestants (Goswami:1979:42). The pastor or the church elders (*kohran upa*) conduct the religious proceedings of the church (*biakin*). In the Mizo area all the proceedings of the church are in Mizo language. Hymns are sung in Mizo language from the song book (*Hlabu*). In the Mara area, the Lakher Pioneer Mission carry out the service in Mara language. Now more than 83% of the total population of the state follow the Christian faith.

Besides Christianity, the other major religion is Buddhism, which 8.19% of the total population of the state follow. Both Chakma and Magh belong to this faith. Their religious activities centre around the temple called *heyong* and monks known as *thogar* or *ashangfora* look

after their religious activities.

In the past, the village was the basic social unit of Mizoram. It was usually set on the crest of a hill with the chief's house in the centre. Some distance away was the bachelor's dormitory (*zawlbuk*), where young bachelors met and slept together at night. The dormitory was in fact a training ground where the young were trained to become responsible members of their society. But with the advent of Christianity and spread of education, the institution of *zawlbuk* withered away gradually and no longer exists. Similarly chieftainship was also abolished in 1954.

Mizos follow the patrilocal pattern of family (*chhung*). The head of the family (male) controls the social, economic and religious affairs. Both nuclear and extended types of families are found. "But the percentage of elementary forms of family is higher than other forms of family" (Goswami:1963:206). They generally follow the practice of ultimogeniture. However, after the consolidation of the British administration, the eldest son began to be viewed as the inheritor of the father's property and power. Presently the law of inheritance has changed drastically. Women have the right of inheritance under the Lushai District Act, No.1, 1956 (inheritance of property). Generally after the death of the father, the eldest son becomes the head of the family. After marriage or after their first baby, the elder son settles down in a separate house and leads an independent life. The youngest son is left behind in their old house to look after the parents. The nuclear family pattern has become a common feature among the Mizos.

The communities are generally expected to follow endogamy. But in recent times they have not been following this practice rigidly. Marriages between members of different communities are a regular feature nowadays, particularly among the educated section. They also practice both clan endogamy and exogamy. Cross-cousin marriages are prescribed whereas parallel cousin marriages are not. Marriage with step-daughters and step-mothers are prohibited. The Mizo have never practised polyandry. Levirate, both senior and junior, are permissible. Monogamy is the usual practice. This has been enforced by the church. In the past along with a wife (*nupui*), they could keep a number of concubines (*hmei*). This kind of practice of having sex relations with more than one woman or the institution of concubinage has almost died away. Divorce or *mak* is permitted and resorted to. Grounds for divorce are usually cruelty, unfaithfulness, stealing habits

and sterility. Depending on the nature of divorce, liabilities for payment of the brideprice are altered and refunded or forfeited. Widow and widower remarriage is permitted in their society. Courtship (*mula-rim*) is quite common among the young boys and girls though the consent of the parents is normally obtained in the selection of the bride and consequently for marriage as well. Before marriage a go-between or negotiator (*palai*) from the groom's family negotiates terms and conditions and fix the brideprice (*man*). Formerly, the brideprice was calculated in terms of *mithun* (*sial*). Different rates were fixed for different clans, the highest being the price for girls from the chiefs' clans. The custom of paying brideprice still persists in their society. Two main types of marriage price are still paid in the Mizo community, the main price (*manpui*) and subsidiary price (*mantang*). The *manpui* is paid to the father or brothers of the bride, whereas *mantang* is divided among the different relatives of the bride. The marriage is solemnised by the pastor or church elders in the church. They prefer March to be the best month for marriage (Goswami, 1979:29), though there is no bar for marriage in other months. The society in general is free regarding the mixing of boys and girls. As a result of premarital sex, children (*sawnman*) are often born outside of wedlock. According to a survey (Highlander, vol.II, no.369, 1979), nowadays premarital sexual relations are more common than in the past because the society has become less rigid with respect to the mixing of men and women. Punishment is severe for adultery and in most cases leads to divorce. Boys generally marry between twentythree and twentyseven years of age whereas girls marry at about eighteen to twenty. Generally the relationship between the husband and wife is warm and affectionate. At the time of pregnancy women generally receive special care and is not allowed to do any heavy work. A naming ceremony is usually performed when the child is a few months old. The ceremony is performed in the church according to Christian rites. The name of the child is usually selected by the parents or relatives.

