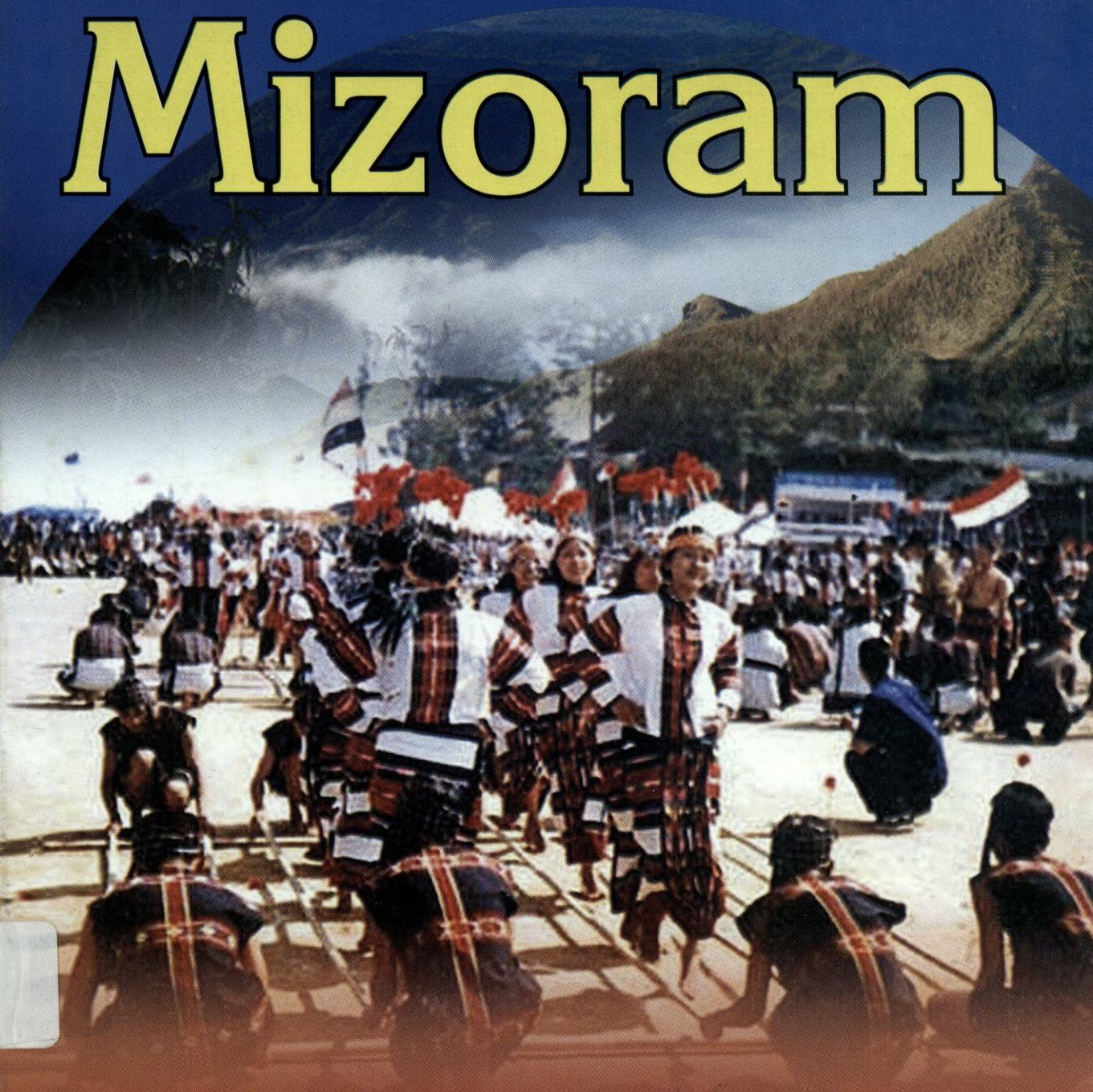


ENCYCLOPAEDIA
OF
Mizoram



TEISI THOU

Encyclopaedia
of
MIZORAM

Volume 1

Teisi Thou

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CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>vii</i>
(Vol. 1)	
1. Introduction	1
2. Facts about Mizoram	51
3. Information Technology in Mizoram	105
4. Traditional Community-based Fire Management among the Mizo	119
5. Industrial Policy of Mizoram	163
6. Mizoram—The Nightangle of North East	193
7. Christianity, Ethnicity and Structural Violence	213
8. Mizo Women in a Man-made Society	237
(Vol. 2)	
9. Mizoram—From Insurgence to Resurgence	289
10. The People of Mizoram	317
11. Tribes of Mizoram	331
12. Mizoram : An Obsession Called ‘Lalruotmawi’	361
13. Explaining Manipur’s Breakdown and Mizoram’s Peace	375
14. The Origin of The Chin	407
15. Road Development Policy	429
16. A Comparative Analysis of Naga, Mizo and Meitei Insurgencies	445
17. Topography, Climate, Geology and Soil	463
18. Wildlife in Mizoram	473
19. Chin Refugee Report Mizoram	507
<i>Bibliography</i>	<i>567</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>573</i>

INTRODUCTION

Mizoram pronunciation is one of the Seven Sister States in North Eastern India. It shares land borders with the states of Tripura, Assam, Manipur, Bangladesh and the Chin State of Burma. Mizoram became the 23rd state of India on 20th February, 1987. Its population at the 2001 census stood at 888, 573. Mizoram ranks second in India with a literacy rate of 88.49%.

Mizoram has the most variegated hilly terrain in the eastern part of India. The hills are steep (avg. height 1000 metres) and separated by rivers which flow either to the north or south creating deep gorges between the hill ranges. The highest peak in Mizoram is the Blue Mountain with a height of 2210 metres. Its tropical location combined with the high altitude gives it a mild climate all year round. Mizoram is rich in flora and fauna and many kinds of tropical trees and plants thrive in the area. Mizoram literally means land of the highlanders.

Mizoram has a mild climate, not very warm in summer and not very cold in winter. During winter, the temperature varies from 11°C to 21°C and in summer it varies between 20°C to 29°C. The entire area is under the regular influence of monsoons. It rains heavily from May to September and the average rainfall is 254 cm, per annum. The average annual rainfall in Aizawl and Lunglei are 208 centimetres and 350 centimetres, respectively. Winter in Mizoram is normally rain-free.

History

Origin

The origin of the Mizos, like those of many other tribes in the northeastern India is shrouded in mystery. The generally accepted view is that they were part of a great wave of migration from China and later moved out to India to their present habitat. It is possible that the Mizos came from Sinlung or Chhinlungsan located on the banks of the Yalung River in China, first settled in the Shan State and moved on to the

Kabaw Valley. It is also believed that Mizos originated from Mongolia, however there is no written proof.

Khampat

The earliest Mizos who migrated to India were known as Kukis, the second batch of immigrants were called New Kukis. The Mizo history in the 18th and 19th century is marked by many instances of tribal raids and retaliatory amount of autonomy was accepted by the government and enshrined in the Six Schedule of the Indian Constitution. The Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council came into being in 1952 followed by the formation of these bodies led to the abolition of chieftainship in the Mizo society.

The autonomy however met the aspirations of the Mizos only partially. Representatives of the District Council and the Mizo Union pleaded with the States Reorganization Commission (SRC) in 1954 for integrated the Mizo-dominated areas of Tripura and Manipur with their District Council in Assam. The tribal leaders in the northeast were laboriously unhappy with the SRC recommendations. They met in Aizawl in 1955 and formed a new political party, Eastern India Union (EITU) and raised their demand for a separate state comprising of all the hill districts of Assam. The Mizo Union split and the breakaway faction joined the EITU. By this time, the UMFO also joined the EITU and then understanding of the Hill problems by the Chuliha Ministry, the demand for a separate Hill state by EITU was kept in abeyance.

Mautam Famine

In 1959, the Mizo Hills was devastated by a great famine known in Mizo history as 'Mautam Famine'. The cause of the famine was attributed to flowering of bamboos which resulted in a boom of the rat population. After eating bamboos seeds, the rats turned towards crops and infested the huts and houses and became a plague to the villages. The havoc created by the rats was terrible and very little of the grain was harvested.

For sustenance, many Mizos had to collect roots and leaves from the jungles. Still others moved to far away places, and a considerable number died of starvation. In this hour of darkness, many welfare organizations tried their best to help starving villagers. Earlier in 1955, the Mizo Cultural Society was formed with Pu Laldenga as its secretary. In March 1960, the name of the Mizo Cultural Society was changed to 'Mautam Front'. During the famine of 1959–1960, this society took the lead in demanding relief and managed to attract the attention of all sections of the people. In September 1960, the Society adopted the name of Mizo National Famine Front (MNFF). The MNFF gained considerable popularity as a large number of Mizo Youth assisted in transporting rice and other essential commodities to interior villages.