The news of the death of a person is conveyed to the villagers by the tolling of church bells. The relatives and friends at once assemble together in the house of the bereaved family. They generally bury the dead in the cemetery. Rites relating to the funeral service are performed either by the pastor or the church elders. They erect a memorial stone with the name of the dead inscribed upon it.

Women are generally healthy, cheerful and confident in all re-

spects. They have the freedom of action and they can take part in every walk of life. Their meetings with the opposite sex are free, frank and based on mutual understanding. Nowadays women are taking up various kinds of jobs. They even work as traffic policewomen. Many actively take part in village as well as state politics. In the past, they did not use any surname. Presently, most of them use either the clan names or community names as surnames.

The institution of chieftainship was strongly embedded in the early history of the Mizos. The British regarded them as the guardians of the people. They were given overwhelming powers by the British rulers to govern the people. The institution of chieftainship was hereditary. Generally the eldest son inherits chieftainship. In the administration of village affairs the chief (*lal*) was assisted by a council of elders (*laupa*). These elders were selected or nominated by the chiefs themselves. Besides *upa*, another important village official was the crier or *tlangau*. Some of the members of the council of elders were *Zalem*. They were privileged to be among the first to choose land for *jhum*. The main function of the chief's council was to distribute the *jhum* fields at the beginning of the year, to solve matrimonial and other disputes. All the disputes were heard by the chief and his council and disposed of according to their merits. The chief had no right to impose any tax. But each and every household of the village was to contribute a substantial amount of paddy every year to the chief as a token of gratitude for his role as a guardian and protector. This was called *fathang*. Other tributes received by the chiefs were *meat tax* (*sachhiah*), blacksmith tax (*thirdengsa*) and salt tax (*chichhiah*). They also received material benefits from the earnings of the villagers from horticulture or other forms of cultivation. All their rights and privileges were abolished along with the abolition of the chieftainship in 1954. The administrative control of the villages is now entrusted to elected village councils. They are empowered to look after the village affairs, to punish the guilty persons and to collect land revenue from the villagers.

Agriculture is the principal occupation of the Mizos. About 73% of them are engaged in cultivation and live in rural areas. *Jhum* is the ageold practice of the people. This method of cultivation is considered to be the most suitable in the rugged mountainous terrain, except in certain plain areas, where they practise plough cultivation. The implements used in *jhum* are very simple. They use scythe (*chem*), small hoe (*tuthlawh*), a sickle or reaping hook

(*favah*) only. For wet cultivation they generally use plough with ox (*baungpa*) or buffalo (*loi*). Besides that they use *mawi* and *baung tuthlawh* or ox hoe for ploughing, weeding and sowing paddy. After Independence, first the District Council and later on the state agricultural department tried to introduce several land reform measures. The first measure was to introduce terrace cultivation but this did not prove to be successful due to soil erosion. This kind of cultivation is not suitable in most areas of the state due to the sharp elevation of the agriculture fields. Now the Department of Agriculture is putting stress on permanent cultivation, on potential flat land. They are also trying to introduce horticulture on a large scale on the moderate slopes. Besides their traditional crops, a number of Mizos are now cultivating cash crops. Along with rice and maize, they grow pulses, oil seeds and cotton. They also grow different varieties of fruits in their gardens such as orange, banana, pineapple, papaya, coffee, pepper, and different citrus fruits other than orange. Large cardamom had been introduced in some places, and is thriving well. Recently they have taken up tea and rubber plantation on the low lying areas bordering Tripura and Cachar district of Assam.

As *jhum* cultivation fails to provide even the basic annual requirements, they have now started taking up other occupations for their livelihood. Many of them work as daily labourers for various contract projects like road construction. Some others run small tea stalls and shops as a source of subsidiary income. A number of them have given up their traditional occupations and engage themselves in small cottage industries on a regular basis. The more important of these are carpentry, blacksmithy, tailoring, knitting, running rice mills, bakeries, photography studios, basketry and weaving. The different nationalised banks give financial help for these activities. Women have taken up sewing, running small hotels, tea-stalls and *paan* shops. Among the educated section, a number of them are now in the government or private service. It has been observed that new job opportunities have opened up due to the establishment of various central and state departments after Mizoram attained statehood.

All their activities centre round *jhum* cultivation and all their festivals are in some way or the other connected with agricultural operations. Mizos observe three major traditional festivals, *Mim kut*, *Chapchar kut* and *Paul kut*. *Mim kut* or maize festival is usually

celebrated in the months of August and September after the harvesting is over. There is a touch of solemnity about the festival, although it is observed in a spirit of thanksgiving and with the usual singing and dancing. It is a festival dedicated to the memory of the dear ones who are no more. *Chapchar kut* festival is held sometime in March or at the beginning of spring. This is the time when the Mizos complete *jhum* harvesting, the most arduous part of the *jhum* operation. This festival is perhaps the gayest of the Mizo festivals, observed with great fun and merriment. *Paul kut* festival takes place between December and January, when harvesting is over. This is by far the most important festival, celebrated in the spirit of perfect happiness. After harvesting the villagers rest and enjoy the fruits of their labour. This festival is held with great enthusiasm. There is singing, dancing and community feasting on the occasion.

Due to the influence of Christianity the importance of these festivals was gradually decreasing. Presently they are again realising the importance of these old festivals and are trying to revive them in a new form. Government bodies have come forward actively to organise these festivals successfully. The educated section, particularly the young Mizo boys and girls have invented a new *kut*, which they call *Thalfavang kut*.

*Thal* is dry and used to signify spring, *favang* means autumn. This festival is generally observed during autumn only.

Mizos love songs and music. Their songs and lyrics narrate their origins, route of migration and descent. The earliest recognised ones were those called *Chai hla* or *Chheih hla* (Thanga 1978:35).

Mizos have several community and folkdances which have been handed down from generations. Most of the dances involve the whole community. One of the popular dances is *Cherow*, popularly known as bamboo dance because bamboos are used in this dance. The dancer steps alternately in and out between and across a pair of horizontal bamboos, held against the ground by people sitting face to face at either side. They tap the bamboos open and close in rhythmic beats. The bamboos placed horizontally are supported by two bases, one at each end. The pattern and steppings of the dance have many varieties. The two popular varieties are *kantluang* and *khawnthum*. Sometimes the steppings are made in imitation of the movements of birds, swaying of trees and so on. Little is known about the origin of this dance. It is performed on any occasion these days, but in earlier times it was used to be performed only

after the death of a person to ensure the dead person a safe passage to paradise. There is also *Khuallam* or the stranger's dance. *Khual* in Mizo language means a guest and *lam* means dancing. So *Khuallam* is the dance for the guest. It is generally performed to honour the invitees while entering the arena. The dance is normally performed by a group of male dancers dressed in traditional Mizo clothes with red and green stripes known as *puandum*. A set of three gongs, called *darbu*, a big gong called *darkhuang* and a drum called *khuangpui* are used as accompaniments for the dancing.

*Chheih lam* means exclamation dance and is performed on any suitable occasion, normally in the cool of the evening, when the day's work is over. It is a dance that embodies the spirit of joy and exhilaration. It is performed to the accompaniment of a song called *chheih-hla*. The song is sung to the beats of a drum or bamboo tube or clapping of hands. People squat on the floor in a circle, while the performer stands in the middle singing a song with various movements of limbs and body.