Insurgency

The Mizo National Famine Front dropped the word 'famine' and a new political organization, the Mizo National Front (MNF) was born on 22 October 1961 under the leadership of Laldenga with the specified goal of achieving sovereign independence of Greater Mizoram. Simultaneous large scale disturbances broke out on 28 February 1966 government installations at Aizawl, Lunglei, Chawngte, Chhimluang and other places. The Government of India bombed the city of Aizawl with 'Toofani' and 'Hunter' Jet fighters. This was the first time that India had used its air force to quell a movement of any kind among its citizens." In the afternoon of March 4 1966, a flock of jet fighters hovered over Aizawl and dropped bombs leaving a number of houses in flames.

The next day, a more excessive bombing took place for several hours which left most houses in Dawrpui and Chhingaveng area in ashes, " recollected 62-year-old Rothangpuia in Aizawl.. The search for a political solution to the problems facing the hill regions in Assam continued. The Mizo National Front was outlawed in 1967. The demand for statehood gained fresh momentum. A Mizo District Council delegation, which met prime minister Indira Gandhi in May 1971 demanded full fledged statehood for the Mizos. The union government on its own offered the proposal of turning Mizo Hills into a Union Territory (U.T.) in July 1971. The Mizo leaders were ready to accept the offer on the condition that the status of U.T. would be upgraded to statehood sooner rather than later. The Union Territory of Mizoram came into being on 21 January 1972. Mizoram has two seats in Parliament, one each in the Lok Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha

Birth of Mizoram State

Rajiv Gandhi's election to power following his mother's death signalled the beginning of a new era in Indian politics. Laldenga met the prime minister on 15 February 1985. Some contentious issues which could not be resolved during previous talks were referred to him for his advice. With Pakistan having lost control of Bangladesh and no support from Pakistan, the Mizo National Front used the opportunity that had now presented itself.

New Delhi felt that the Mizo problem had been dragging on for a long time, while the Mizo National Front was convinced that disarming, to live as respectable Indian citizens, was the only way of achieving peace and development. Statehood was a prerequisite to the implementation of the accord signed between the Mizo National Front and the Union Government on 30 June 1986. The document was signed by Pu Laldenga on behalf of the Mizo National Front, and the Union Home Secretary R.D. Pradhan on behalf of the government. Lalkhama, Chief Secretary of Mizoram, also

signed the agreement. The formalization of the state of Mizoram took place on 20 February 1987. Chief Secretary Lalkhama read out the proclamation of statehood at a public meeting organized at Aizawl's parade ground. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi flew in to Aizawl to inaugurate the new state. Hiteshwar Saikia was appointed as Governor of Mizoram.

Geography

Hills

Mizoram is a land of rolling hills, rivers and lakes. As many as 21 major hills ranges or peaks of different heights run through the length and breadth of the state, with plains scattered here and there. The average height of the hills to the west of the state are about 1, 000 metres.

These gradually rise up to 1, 300 metres to the east. Some areas, however, have higher ranges which go up to a height of over 2, 000 metres. Phawngpui, or the Blue Mountain, situated in the southeastern part of the state, is the highest peak in Mizoram.

Rivers

The biggest river in Mizoram is the River Kaladan also known as Chhimtuipui Lui in local Mizo language. It originates from Chin State in Burma and passes through Saiha and Lawngtlai districts in Southern tip of Mizoram and goes back to Burma's Rakhine state, finally it enters Bay of Bengal at Akyab, a very popular port in Sittwe, Burma. Indian government has invested millions of rupees to set up inland water ways along this river to trade with Burma. The project name is known as Kaladan Multipurpose project.

Although many more rivers and streams drain the hill ranges, the most important and useful rivers are the Tlawng (also known as Dhaleswari or Katakhal), Tut (Gutur), Tuirial (Sonai) and Tuivawl which flow through the northern territory and eventually join the Barak River in Cachar District. The Koldoyne (Chhimtuipui) which originates in Burma, is an important river in the south of Mizoram. It has four tributaries and the river is in patches.

The western part is drained by Karnaphuli (Khawthlang tuipui) and its tributaries. A number of important towns, including Chittagong in Bangladesh, are situated at the mouth of the river. Before Independence, access to other parts of the country was only possible through the river routes via Cachar in the north, and via Chittagong in the south. Entry through the latter was cut off when the subcontinent was partitioned and ceded to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in 1947.

Lakes (Dil)

Lakes are scattered all over the state, but the most important among these are Palak dil (Pala Tipo), Tamdil, Rungdil, and Rengdil. The Palak lake, the biggest lake in Mizoram is situated in Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) within Saiha District which is part of southern Mizoram and covers an area of 30 hectares. It is believed that the lake was created as a result of an earthquake or a flood. The local people believe that a village which was submerged still remains intact deep under the waters. The Tamdil lake is a natural lake situated 110/85 km from Aizawl. Legend has it that a huge mustard plant once stood in this place. When the plant was cut down, jets of water sprayed from the plant and created a pool of water, thus the lake was named '*Tamdil* which means of 'Lake of Mustard Plant'. Today the lake is an important tourist attraction and a holiday resort.

However, the most significant lake in Mizo history Rih Dil is ironically located in Burma, a few kilometres from the India-Burma border. It was believed that the departed souls pass through this lake before making their way to "Pialral" or heaven.

Demographics

People

The great majority of Mizoram's population is several ethnic tribes who are either culturally or linguistically linked. These myriad ethnic groups are collectively known as the Lushais/Lusais (People who play with heads) /Luseis (Long-Headed people) or otherwise called Mizos (Mi= People, Zo= Hill) both of which are umbrella terms. These days, there is an increasing of the importance of unity among all the Mizo tribes living in different parts of the northeastern states of India, Burma and Bangladesh. The Mizos are divided into numerous tribes, the largest of which is possibly the Lushais, which comprises almost two-thirds of the state's population. Other Mizo tribes include Hmar, Mara, Paite, Lai, Ralte. The Riang, a subtribe of Tripuri and the Chakma of Arakanese origin, are a non-Mizo tribe living in Mizoram.

Religion

Some 87% of the population (including all ethnic Mizos) is Christian. Other faiths include Hindus who form a small minority in the state, at 3.6% of the population following the religion. Muslims also form a small minority with 1.1% of the population following the faith. People who believe in this faith are from other state but living in Mizoram

Hinduism

The pre-Christian spirituality of the Mizos was animism.

There are certain tribes that still practice the traditional animism. Roma Bradnock writes, "*The mainly nomadic Chakmas along the western border practise a religion which combines Hinduism, Buddhism and animism.*" The Khans are also very much influenced by Hinduism. Suhas Chatterjee writes, "*The Khan culture is very likely the influence of the Puyas of ancient Srikshehra, the Hindu kingdom in Burma.*"

Christianity

The major Christian denominations are the Presbyterian The Mizoram Presbyterian Church was established by a Welsh Missionary named Rev. D.E. Jones. The Mizoram Presbyterian Church is one of the constituted bodies of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India, which has its headquarters at Shillong in Meghalaya (India). The administrative set up of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church Synod is highly centralized. The Synod, having its headquarters at Aizawl, the Capital of Mizoram State, is the highest decision making body of the church. The financial operation, the personnel matters, the administration, management and the execution of works of the church are directly or indirectly supervised and controlled by the Synod Headquarters., Baptist Church of Mizoram, Evangelical Church of Maraland, Salvation Army, Seventh-day Adventist Church, Roman Catholic, Lairam Jesus Christ Baptist Church (LIKBK), and the Pentecostals.

Judaism

In recent decades, a number of Southeast Asian-looking people from Mizoram, Assam, and Manipur have claimed to be Jewish. This group is known collectively as the Bnei Menashe, and include Chin, Kuki, and Mizo. Several hundred have formally converted to Orthodox Judaism and many openly practise an Orthodox type of Judaism. The Bnei Menashe do not see themselves as converts, but believe themselves to be ethnically Jewish, descendants of one of the Lost Tribes of Israel (*see Bnei Menashe*). The Jewish population of the Bnei Menashe currently is estimated at 9, 000 people.

Politics

As in other Indian states, the ceremonial head of the state government is a governor appointed by the Union Government. His/her appointment is largely ceremonial, and his/her main role is to oversee the swearing in of the Chief Minister. The Chief Minister, who holds the real executive powers, is the head of the party or coalition garnering the largest majority in the state elections. The governor also appoints the cabinet ministers on the advice of the Chief Minister. Mizoram has a unicameral legislature like most other Indian states. Mizoram has one seat in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha. (There are a total of 40 State Assembly seats.) The Lais, Maras and Chakmas have separate autonomous District Councils. The present Chief Minister of Mizoram is Pu Zoramthanga.