*Chailam* is a community dance with men and women standing in a circle, holding each other on the shoulder and the nape. The dancers sway to and fro and swing their feet to the tune of the song sung in chorus while a drummer and a gongman beat their instruments. Earlier during the dance, dancers used to drink ricebeer. Horns of mithun is used to make an instrument for the dance.

*Rallu lam* was the dance to celebrate the trophy for getting an enemy's head in a war. It was celebrated in honour of a victorious warrior. The mode of celebration however varied from village to village.

*Solakia* is a dance prevalent among the Maras and Pawis of the south district of Mizoram. Like *Rallu lam*, it was also performed in earlier times to celebrate victory in war. Marked with five principal movements, the dance seeks to recapture the actions of a hero at war. In this dance, men and women stand in a line, while the hero brandishing a sword and a shield (*phaw*) dances in the middle with the accompaniment of gong beats.

*Sarlankai* is one of the most impressive Mizo dances. It is a variation of *Solakia*. The only difference lies in the dress and tempo. No song is sung, only gongs or drums are played.

*Parlam* is a flower dance in which beautiful girls dance dressed

in colourful attire with their coiffure decorated with colourful flowers. They dance to the tune of the song sung by themselves. The principal movement in the dance involves the waving of hands.

Besides the above mentioned dances the *Pawnto* or children's action songs are popular among them. These children's songs are mainly of four types, namely; (a) *Sera hmin bai lekah* (b) *sawnga leihlawn* (c) *Kinga lu thle le lek* (d) *Tlanga lal herawtah*. These dances are nowadays taken up in the different Mizo schools as an extra curricular activity.

With the advent of Christianity, the customs and lifestyle of the different communities have drastically changed and even the traditional festivals have died out. In stead the Mizos are now performing festivals like Christmas, New Years Day and a few others connected with Christianity. Many of their present customs are a mixture of their old tradition and western pattern of life. But recently, the Government of Mizoram understood the importance of the traditional festivals and set up a separate wing in the education department just to revive their traditional festivals, music and songs. They organise cultural programmes in different parts of the state and also outside the state. In their traditional festivals and dances they use different kinds of musical instruments such as (*darbu*) consisting of three small gongs, big gong (*darkhuang*), big drum (*khuang pui*), small drum (*khuangte*), bamboo flute (*phenglawng*), bamboo guitar (*rawtingtang*), a kind of wind instrument (*rawchhem*), tender leaves blown in the mouth (*hnah tum*) and jewi harp (*thangtung tamrik*). But nowadays, they have taken up western music, along with the western musical instruments, like guitar (*ting-tong*), and drums.

(There was feeble political consciousness among the Mizo leaders under the British rule. On June 4 1935, Young Lushai Association was formed, which was later changed into Young Mizo Association. Originally the YLA was formed to deal with social issues only but from 1945 onwards they began to deal with some of the political issues also including election of elders by the villagers, abolition of forced labour. The first political party was formed in 1946. The then superintendent Mr. A. R. H. MacDonald gave permission to the Mizos to form a political party. On April 12 1946, the first political party, Mizo Commoners Union was formed, which was later changed to the Mizo Union. Due to interparty

squabbles there was a rift within the party, as to whether they should join or opt out of India and on April 25 1947, the rebel group formed a separate party known as Mizo Union Council which was renamed as United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO). The main aim of the UMFO was to opt out of India.)