Administration

After the 1986 signing of the Historic Memorandum of Settlement between the Government of India and the Mizo National Front, Mizoram was granted Statehood on February 20, 1987 (as per the Statehood Act of 1986). Mizoram became the 23rd State of the Indian Union.

The capital of Mizoram is Aizawl. The Mizoram State Legislative Assembly has 40 seats. Mizoram is now represented at the Parliament by two MPs, one in the Lok Sabha and the other in the Rajya Sabha.

Mizoram has witnessed vast constitutional, political and administrative changes in recent years. The traditional chieftainship was abolished and the District and Regional Councils (created under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India) gave a substantial measure of local control. Today the Lais, Maras, and the Chakmas have separate Autonomous District Councils. The Village Councils are the grassroots of democracy in Mizoram.

Mizoram is divided into 11 districts:

- Aizawl
- Lunglei
- Kolasib
- Mamit
- Serchhip
- Saiha
- Champhai
- Lawngtlai
- Hnahthial
- Khawzawl
- Saitual

There are three Autonomous District Councils (ADC) for ethnic tribes in Mizoram, namely Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) for ethnic Chakmas in Southwestern Mizoram bordering Bangladesh, Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) for Mara people in the Southern-most corner and Lai Autonomous District Council (LADC) for Lai people in Southeastern part of the state.

Education

The College of Veterinary Sciences & Animal Husbandry, Selesih, Aizawl, Mizoram is the premier institute of Veterinary Medicine catering the needs of northeastern states of India.

Under Mizoram University, there are 29 undergraduate colleges including 2 professional institutions affiliated with the university. The total enrolment in these institutions is approximately 5200 students.

Economy

In terms of economic development, Mizoram lags behind in comparison to the rest of the country. Cottage industry and other small-scale industries play an important role in its current economy. The people of Mizoram have not taken a keen responsibility for the development of industry due to the lack of market raw materials. The industry is wanting but lately there is a much wider chance for the development of forest products. The 9th Five Year Plan (1997–2002) gives much priority to the “agro-based industry” as nearly 70% of the population is engaged in agriculture.

Sister Organisations Of Industry Department:

- Zoram Industrial Development Corporation. (ZIDCO)
- Mizoram Khadi and Village Industry Board. (MKVIB)
- Zoram Handloom and Handicraft Corporation Limited. (ZOHANCO)
- Mizoram Food and Allied Industries Corporation Limited. (MIFCO)
- Zoram Electronics Development Corporation. (ZENICS)

Macroeconomic Trend

Below is a chart of trends in gross state product of Mizoram at market prices estimated by *Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation* with figures in millions of Indian rupees.

Year	Gross State Domestic Product
1980	680
1985	1, 810
1990	3, 410
1995	9, 370
2000	17, 690

Mizoram’s gross domestic state product for 2004 is estimated at \$685 million in current prices.

Bamboo

30% of Mizoram is covered with wild bamboo forests, many of which are largely unexploited. Mizoram harvests 40% of India’s 80 million-ton annual bamboo crop. The current state administration wishes to increase revenue streams from bamboo and aside from uses as a substitute for timber, there is research underway to utilize

bamboo more widely such as using bamboo chippings for paper mills, bamboo charcoal for fuel, and a type of “bamboo vinegar” which was introduced by Japanese Scientist Mr. Hitoshi Yokota, and used as a fertilizer.

Bamboo harvests, Rats and Famine

Many of the plans that the administration had were disrupted with the advent of the flowering season for bamboo in May 2006, an event which takes place once every 48 years.

“After the bamboo flowers, it dies and is finished, ” current Chief Minister Pu Zoramthanga said in an interview to Reuters in May 2006. “Unless we harvest it, we are going to waste billions and billions of rupees. We have to make roads into the jungle and harvest it as soon as possible.” He admitted it will only be possible to harvest five percent of the bamboo before it flowers.

The flowering of the bamboo leads to a dramatic increase in the local rat population; some experts believe that the flower has an effect on rat fertility. In a process locally known as *Mautam* the increase in rodent population following the flowering led to raids on granaries and the destruction of paddy fields.

Records from the British Raj indicate that Mizoram suffered famine in 1862 and again in 1911 after the region witnessed similar bamboo flowerings. The last *Mautam*, in 1958-59, resulted in the recorded deaths of at least a hundred people, besides heavy loss to human property and crops. It led to the foundation of the Mizo National Famine Front, set up to provide relief to far-flung areas; the front later became the Mizo National Front, which, under former Chief Minister Laldenga and current CM Zoramthanga, fought a bitter separatist struggle for twenty years against the Indian Army.

The 2006 *Mautam* has led to an explosion in the rat population and the army has been called to assist embattled civil authorities and, apart from killing rats, help educate people on pest control and means of deterrents such as growing turmeric and spices which repel rats.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the mainstay of the people of Mizoram. More than 70% of the total population is engaged in some form of agriculture. The age-old practice of *Jhum* cultivation is carried out annually by a large number of people living in rural areas. The climatic conditions of the state, its location in the tropic and temperate zones, and its various soil types along with well-distributed rainfall of 1900 mm to 3000 mm spread over eight to ten months in the year, have all contributed to a wide spectrum of rich and varied flora and fauna in Mizoram. These natural features and resources also offer opportunities for growing a variety of horticultural crops.

Food Processing

The agro-climatic conditions of Mizoram are conducive to agricultural and horticultural crops. As this is the case, a strong and effective food processing sector should play a significant supportive role in the economy. The total production of fruits, vegetables, and spices will be increasing year by year as the number of farmers are weaned away from *Jhum* cultivation and are taking up diversification towards cash crops. Recently, Godrej Agrovet Limited has entered for a new venture wherein Oil Palm and *Jatropha* cultivation is their main theme in Mizoram.

Mines & Minerals

The present main mineral of Mizoram is a hard rock of Tertiary period formation. This is mainly utilized as building material and for road construction work. However, several reports (both from Geological Survey of India and State Geology & Mining Wing of Industries Department) revealed that the availability of minor mineral in different places.

Hand Looms & Handicrafts

Mizo women typically use a hand loom to make clothing and other handicrafts, such as a type of bag called *Pawnpui* and blankets. The Mizo rarely did much craft work until the British first came to Mizoram in 1889 when a demand for their crafts was created with this exposure to foreign markets. Currently, the production of hand looms is also being increased, as the market has been widening within and outside Mizoram.

Tourism

With its abundant scenic beauty and a pleasant climate, Mizoram hopes to develop its tourist-related industries. Specific tourist projects can be developed to put Mizoram on the “tourist map” of India. With the development of Reiek resort centre and a number of other resort centres in and around Aizawl, as well as establishment of tourist’s huts across the entire state, tourism has been much developed. The ever smiling faces of the Mizos is an experience to cherish, and gives new meaning to life.

Energy Sector

Despite having a rich potential in hydropower, Mizoram does not having its own power generation operation worth mentioning. At present, there are 22 isolated Diesel Power Stations scattered about the state and 9 Mini/Micro Hydel Stations in operation. The above total installed capacity of the Diesel Power Stations is 26.14MW and the Mini/Micro Hydel Stations is 8.25 MW. As per the 16th Electric Power Survey of India under CEA, Government of India, the restricted peak load demand of the state during

the 2002–2003 year is 102 MW. Against this, an effective capacity of about 16 MW from Diesel Power Stations and 6 MW from the Mini/Micro Hydel Stations is available from local generation at present.

Medicinal

The socio-economic life of the rural people depends on their local vegetation from where they derive all their material requirements – timber, food, fuel wood, medicinal plants etc. About 95% of the interior population depends on herbal medicine and nearly 98% of raw materials are harvested from the wild plant resources without replenishing the growing stocks.

The villages' herbal preparations include uprooting of the plants, which is detrimental to both the plants themselves and the growing area. As a result of this practice, many commonly used and effective medicinal plants have become rare and endangered species. Some are on the verge of extinction unless conservation measures are taken up for revival.

Transport

Roads

Mizoram is connected through National Highway 54. NH-150 connects the state with Seling Mizoram to Imphal Manipur. NH-40A links the State with Tripura. A road between Champhai and Tiddim in Burma will soon connect the two countries.

Air Service

Mizoram has only one airport, Lengpui Airport, near Aizawl and this Airport can be reached from Kolkata by Air within a short period of 40 minutes. Mizoram is also accessible from Kolkata via Silchar Airport, which is about 200 km. from the state capital of Mizoram.