(After India became independent in 1947, there was a lot of change in the political affairs of Mizoram along with the other parts of India. With the provision made in the Indian Constitution an Autonomous District Council was formed. The Mizo Union party remained in power from the inception of the District Council. Upto 1961, only the regional parties were active in Mizoram. The first national party, the Indian National Congress was established in Mizoram in 1961. In the meantime the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) changed its strategy. They joined hands with some tribal political leaders of Assam to form a hill state, comprising the hill districts of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. They formed an organisation namely, Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU). But it failed to make any impact in politics due to the nationalist movement of the Mizochin and suspicion against the leaders of UMFO. Later on the Mizo National Front came into existence. Famine caused by the destruction of crops by rats, following the flowering of bamboo occurred. Some disgruntled men including dissidents of both the parties formed a Mizo National Famine Front, ostensibly for organizing relief work, but actually to start a new political party. Within a short time, they sensed the discontent of the people regarding the relief work, and changed its line of action and declared itself as a political party as Mizo National Front (MNF). The demand of the party was the creation of a sovereign independent greater Mizo country. For that cause they took up arms against the Government forces in February 1966, and later on set up a so called independent government under the leadership of Shri Laldenga. They established their headquarter in *Rangamati* in the Chittagong hills tract of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). From that time onward continuous disturbances broke out throughout the state. The area was declared as disturbed by Government of India in February 1968. There was a continuous effort by the government to solve the problem and restore peace. After several long discussions and deliberations during this period through different agencies and organisations, an agreement was signed on June 30 1986, between

Government of India and MNF. The MNF acknowledged Mizoram as an integral part of India and decided to solve all kinds of problem within the framework of the Constitution of India. The agreement sent a wave of jubilation throughout Mizoram and peace prevailed from that time onwards.)

(After it became a union territory in 1972, the first general election for the Mizoram Legislative Assembly was held in 18th April 1972. Only three regional parties and one national party, the National Congress contested the election along with about 56 independent candidates for the 30 seats. In this election 1,14,366 voters exercised their franchise which resulted in the landslide victory for the Regional Mizo Union Party, securing 21 seats. Indian National Congress managed to secure only 6 seats and the other 3 had gone to Independents. Three women contested the election but no one was successful. Shri Chhunga became the first Chief Minister of Mizoram.)

(The second general election was held in April 1978. Only the Regional parties contested the election. The parties are Peoples Conference, Mizoram Janata (Ind.), Mizoram Congress (Ind.), Mizo Democratic Front (MDF), Mizo Union (MU). For the first time in Mizoram assembly a woman candidate was elected. In this election, Peoples Conference headed by Brig. T. Sailo emerged victorious. They won twentythree seats and Brig. T. Sailo became the Chief Minister. As a result of the defection of eight members from the legislative party of the Peoples Conference, the Ministry fell within eight months and hence President's rule was imposed for the first time in Mizoram. The third general election was held in April 1979 and two national and four regional parties along with some Independent candidates contested. Janata Party for the first time contested the election. But Peoples Conference emerged as the winner and Brig. T. Sailo became the Chief Minister.)

(The fourth general election was held in April 1984. The people voted Congress(I) party to power with an impressive margin. This was the first time the Mizos elected a national party. The Peoples Conference Party, which held reins during the last two elections managed to secure eight seats only and one seat each went in favour of the Mizo Convention and an independent candidate. Shri Lalthanhawla became the Chief Minister of Mizoram. As a sequel to the signing of the Memorandum of settlement, Congress (I) and MNF coalition Ministry was sworn in on August 21 1986.

This ministry was headed by Shri Laldenga.)

(The fifth general election was held in 1987 after the historic Memorandum of settlement between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front in 1986 and it was granted statehood. The number of Legislative Assembly seats went up from thirty to forty. In this election only one national party, the Indian National Congress and five regional parties contested. The Mizo National Front, headed by Shri Laldenga emerged as the winner with twentyfour seats. The Congress secured thirteen and the Peoples Conference, three. Shri Laldenga became the fifth Chief Minister of the state. But as a result of interparty conflict, the defection of eight members from the Legislative party of the Mizo National Front, the Ministry fell and hence President's rule was imposed for the second time in Mizoram in July 1988.)