Railway

Mizoram can be easily reached by train at Bairabi rail station or via Silchar. Bairabi is about 110 km, where Silchar is about 180 km. from the state capital.

Water Ways

Mizoram is in the process of developing water ways with the port of Akyab Sittwe in Burma along Chhimtuipui River. India is investing \$103 million to develop the Sittwe port on Burma's northern coast, about 160 km from Mizoram. Military government of Burma committed \$10 million for the venture, which is part of the Kaladan Multipurpose project.

Culture and Arts

Music

Mizo traditional tunes are very soft and gentle, with locals claiming that they can be sung the whole night without the slightest fatigue. Even without musical instruments, the Mizo can enthusiastically sing together by clapping hands or any materials which can produce complementary sound. All these informal instruments are called Chhepchher.

The Mizo in the early period were very close to nature and that music was the tune of their life. Even today, the Mizos use a drum known locally as “khuang”, made from wood and animal hide, to accompany their singing in church services as well as cultural festivities. Western influence is evident from the contemporary music scene though, with experiments in genres such as rock (punk, emoscream, metal), pop and hip-hop, R&B to name a few. We can say that Music and the society of Mizo’s goes together. Mizos are very fond of Music, they sing in a funeral and in a wedding.

Festivals

Modern Mizos are fast giving up their old customs and adopting the new ways of life which are greatly influenced by western cultures. Music is a passion for the Mizos, and the youth especially have become quite enamoured of western music.

Mim Kut

The *Mim Kut* festival is usually celebrated during the months of August and September, after the harvest of maize. *Mim Kut* is celebrated with great fanfare by drinking rice-beer, singing, dancing, and feasting. Samples of the year’s harvests are consecrated to the departed souls of the community. Mizos practise “slash and burn” (*Jhum*) cultivation. They clear areas the jungle, burn the stumps and leaves of the downed trees, and then cultivate the land. All their other activities revolve around the *Jhum* operation and their festivals are all connected with such agricultural operation.

Chapchar Kut

Chapchar Kut is another festival celebrated during March after completion of their most arduous task of *Jhum* operation *i.e.*, jungle-clearing (clearng of remainings of burnt area). This is a spring festival celebrated with great fervour and gaiety.

Pawl Kut

Pawl means “Straw” hence pawl kut means kut held soon after the harvest. *Pawl Kut* is a festival celebrated in December to commemorate the end of harvest season. It is perhaps the greatest Mizo festival.

Dances

Cheraw

The most colourful and distinctive dance of the Mizo is called *Cheraw*. Long bamboo staves are a feature of this dance and it is known to many as the Bamboo Dance. Originally, the dance was performed to wish a safe passage and victorious entry into the abode of the dead (*Pialral*) for the soul of a mother who had died in childbirth. To dance *Cheraw* takes great skill and alertness.

Khuallam

Khuallam was originally a dance performed by honoured invites while entering into the arena where a community feast was held. To attain a position of distinction, a Mizo had to go through a series of ceremonies where friends from nearby villages were invited and *Khuallam* was the dance for the visitors or guests. *Khuallam* is performed by a group of dancers, the more the merrier, in colourful profiles to the tune of gongs and drums.

Chheih Lam

Chheih Lam is the dance done over a round of rice-beer in the cool of the evening. The lyrics in triplets are usually spontaneous compositions, recounting their heroic deeds and escapades and also praising the honoured guests present in their midst.

Media & Communication

Mizoram's media is growing quickly. Internet access is average, and private cable channels are quite popular - the big players in the cable market being Skylinks, LPS (Laldailova Pachuau & Sons) & Zonet from Aizawl and smaller operators are JB cable Networks, LDF Cable, Eldo Zenith Links from Lunglei. Other major media players are the press, All India Radio, Doordarshan and local cable TV operators. A Broadband internet is also available.

The Press

- Directorate of Information and Public Relations
- Vanglaini
- Aizol Times
- Newslink English Daily
- The Zozamtimes
- The Highlander English Daily
- Lelte Music in Mizoram
- Zolife

- The Aizawl post
- Evening Post
- Lengzem
- Zalen Sunday News
- Tawrhbawm
- Mizoserver
- Ramhlun North

Television

- LPS
- Zonet
- Skylinks

Radio

- All India Radio Govt Radio Station
- Adventist World Radio

Telecommunications

Major cellular service operators include cellular phone companies like Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), Airtel, Reliance and Aircel.

Social Life

The fabric of social life in the Mizo society has undergone tremendous change over the last few years. Before the British arrived in these hills, for all practical purposes, the village and the clan formed units of Mizo society. The Mizo code of ethics or dharma focused on “*Tlawmngaihna*”, an untranslatable term meaning that it was the obligation of all members of society to 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. The old belief, *Pathian*, is still used to mean God. Many Mizos have embraced their new-found faith of Christianity. Their sense of values have also undergone a drastic change and are largely being guided (directly and indirectly) by the Christian church organisations.

Mizos are a close-knit society with no class distinction and no sexual discrimination. 90% of them are cultivators and the village functions as a large family. Birth, marriage, and death in the village are important occasions in which the whole village is involved.

About Mizoram

There are several historic sources of information about Mizoram that quench the curiosity of the scholars and travellers. The hilly state encompasses an area of 21,

087 sq. km and stretches between the latitudinal parallels of 21°58' North and 24°35' North and the longitudinal meridians of 92°15' East and 93°29' East.

Mizoram, one of the members of the seven sisters that coalesce to form northeast India, is bordered by the states of Assam, Tripura and Manipur. The state also shares an international boundary with Myanmar and Bangladesh. Mizoram's topography is marked by rugged hills laced by hilly streams and sylvan lakes. The mystic Blue Mountains locally known as the Phawngpui stands tall at an elevation of 2,210 meter marks the highest point in the state.

In order to visit the state, tourists usually fly down to the Aizwal airport. Several leading airlines like Indian Airlines, Alliance Air and Air Deccan have scheduled regular flights to and from the city. Tourists and visitors can also avail trains up to Silchar and drive down to Mizoram from there. The National Highway No. 54 passes through the state. A well developed network of roads connects the state with the cities of Silchar, Guwahati and Shillong. The Mizoram State Transport Corporation provides buses that ply passengers to and fro. Tourists can also avail local taxis to take them across the state.

Mizoram is populated by a montage of tribes, each of who have their own unique lifestyle and dialect that fascinate the sophisticated city slicker.

Facts on Mizoram

Facts on Mizoram enlightens scholars, researchers and travellers whose itchy feet take them across far off lands. The northeast Indian state encompasses an area of 21,087 sq. km and stretches between the latitudinal parallels of 21° 58' North Latitude and 24°35' North Latitude on one hand and the longitudinal meridian of 92°15' East and 93°29' East on the other. The state is encircled by the states of Assam, Tripura and Manipur and also shares an international boundary with Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Aizwal, the capital city of Mizoram, happens to be the focal point of the city's industries. The state's only airport is also sited in the city. According to the statistics cited in the 2001 census report, Mizoram records a population of 8,91,058 with a ratio of 938 women per 1000 men.

The hilly state is inhabited by a number of tribal communities whose unique lifestyle mesmerizes the urban tourists. The state emblems comprise of the state animal Serow, locally known as the Saza. The Serow bears a close semblance to the antelope and is a member of the genus *Naemorhaedus*. The Hume's Bar Tailed Pheasant or the Vavu is an endangered species of birds whose multi hued plumes present a dazzling sight and is credited to be the state bird. The Dancing Girl or the

Aiting is the state flower while the Mesual Ferrea or the Nahar tree, locally known as Herhse is accorded the status of state tree of Mizoram.

Capital of Mizoram

Aizwal city is the capital of Mizoram. It is the largest city in the state of Mizoram and is perched at an elevation of 3, 715 feet above sea level. Aizwal lies just north of the Tropic of Cancer.

Aizwal is the nucleus of the state and all industrial enterprises, administrative and judiciary offices and major banks are housed in the city. The facts on Mizoram reveal that the capital city records a population count of 2, 10, 818 with a highly commendable 81.29% literacy rate. The city's economic progress is evinced by its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is recorded to be 8.3%. The city also marks a net 5.4% rise in inflation rate.

The leading industrial enterprises of Aizwal include sugar and textile mills, food processing units, chemical and cement plants as well as outlets of electronic goods, apparels, plywood products and a number of refineries. The city also exports jewellery pieces, precious and semi precious stones, leather accessories, chemicals as well as engineering goods to foreign countries.

The rugged landscape of Aizwal is complemented by a fine salubrious weather. The city is inhabited by the Mizo tribes who are segregated into several smaller tribal communities like Lushais, Kukis and Pawis. The local people have their indigenous culture and unique lifestyle. They speak a variety of dialects and languages. However Mizo and English are spoken by majority of the populace.