(Recently the sixth general election was held in January 1989. In this election the Indian National Congress, a national party was voted to power for the second time. They secured twentyfive seats, where as MNF secured fourteen and P. C. only one. The other regional parties failed to secure any seat. Shri Lalthanhawla became the Chief Minister for the second time and still holds the post.)

(Different voluntary organisations are very active in Mizoram. The Y.M.A. (Young Mizo Association) is the most popular and important organisation, which has members from all sections of people irrespective of caste, sex or religion. The organisation was earlier known as Young Lushai Association (YLA). This organisation was initiated by Rev. David Edward on 15th June 1935. From 1947, the organisation came to be known as Young Mizo Association (Y.M.A.). It is a non-political, socio-cultural organisation with its central office in Aizawl. There is one sub-headquarter at Lunglei and about 400 branches throughout the state. This organisation is spread out not only in Mizoram but also has branches in Manipur and in Cachar district of Assam. The main aim and activities of Y. M. A. are (a) humanitarian work like building of houses for the poor, the disabled (b) organising various cultural activities (c) construction of village paths (d) improvement in water supply (e) improvement and maintenance of cemeteries (f) construction of public urinals and latrines (g) construction of school buildings (h) running the adult literacy centres (i) preservation of forest and tree plantation programmes (j) provide the villagers with useful

occupations for their spare times. Almost every village has a branch of Y.M.A and its office bearers are elected for a term of two years.)

(The other active voluntary organisation of the Mizos is *Hmeichhe Tangmual Pawl* (Mizo Women's Organisation). They have their branches in the villages and work to uplift the womenfolk. This forum involves women in the nutrition programmes, educational, medical programmes and programmes for handicrafts, weaving, childcare, knitting and many others. They also run adult literacy programmes and are involved in various other community development schemes. The office bearers are elected through democratic methods.)

(Besides, many voluntary organisations are active in Mizoram. They are People's Union for Civil Liberty, Ex-Servicemen's Association, Zoram Upa Pawl (ZUP, Women's Association, membership of this organisation is given only to these who are fifty years or more). Most of the church denominations have their youth organisations like Kristian Thalai Pawl (K.T.P's Youth Organisation of Presbyterian Church) and Salvation Army. The main aims and functions of these organisations are to guide the young Christians towards Christ and to utilize the services of the youth for the socio-religious purposes. They also take up evangelisation programme among the non-Christian communities. There are also some committees for specific purposes like games and sports committees, Field Management Committee and Village Defence Party (VDP).)

Though a late starter in the sphere of development, a greater part of Mizoram is undergoing rapid progress with the objective of gaining lost grounds and progressing along with the rest of the country.

The Mizos have made a tremendous achievement in education, though majority of them (about 75%) still live in the rural areas. The literacy rate is regarded as one of the highest in India, surpassed only by Chandigarh, Kerala and Delhi. The number of Primary, Middle and High schools are 1005, 443 and 154 respectively with enrolment in each category of schools being 88,064, 36,246 and 15736 pupils (Statistical Handbook, Mizoram; 1987). Twelve colleges for higher education and one university for post graduate courses have been established in different parts of Mizoram. Presently there are about 5319 pupils in the colleges and about 100 students in the post graduate college. Besides, many Mizo students are now studying in different institutions and in

various fields such as commerce, agriculture, animal husbandry, veterinary science, engineering and medical, in different parts of India. Girls have not stayed behind in this race. They have also fared extremely well in all the Indian competitive services. Some Mizos, belonging to the Indian Administrative Service are serving in different states. Similarly some of them are also engaged in different central services such as the Indian Foreign Service, the Indian Police Service and others. The other field where they have done commendably is the Defence Service. This is not valid for the Chakma, the Magh and the Riang. The dismal placement of these communities especially in education and with respect to employment opportunities keep them at the outer fringe of developmental activities. However, these recognised communities do not consider them as Mizos.

The Mizos are in general healthy. They are very hard working. Women look healthier than men and generally do more work. The sanitary condition of the villages is still not satisfactory though considerable changes have taken place in the villages where educated persons live. Generally there is no proper means of disposing garbage. There is no drainage system in the villages. The only system is the natural drainage system in which rain water washes away the waste products. The villages are not free from disease; the common diseases are diarrhoea, dysentery, malaria and measles. In the past they were totally dependent on indigenous herbal medicines or on ritual activities of the traditional priests who appeased the spirits that they believed were responsible for the diseases. During that period, epidemics broke out frequently almost every year, and infant mortality was very high. A lot of changes have since taken place in this respect. Many hospitals, subsidiary health centres, primary health centres, health sub-centres are found in different parts of Mizoram. Even an Ayurvedic dispensary was established by the health department. The people now mostly depend on modern medicines though some of them still use indigenous medicines in minor cases. Different health programmes, like National Malaria Eradication Programme and Leprosy Eradication Programmes are active in the state to educate people regarding hygiene and sanitation and to wipe out different diseases. As regards family planning, the people are gradually realising the importance of a small family. A large number of them are now adopting birth control measures. During 1986-87, 2869

males and 2697 females underwent vasectomy and tubectomy operations respectively (Statistical Handbook, Mizoram 1987).

The problem of water is acute throughout the state. For drinking water they largely depend on natural sources, like rivers, springs and streams which mostly dry up during the dry seasons. However, most of the houses have their gigantic water drums made of plain aluminium sheets to store rain water for the dry seasons. Recently, PHE (Public Health Engineering) Department has made arrangements to supply drinking water by trucks to some of the villages and towns. To solve this problem, the government has already taken several steps. They have taken up several water supply schemes to draw water from the river. They also tried to modernise the natural water sources by constructing reservoirs in many places.

Various kinds of national and regional programmes have been implemented to educate and employ the rural people in general. In Mizoram the rural development programmes at the state level are implemented through the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) and community development blocks. There are twenty community development blocks and one sub-block covering the whole of Mizoram. The different schemes are IRDP, NREP, RLEGP and DWCRA. Under the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) many youths have undergone training in different fields like weaving, basketry, knitting, tailoring, hair dressing and carpentry. The number of youths in the training centre are increasing and they are getting scholarships during the training period. Besides that, a good number of them have benefited in the fields of agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry and fishery. The other national scheme is the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP). Under this programme a number of villagers are engaged in different developmental activities. The main activities of this programme are construction of suspension bridges, construction and maintenance of inter-village paths, construction of play grounds and school buildings and construction of water points. Social forestry schemes are also implemented under this programme. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) is another centrally sponsored scheme. Under this programme landless rural people are guaranteed employment. Before the work starts, the workers are provided with 100 days employment guarantee card. Group Housing under

Indira Awaas Yojana, sanitary latrines, multipurpose training cum production centres, construction of Lower Primary schools, road communications and also social forestry come under this scheme. Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) is another programme, jointly sponsored by UNICEF, Central Government and State Government. The main objective of this programme is to increase the income of women members of the poor families by providing support services like child care activities, and other economically viable activities on a group basis. Under this programme a good number of women have benefited and this programme is very popular among rural womenfolk. The other programmes operating in the state are those for assisting small and marginal farmers for agricultural production (PASMAFAP), Bio gas, Small Marginal Farmer (SMF), *Jhumia* settlement scheme. Zoram Industrial Development Corporation Limited (ZIDCO), formerly known as the Mizoram Small Industries Development Corporation Limited (MSIDC), is a company owned by the Mizoram Government. The main aims and objectives of ZIDCO are to aid, counsel, assist, finance, protect and promote industries in Mizoram owned or run by the government, statutory body companies, firms or individuals. They have already shown a commendable achievement in this regard, and a good number of them received training and financial help in various fields such as in opening saw mills, hotels, rice mills, vehicle shops and weaving centres. Industries of various kinds, big and small have benefited in one way or another by this corporation. Village artisans were given grants-in-aid in cash and in kind, to develop their artistic abilities and for earning something through occupations such as basketry, weaving, carpentry and blacksmithy.)