Aizwal is also a tourist haven that abounds in scenic locales. Apart from shopping and browsing through the numerous handicraft emporiums that showcase a wonderful array of souvenirs and handicrafts, tourists must also visit the following must see attractions that the city has to offer:

- Berawtlang Tourist Complex
- Durtlang Hills
- Mizoram State Museum
- Mini Zoo

Mizoram State Symbols

The Mizoram State Symbols vividly illustrate the diverse natural heritage of the northeast Indian state. The state animal, state bird, the state flower and the state tree collectively form the state symbols. The state symbols of Mizoram are a manifestation of the state's pride and depict the best of the state's natural offerings.

State Animal

The Serow, locally known as the Saza, is the state animal of the hilly state of Mizoram. The serow inhabits the rocky and rugged terrains of the state and is a member of the *Nemorhaedus* genus. The bearded and horned serow bears a close semblance to the antelope. Fossils testify that the animal existed even during the Pliocene era, nearly seven million years back.

State Bird

The bird resides in the wilderness in the open forests of Mizoram. The interesting feature of the Hume's Bar Tailed Pheasant, scientifically known as the *Syrmaticus Humiae*, is the striking appearance of the multi hued plumes. The bird belongs to the rare and endangered species of birds and attempts are being made to prevent them from extinction.

State Plant

The state plant or the state tree of Mizoram is the Nahar tree. The dancing girl, locally known as the Aiting is the state flower of Mizoram.

Mesual Ferrea or Nahar, colloquially called the Herhse, is the state tree. The Nahar tree interestingly also happens to be the state tree of the island nation of Sri Lanka. The plant is a member of the Clusiaceae family and is famed for its hard timber that has manifold use.

Mizoram by Air

A trip to the hilly terrains of Mizoram by air is the best and most convenient way of travelling to this northeastern state. In order to reach Mizoram by air, tourists have to fly down to the state's capital city Aizwal, which houses the only airport in the state.

The Lengpui airport is sited at a distance of 40 km from the capital city and is responsible for the air traffic of the entire state. There are air routes that connect Aizwal with the urban metropolis of Kolkata. The journey from Aizwal to Kolkata takes approximately 1 hour. The airport is also connected with Imphal and Guwahati and can be reached after a half an hour air sojourn. The major flights that operate from the airport at Aizwal belong to Indian Airlines and their offshoot Alliance Air as well as Air Deccan.

In order to aid the budget travellers, several airline operators that provide cheap flights like Alliance Air and Air Deccan are operating in the state. Alliance Air has scheduled regular flights from Kolkata to Aizwal. The airlines also provide another flight that hops from Kolkata to Imphal and finally to Aizwal takes off on Mondays,

Wednesdays and Fridays. Another Alliance Air flight flies from Kolkata to Aizwal via Guwahati, four times a week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays as well as Sundays.

Aizwal Airport

The Aizwal Airport or the Lengui Airport is situated at a distance of 40 km from Aizwal, the capital of the northeast Indian state of Mizoram. The rugged and rocky hilly terrains of Mizoram are less conducive to road or rail travel. Thus travelling to Mizoram by air is the most convenient way of reaching the mountainous state.

The Lengpui Airport, identified by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) code AJL as well as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) code VEAZ is perched at an elevation of 1100 feet above sea level. It encompasses the geographical coordinates of 23°44'46" North latitude and 92°48'11" East longitude. The airport is an undertaking of the Mizoram State Government and incurred a total expenditure of more than Rs 100 crores.

The construction of the airport at Aizwal commenced in the year 1996 and culminated in March 2002. The foot stall or the plinth area of the airport covered an expanse of 9788 sq. meter to facilitate incoming and outgoing traffic that exceeds the margin of 300. The airport is also endowed by a brand new 2500 meter long runway.

The existence of Aizwal airport has made things simpler for the citizens of Mizoram. Earlier people visiting the state would have to travel a distance of 130 km to the nearest airport at Bairabi. Several leading airlines operators like the Indian Airlines and their offshoot Alliance Air as well as Air Deccan are operating from the city. Air Deccan and Alliance Air are some of the inexpensive flight operators. These airlines aid the budget traveller.

Mizoram by Road

The rugged terrains of the craggy and mountainous northeast make it difficult to reach Mizoram by road. The National Highway No. 54 passes through the state of Mizoram and connects the capital city, Aizwal with the city of Silchar in Assam. This facilitates the state's connectivity with the rest of the nation. Aizwal is also directly connected with the cities of Guwahati and Shillong that are located at a distance of 506 km and 450 km respectively from the capital city. This ensures that Mizoram is linked with its northeastern counterparts as well as all parts of the Indian subcontinent.

The Mizoram State Transport Corporation provides buses that ply passengers to and from different parts of the state. A fleet of 70 buses accounts for the state's public

transport facility and carries bus loads of passengers to the cities of Aizwal, Lunglei, Silchar and Saiha. Some of the buses are long distance and undertake overnight journey to the cities Shillong or Silchar or Guwahati.

Taxis in Mizoram are another means of transportation in the hilly terrains. Although the taxi fares are more than that charged by the buses, they provide a comfortable medium of transport. Luxury taxis are few in number owing to the high fares.

Mizoram State Transport Corporation

Mizoram State Transport Corporation, also known as MST, facilitates public transportation in Mizoram. It is the body which regulates the flow and registration of vehicles in this state. Mizoram state transport operates multifarious transport services on a routine basis mainly from Aizwal, Lunglei, Silchar and Saiha. It has a fleet of about 70 buses, and is known for providing public transportation in Mizoram at a reasonable fare.

Mizoram State Transport Corporation, manages deluxe buses, medium buses, mini buses and also provides rentals of recovery vans. Mizoram state transport overnight bus services from Aizwal to Shilong, Guwahati, Saiha and Lunglei are very popular. Mizoram state transport also offers fare concessions to senior citizens, people with various physical disabilities and also to people with terminal diseases like cancer. Advanced ticket booking is also provided by the Mizoram state transport corporation.

With the arrival of private operators in the transportation business, the competition has increased and thus, the customer is benefited. Due to the regulatory discretionary powers of the state transport corporation, the rates of the fares remain stable and do not fluctuate a lot. The Mizoram State Corporation has gone a long way in providing quality transportation for the people at reasonable fares.

Taxis in Mizoram

Taxis in Mizoram are a very reliable mode of transport in the northeast Indian state. They form a substantial percentage of the transportation facility in the city. In comparison to the buses of the Mizoram State Transport Corporation, they charge a higher fare but they are the fastest mode of public transportation around.

Most of the taxis are affiliated to one union or the other. The unions regulate the fare with respect to the centralized directives all the way from New Delhi. The taxis are mostly well maintained and manned by the local Mizos. Occasionally, the members of the Garo, Khasi or Jaintia tribes migrate to the cities, looking for jobs. They end up as taxi drivers because of their knowledge of the local areas.

Luxury taxis are very few between, the reasons being that their maintenance charges are quite high and their occupancy rates are low due to their high fares. Sometimes, taxis double up as day hires for taking families out on a joy trip or for business executives.

Languages

The languages of Mizoram reflect the cultural diversity of the northeast Indian state. Tribal communities belonging to the Mizo race are predominant in the state. The tribal people however, give education its due importance and thus the state literacy rate is soaring at a phenomenal 88.29%. The people of Mizoram speak a number of languages of which Mizo and English hold a special place.

The Mizo community is an amalgam of several indigenous tribes who had their own unique lifestyle and distinctive dialects. The Duhlian dialect, also known as the Lusei among the locals was the most popular language of Mizoram. Over the years, this local mode of speech and communication has evolved into the northeast Indian state's lingua franca. However, traditional Lusei language was interspersed with traces of other dialects like the Mara, Fanai and Changte and their collective medley led to the formation of the Mizo language. Subsequently, the untiring efforts of the Christian missionaries led to the development of the Mizo script. This was a significant milestone that marked the development of a colloquial speech into a formal script. The writing pattern was a combination of the Roman script and Hunterian transliteration methodology with prominent traces of a phonetics based spelling system. The development of the Mizo writing script has prompted the state to demand the official recognition of the language in the 8th constitution.

Another language that has gained wide acceptability in Mizoram is English, the universal language. English has paramount importance in the sphere of the state's education, all administrative units and government matters as well as all other formal ceremonies.

Mizo

Mizo is the predominant language spoken by the inhabitants of Mizoram. The mountainous state of Mizoram or the erstwhile Lushai Hills District is the home of several tribal communities who are collectively known as the Mizos.

The etymological connotation of the term Mizo implies highlander. In the local dialect 'Mi' is synonymous with people and 'Zo' means the inhabitant of an upland terrain. The Mizo language happens to be the lingua franca of the state. The language is an offshoot of the Kuki-Chin script that hails from the Tibeto-Burmese language. The several smaller tribal communities that include the Lushais, Kukis, Himars,

Paithes, Pang, Raltes and Pawis agglomerate to form the Mizo tribe. Each of these tribes spoke a different dialect that was unique to its culture. The Duhlian dialect, also known as the Lusei among the locals, was the most popular language of Mizoram. Over the years, this local mode of speech and communication has evolved into the northeast Indian state's lingua franca.

It was the persistent initiatives of the Christian missionaries that led to the development of the colloquial dialect into a formal written script. The writing pattern was a medley of the Roman alphabet and Hunterian transliteration, interspersed with traces of a phonetics based spelling system.

The Mizo language, an amalgam of several local dialects like the Mara, Fannai and the Chhange reflect the gradual cultural enrichment intellectual appetite of the residents of Mizoram. In fact, Mizoram University has an exclusive department that caters to the study and research of this beautiful subject.

English

English, the universal language, spoken in almost all countries also happens to be one of the most popular languages in the northeastern state of Mizoram. The widespread proliferation of education throughout the state not only elevated the literacy rate to a phenomenal 88.29% but also made a part and parcel of the people's everyday affairs. In Mizoram English is the official medium of communication in any formal occasion or ceremony. English language has also spread its wings to penetrate into the state's academic circuit as well as the administration.

It is interesting to note that the current Mizo language was developed by the 19th century Christian missionaries, who used the English script as a platform to develop the Mizo alphabet. The writing pattern of the Mizo script was a medley of the Roman alphabet and the Hunterian transliteration, interspersed with traces of a phonetics based spelling system. It was the inclusion of the Roman script that augmented the local inhabitant's knowledge and proficiency of English. In fact, even the small children attending primary school in Mizoram are fairly adept in speaking the language.

The simplicity and the flexibility of English have led to the acceptability and ever growing popularity of the language even in the remote reaches of the hilly terrains of Mizoram. Thus today the language is flourishing as one of the predominant languages of Mizoram.

Government & Politics of Mizoram

For the politically inclined people, a brief study on the Government & Politics of Mizoram will be of much interest. Like every other Indian state, Mizoram Government

is also headed by the Chief Minister. He leads council of ministers who are responsible to an elected legislature. The Governor of Mizoram is the head of the state.

The legislative assembly of Mizoram has 40 members. They are elected by the people of the state every five years. The High Court in Mizoram is situated at Guwahati. Aizawl, the capital of the state, has a bench of the Mizoram High Court.

In the present government of Mizoram, Shri Lt. Gen. MM Lakhera is the Honourable Governor. The honourable Chief Minister of the northeastern state of Mizoram is Shri Zoramthanga.

The political history of Mizoram dates back to the mid 1950s. It was around this time when the people of Mizoram demanded the status of a state. For over three decades, the revolution continued and at last an agreement was signed between the Union Government and the Mizo National Front in the year 1986. On 20th February in the year 1987, Mizoram finally attained the status of a state.

Constituencies of Mizoram

Elected candidates from different Constituencies of Mizoram form the legislative assembly of the state. There are two major parties in this northeastern state that contest in these following Mizoram constituencies. Most of the assembly constituencies are reserved for the scheduled caste and tribes.

The constituencies in Mizoram are Chawngte, Tlabung, Tuipang, Saiha, Sangau, Lawngtlai, Buar-pui, Lunglei South, Lunglei North, Khawbung, Champhai, Khawha, Saituai, Tawipui, Vanva, Hnahthia, North Vanlaiphai, Khawzawl, Ngopa, Suangpuilawn, Ratu, Kawnpui, Kolasib, Bilk-hawthlir, Mamit, Phuldungsei, Sateek, Lokichera, Kawrthah, Serchhip, Serchhip, Lungpho, Tlung-vel, Aizawl North-I, Aizawl North II, Aizawl West I, Aizawl West-II, Aizawl West I, Aizawl West-II, Aizawl South-I, Aizawl South - II, Aizawl East-I, Aizawl East-II.

There is one Lok Sabha Constituency in the state of Mizoram that is reserved for the Schedule Tribes along with one Rajya Sabha seat.

Governor of Mizoram

M.M. Lakhera is the honourable Governor of Mizoram. He was born at Jakhand Village in the princely state of Tehri Garhwal on 21st October in the year 1937. His father is late Shri Jaya Nand Lakhera who was a pathfinder in the field of education in Tehri Garhwal. Late Smt. Kalawati was his mother, who was a house wife. He had done his initial schooling from a Primary School at Jakhand. He then joined the Rastriya Indian Military College in Dehra Dun. After completing school, M.M. Lakhera, received training at the National Defence Academy at Khadakvasla in Pune.

M.M. Lakhera joined the Army and the story after that is full of vigour and glory. He took part in Goa operation in the year 1961 and in the India-Pakistan war in 1965 and 1971 in the Jammu and Kashmir Sector. He commanded the 4th Battalion of the Kumaon Regiment in Jammu & Kashmir. The present Governor of Mizoram, His Excellency M.M. Lakhera has also served as a Deputy Commander of a Brigade in Manipur between 1981 and 82.

For his contribution towards the country, M.M. Lakhera, was awarded the Vishisht Seva Medal by the President of India on 26th of January in the year 1990. Several more awards followed during his course of service and even after retirement, he has been awarded with a number of awards like:

- Param Vishisht Seva Medal
- Ati Vishisht Seva Medal
- Vishisht Seva Medal

Post retirement, M.M. Lakhera got actively involved into social activities. He was the Governor and Administrator of Pondicherry before he took over as the Governor of Mizoram from 25th July in the year.

Legislature of Mizoram

The Legislature of Mizoram is a very important part of the state government of Mizoram. The Legislative Assembly is the seat of Mizoram's Legislature. Different elected candidates from the various constituencies of the state of Mizoram constitute Mizoram's Legislature.

Mizoram gained the status of a state on 20th February in the year 1987 and the first State Assembly was founded in month of March the same year. The initial strength of the assembly was 40 members. The Mizoram Legislative Assembly is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association from the year 1987.

The present Speaker of the northeastern state of Mizoram is honourable Lalchamliana. He presides over the Legislative Assembly of the state. Other than the honourable speaker, there are the members of Legislative Assembly who attend the assembly. Some of the names of the members of the Mizoram Legislative assembly are as follows:

- Zodintluanga Buarpui
- Lalhmingthanga Lunglei
- Dr R.Lalthangliana Lungel
- P.P.Thawla Tuipang
- S.Hiato Saiha

- H.Rammawi Sangau
- H.Vanlalthaliana Lawngtlai
- Alak Bikash Chakma Chawngte
- N.K.Chakma Tlabung
- K.Vanlalauva Khawbung
- Zoramthanga Champhai
- Lalrinliana Sailo Khawhai
- R.Lalzirliana Saitual
- Andrew Lalherliana Khawzawl
- Z.H.Ropuia Tawipui
- C.Lalrinsanga Vanva
- Sailothanga Sailo Kawnpui
- K.Lalrinliana Kolasib
- Lalchamliaana Bilkhawthlir
- Tawnluia Zawlnuam
- F.Lal Thanzuala Hnahthial
- D.Thangliana N.Vanlaiphai
- H.Rohluna Ngopa
- H.Lalsangzuala Suangpuilawn

Chief Minister of Mizoram

Pu Zoramthanga is the present Chief Minister of Mizoram. He was born to Pi Vanhnuaichhingi and Pu Darphunga. Among three sisters and five brothers, he is the second youngest. Pu Zoram-thanga joined primary school in 1950. He was brilliant as a student and stood first in his class. In the year 1954, he joined the middle school at South Khawbung. He completed his high school from Samthang village at Champhai. He was appointed as the headmaster of a school at a very young age.

During the Mizoram disturbance in 1966, Pu Zoramthanga joined the underground movement. He then became the Secretary of Run Bung Area for three years. In the year 1969, the cadres of the Mizo Nationalist Front went down to the erstwhile East Pakistan, Pu Laldenga, where he was appointed as the secretary of the party.

In this post, he attended many important meetings and also faced several challenges. He was the initiator in a good number of peace talks and treaties. Pu Zoramthanga was made a minister in the interim government of Mizoram. After gaining the status of a state, the Mizo National Front formed the government in the year 1987.

Zoramthanga was in charge of both the Education and Finance departments. After the death of Pu Laldenga, he became the President of the MNF. Since then, he has continued to be the President of the MNF till date. During the assembly elections in the year 1998, he led his party and became the Chief Minister of Mizoram.