Agriculture is the major occupation of the people of Mizoram and so priority was given for fostering development in this field. They have adopted a new policy of weaning away cultivators from the age-old but destructive technique of *jhuming*. Steps have been taken for permanent wet cultivation, double cropping, irrigation and construction of link roads to increase production. They have also introduced modern techniques and implements. Supply of better seeds and manures have also begun. Under the *jhum* control scheme (sponsored by the central government) certain blocks are taken and each household is provided with some sort of a permanent occupation other than *jhum*. The different kinds of occupa-

tion are sericulture, wet cultivation, cattle rearing, piggery, poultry, vegetable farming and others. The villagers are also encouraged by the department to plant cash crops on a larger scale and provide them with avenues for marketing their agricultural produce. For that the government has strengthened the activities of MIZOFED. They are also paying more attention to the development of forests. For that, the forest department has launched various programmes like reafforestation programmes, planting economically important species like teak, gomari, eucalyptus, pine and other locally important species to replace less economically important miscellaneous species, resettlement of local *jhumers* by way of assisting them in taking up forestry works, planting of fruit trees and planting of commercial timber.

In Mizoram, roads form the only means of communication, though the network is bad. Only a fraction of the 737 villages are connected by roads. Large areas are still untouched by motor roads. People are still compelled to use the narrow hill tracts to reach the nearest town or the market place. The Border Roads Organisation has been doing a splendid job in the development of road communication network in Mizoram under the project Pushpak. They have constructed about 1369 km. of metalled all weather roads and about 286 km. of *kaccha* or fair weather roads. Side by side the state Public Works Department (PWD) also constructed about 223 km. metalled and 727 km. *kaccha* roads. Recently Mizoram came up on the air map when Vayudoot started a service between Aizawl and Calcutta and Aizawl and Silchar once a day. Tuirial airfield is situated about 25 kms. from Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram.

Postal facilities are still not upto the mark. There are only 277 post offices (including head post-offices, sub post-offices and branch post-offices) throughout the state. So only those who live in towns and near big road-side villages can avail of this facility. Telephone facilities are there only in seven places namely Aizawl, Champhai, Koladib, Lunglei, Saiha, Sairang and Vairengte. There are only two telegraph offices throughout the state. Generally, all the important messages pass through the wireless of Mizoram Police. There is an All India Radio station and a low power television station at Aizawl.

Mizoram government is also taking interest in the electric supply programme. At present they mainly depend on the diesel

generator. They have undertaken some mini hydel projects like Khawiva and Tuirivang and have surveyed other places to meet the requirements of the state. Moreover, wind generators are being installed in some villages like Hmuifang and Sangau as the alternative source of energy. According to the Statistical Handbook 1987, all the six towns of the state have electricity and as many as 207 villages have been connected with electricity under the rural electrification programme. The supply of kerosene oil is not regular in the villages. The ration system covers almost all the villages. Through this system rice is available at subsidised rates.

Within a year or two, banking facilities in the state have improved a lot. So, many Nationalised Banks are now operating in different parts of Mizoram. Mizo people are now getting more financial help through the banks, under different projects. Rural banks also operate in different blocks of the state.

Besides, after attainment of statehood overall developmental activities in different spheres, such as sports, tourism, transport, rural development etc. are gaining momentum in the Mizo dominated areas.

Mizoram as a state of the north eastern region of India falls under the North East Regional Office. Regarding reports on the ethnography of the various communities of Mizoram, a few attempts to record were made by the British administrators like Shakespear (1912), Parry (1928) and McCall (1949). However, no systematic survey has so far been made in this regard before we took up the present survey in the year 1985.