Speaker of Mizoram

Mr. Lalchamliaiana is the honourable Speaker of Mizoram. Born on the 17th of August in the year of 1949 in the Electric Veng area of Aizawl, Mr. Lalchamalians is known as a strict disciplinarian. An active member of the Mizo National Front (MNF), the respectable speaker did his post graduation in Political Science in the year of 1981.

As a student, Mr. Lalchamliaiana showed keen interest in the social, economic and cultural developments of the country. He was elected to the post of the leader in the Students' Union during his college and University days. Mr. Lalchamliaiana joined active politics in the underground movement organized by the Mizo National Front from the year 1966 to 1974. As a prominent member of the movement, Mr. Lalchamliaiana was unanimously chosen for the post of Lieutenant.

Mr. Lalchamliaiana had served in various capacities as the Minister of State for Environment and Forest (Ind), Health, Taxation (Ind) and Finance. He represented the Assembly Constituency of Bilkhawthlir in 1998 and was selected as the Member of Legislative Assembly from the Mizo National Front party. In 2003, Mr. Lalchamliaiana was again re-elected to the same post from the same constituency. All his achievements were crowned when, Mr. Lalchamliaiana was unanimously declared as the Speaker of Mizoram.

Apart from politics, Mr. Lalchamliaiana displays keen interest in outdoor sports and indoor games. An ardent reader, Mr. Lalchamliaiana is known for his honesty and integrity. A social worker in his personal life, the speaker is blessed with a happy family life with four children.

Members of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram

The Members of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram are unanimously chosen by the citizens of the state on the basis of adult franchise. Headed by Pu Zoramthanga, the honourable Chief Minister of Mizoram, the Legislative Assembly of the state comprises of forty members.

The Members of Legislative Assembly are elected after every five years by the people of the state. Conducted under strict supervision of the Chief Election Commission and other important government officials, Mizoram holds free and fair elections for formation of a stable government.

Selected from their constituency, the Members of Assembly discuss and implements the policies formulated by the state government. Some of the prominent Members of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram are:

- Pu R Lalthangliana- Minister of School Education, Environment and Forest, I & PR
- Pu Twanluia- Minister of Home, Personal and Administration Reform, PHE
- Pu Aichhinga- Minister of Trade and Commerce, Rural Development, Soil and Water Conservation
- Pu H Rammawi- Minister of Law and Judicial, Agriculture, Horticulture, Parliamentary Affairs
- Pu R. Tlanghmingthanga- Minister of Social Welfare, Health and Family Welfare, SAD
- Pu ZH Ropuia- Minister of State Sports and Youth Services, Tourism, Labor and Employment
- Dr Lalzama- Minister of State Higher and Technical Education Excise, Art and Culture

Elected for a period of five years, the Members of Legislative Assembly are commonly referred to as MLA. The MLA's serve the general citizens of their constituency with utmost sincerity and dedication. Under the able guidance of the Members of Legislative Assembly, the state of Mizoram achieve greater social, economic and political stability.

Legislative Assembly of Mizoram

The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram was established in the year of 1972 on the 10th of May when it attained the status of Union Territory. After the formation of a separate state of Mizoram on the 20th of February in the year of 1987, the State Legislative Assembly began to operate with 40 members who were elected on the basis of adult franchise.

An active participant of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association from 1987 onwards, the members of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly take part in the several meetings and conferences of the organization. The Legislative Assembly of the state comprises of 20 standing committees that look after the administration of Mizoram.

Headed by the Chief Minister, the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram takes many important decisions regarding the social, political and economic condition of the state. To adopt new policies and implement them, the Legislative Assembly had organized a training session of the Members of the state Assembly in collaboration with BPST.

The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram has a huge library which is a vast store house of books, journals and magazines. For convenience of the readers, the library of the State Assembly has been recently computerized. The Legislative Assembly launched its official website for easy accessibility of official information regarding any Minister or Committee.

Mizoram State Legislative Assembly is known for its discipline and transparency of the work culture. The important meetings of the Assembly is presided over by the honourable Speaker, Mr. Lalchamliana of the house. The Legislative Assembly of Mizoram has played an important role in the progress of the state.

Executive of Mizoram

The executive of Mizoram comprises of the post of Governor, Chief Minister, Council of Minister, Speaker and other important functionaries who ensure efficient administration of the state.

Headed by Lt Gen (R) M. M. Lakhera, the Governor of Mizoram, the state has steadfastly moved towards progress in all spheres of public life. The functional head of the Government of Mizoram, the Governor plays an important role in the development of the state.

The state of Mizoram is led by the Chief Minister, Mr. Pu Zoramthanga. The Chief Minister was unanimously elected by the Members of Legislative Assembly of Mizoram. Mr. Pu Zoramthanga looks after all the administrative affairs of the state and ensures progress in social, economic and cultural field.

The Chief Minister in consultation with his Council of Ministers takes important decisions regarding any social, political or economic issues of Mizoram. The Council of Ministers are allotted different portfolios for better administration of the state. Some of the important Council Ministers of Mizoram are:

- Pu Twanluia- Minister of Home, Personal and Administration Reform, PHE
- Pu R Tlanghmingthanga- Minister of Social Welfare, Health and Family Welfare, SAD
- Pu Aichhinga- Minister of Trade and Commerce, Rural Development, Soil and Water Conservation
- Pu H Rammawi- Minister of Law and Judicial, Agriculture, Horticulture, Parliamentary Affairs

All the important meetings of the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram are presided over by the Speaker, Mr. Lalchamliana. Mr. Lalchamliana is known for his strict discipline and honesty. The executive of Mizoram is responsible for the development and better administration of the state.

Political Parties of Mizoram

There are two major political parties of Mizoram that dominate the political scenario of the state. They are the Mizo National Front and the Ephraim Union.

Mizo National Front, which is known as MNF in short, is a regional political party. MNF has come out of the Mizo Famine Front formed by Pu Laldenga. It was formed to protest against the inactivity of the Indian Government towards the famine-affected Mizo areas of Assam in the year 1959. In the same year the Mizo Hills was also destroyed by a devastating famine. The Mizo National Famine Front, originally formed to help the people suffering during the Mautam Famine, was afterwards converted into Mizo National Front on 22nd October in the year 1961. Pu Zoramthanga became the leader of MNF after the death of Laldenga. In the elections of 1998 and 2003, MNF won the state assembly elections, with Pu Zoramthanga as the Chief Minister.

The other main political party in the state of Mizoram is Ephraim Union. It is also a regional political party. It is known as EU and it belongs to the part of Mizoram that considers the Mizos to be the descendants of the tribes of Israel.

Judiciary of Mizoram

The judiciary of Mizoram helps in the swift disposal of criminal and civil cases. The judicial system of Mizoram is supported by Subordinate Courts of Aizwal Bench. Under the strict supervision of the High Court of Guwahati, the Aizwal Bench carries out the judicial duties with absolute transparency.

Comprising of efficient lawyers, the subordinate courts of Mizoram provide the common masses with justice. The subordinate courts of Mizoram deal with all the cases pertaining to civil or criminal jurisdiction. The lawyers of the lower courts of Mizoram are appointed on the basis of the Mizoram Judicial Service Rules of 2006.

The concerned parties are free to apply in the High Court of Guwahati in case they are not satisfied with the decision of the subordinate court of Mizoram. On the basis of the data collected by the state government there were 1375 civil cases pending in the Subordinate Court of Mizoram on 31st December, 2006. In the field of criminal jurisdiction, there were 3088 pending cases on 31st December, 2006.

The honourable Chief Justice of the High Court of Guwahati has ordered the subordinate courts of Mizoram for a speedy delivery of justice in both the civil as well as the criminal cases. The highly qualified lawyers and judges of the Subordinate Court of Mizoram ensure absolute transparency while dealing with any case.

The separation of Judiciary from Executive in Mizoram has helped in the legal procedure of the state.

Government Departments in Mizoram

The government departments in Mizoram look after the administration of the state. The departments offer a systematic administration of the various social, economic and cultural aspects of the state of Mizoram.

The government of Mizoram has several departments that are headed by efficient administrative officers who take care of the proper implementation of the various decisions of the state government. Some of the important departments of Mizoram are:

Finance Department: The Finance Department of Mizoram takes care of the expenditure and revenue of the state. The department plays an important role in managing the finance of the state.

Planning and Programme Implementation Department: The Planning and Programme Implementation Department ensures proper and timely implementation of the various strategies undertaken by the state government in the Five Years Plan.

- ***Home Department:*** One of the prominent departments of the state Government, the Home Department looks after the law and order of Mizoram.
- ***General Administration Department:*** The General Administration Department ensures proper administration of the districts, takes important decisions regarding administration and writes the speech of the Governor during times of budget presentation
- ***Agriculture Department:*** The Agriculture Department implements several measures to enhance the productivity of the agricultural crops of Mizoram.

The state government of Mizoram has equally distributed all the responsibilities among the various departments to ensure good governance. The administrative officials look after the needs and necessities of the common masses and implements the decisions of the state government. The division of responsibilities has helped Mizoram to progress towards further development.

Districts of Mizoram

The districts of Mizoram reflect the unique traditional heritage and cultural ancestry of the region that has percolated to the modern era from the ancient times. Easily accessible by roads, the eight districts of Mizoram are well connected by good roads, railways and air.

Most of the local indigenous inhabitants of the districts of Mizoram are engaged in the traditional occupation of agriculture. The farmers of the state of Mizoram practice jhum cultivation or shifting agriculture to grow crops and cereals. The Champai district of Mizoram is often referred to as the Rice Bowl of the state. Champai

district is famous for its orchards which grows variety of fruits. The native population of Mizoram speaks Mizo language. However, in the recent years the local inhabitants have started conversing fluently in English and Hindi language as well.

Blessed with natural scenic beauty, the districts of Mizoram are endowed with immense tourism prospects. The tourists are enchanted and enthralled with the bewitching natural splendour of the districts.

The districts of Mizoram offer the visitors with a wonderful opportunity to explore and experience the rich flora and fauna of the region coupled with the vibrant and dynamic socio-cultural lifestyle of the tribes of the place.

The state government of Mizoram takes special measures to develop the backward regions of the districts. Headed by experienced ministers and administrative officials, the districts of Mizoram have helped to raise the standard of living. Below is the list of Districts of Mizoram:

- Mamit
- Kolasib
- Aizwal
- Champhai
- Serchhip
- Lunglei
- Lawngtlai
- Saiha

Mamit

Spread over 3026 sq. km, Mamit is one of the prominent districts of Mizoram. Situated at a distance of 112 km from the capital of Mizoram, the district of Mamit is well connected by good roads to the other parts of the state.

The city of Mamit is the administrative headquarter of the district. Comprising of three major sub divisions, Mamit district is divided into Kawrthat SDO (S), Mamit SDO (S), and W. Phaileng SDO (S) for administrative convenience. The important towns of the district of Mamit are W. Phaileng, Kawrthat and Mamit.

The district of Mamit encompasses a total population of 62, 313 persons as per the census data of the year of 2001. The native indigenous inhabitants of Mizoram converse in the Mizo language. However in the recent years, due to the penetration of modern values and culture, most of the indigenous local inhabitants also converse in English and Hindi.

Most of the native population of Mamit district depends on agriculture for earning their livelihood. The farmers of the district of Mamit depend on the traditional practice of shifting cultivation, which is commonly referred to as jhum, to produce agricultural crops and cereals.

Endowed with natural scenic beauty, the district of Mamit of Mizoram has immense potentialities for development of the tourism industry. Far from the maddening crowd and hustle bustle of the cities, the calm and serene surrounding of Mamit relieves the visitors from the stress and strains of daily mundane life.

Kolasib

One of the prominent districts of Mizoram, Kolasib encompasses a total area of 1383 sq. km. The district of Kolasib of Mizoram has a total population of 60, 977 according to the census data of the year of 2001. Located at a short distance of just 83 km from the capital of Mizoram, Kolasib is easily reachable by well maintained roads, railway tracks and air.

Kolasib district is divided into three major sub divisions of Vairengte SDO (S), Kawnpui SDO (S) and Kolasib SDO (S) for convenience of district administration. The two important towns of Kolasib are Vairengte and Kolasib, which is also the administrative headquarter of the district.

Blessed with the bounty of nature and salubrious weather, Kolasib draws several tourists who are enthralled and enchanted by the bewitching sight of the place. The ideal time to visit the beautiful place of Kolasib is from November to March. Some of the notable tourist destinations of Kolasib are:

- Regional Research Station
- Tlawng River
- Bairabi Hydrel Project

Most of the local inhabitants of Kolasib are engaged in agriculture. The native population speaks in Mizo language. English and Hindi languages are also spoken by the local inhabitants of the district of Kolasib.

Kolasib is well connected by road. The interested tourists can avail the train service till Silchar which is very close to Kolasib. The Lengpui airport, which is situated in the capital of Mizoram, lies close to Kolasib and connects the district with the rest of India by air.

Aizwal

Encompassing a total population of 3, 39, 812, Aizwal is the most important administrative districts of Mizoram. Aizwal city is the administrative headquarter

of the district of Aizwal. The capital of Mizoram, Aizwal city has all the important administrative offices, Government departments and the Legislative Assembly of the state.

Spread over a total area of 3576 sq. km, Aizwal is administratively divided into three major subdivisions of Sakawrdai SDO (S), Saitual SDO (S), and Aizwal SDO(S). The important towns of the district of Aizwal are Aibook, Saitual, Darlawn, Aizwal, Phullen and Tlangnuam.

The district of Aizwal has 59.49 % of the forest area. Aizwal boasts of a vast resource of minerals of limestone, coal and crude oil which has helped to strengthen the economic base of the state of Mizoram. Most of the native indigenous population of Aizwal is engaged in agriculture. The main agricultural productions of Aizwal are cash crops of rubber, tea and coffee. The native population speaks Mizo, English and Hindi with much ease and confidence.

Endowed with natural scenic beauty, Aizwal draws numerous tourists who are enchanted by the captivating sight of the place. The tourists can experience the colorful and dynamic lifestyle of the several aboriginal tribe of Aizwal. Some of the important places of tourist interest of the district of Aizwal are:

- Dampa
- Bung
- Aizwal
- Tamadil
- Beraw
- Murlen

The district of Aizwal is easily accessible by road and air. The well maintained roads of the district connect it with the rest of the state of Mizoram.

Champhai

Champhai district of Mizoram covers a total area of 3186 sq. km. Located at a distance of 194 km from Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram, Champhai can be easily accessed by well maintained roads. The district of Champhai holds a total population of 1, 01, 389, according to the census of 2001.

The district of Champhai has a forest area of 59.49%. Most of the indigenous native inhabitants of Champhai district depend on agriculture to earn their livelihood. Champhai has many orchards that produce different kinds of fruits. Popularly referred to as the Rice Bowl of the state of Mizoram, Champhai earns its revenues from the agricultural products.

The local inhabitants of the district converse in the Mizo language. However, due to penetration of modern values of education, many local people speak English and Hindi also.

Blessed with the natural splendour, Champai attracts several tourists from far and wide who are enthralled with the captivating sight of the place. Surrounded by luxuriant green forests, vast stretches of agricultural land and rich reserve of flora and fauna, Champai presents the tourists with a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the bliss of Mother Nature. The famous Murlen National Park is one of the prominent places of tourist interest of the district of Champai.

One of the notable districts of Mizoram, Champai is administratively divided into three main sub divisions of Khawzawl SDO (S), Ngopa SDO (S), and Champai SDO (S). Champai is the most important town of the entire district. Champai district is very developed and provides the tourists with a scope to enjoy natural beauty coupled with the rich cultural traditions of the state.

Serchhip

Serchhip is one of the prominent districts of Mizoram. Spread over a total area of 3576 sq. km, Serchhip encompasses a population of 55, 539. The administrative headquarter of the district Serchhip is the town of Serchhip. The district of Serchhip is located at a short distance of 112 km from Aizwal, the capital of Mizoram.

The Serchhip district is further divided into three major sub divisions of N. Vanlaphai SDO (S), Serchhip SDO (S) and Thenzawl SDO (S) for the convenience of district administration. The well maintained and broad roads of Serchhip connect the district to other parts of the state of Mizoram and to the rest of India as well.

Serchhip is the only major town of the district. Agriculture forms the backbone of the economy of the state of Mizoram. Most of the local inhabitants of Mizoram are engaged in agriculture. The farmers of the district of Serchhip practice shifting cultivation, which is referred to as jhum in common parlance, and produce several agricultural crops.

The local indigenous inhabitants of Mizoram speak Mizo language. However, in the recent years, the native population has started speaking English and Hindi language. Endowed with natural scenic beauty and salubrious weather, Serchhip district of the state of Mizoram attracts numerous tourists who are enchanted and enthralled by the captivating sight of the place.

The vast stretch of agricultural land, the undulating topography and vast reserve of fauna and flora, makes the district of Serchhip one of the important destinations for tourists.

Lunglei

Lunglei is one of the prominent districts of Mizoram. Encompassing a total area of 4, 538 sq. km, the district of Lunglei has a population of 1, 37, 155. The district of Lunglei is situated at a distance of 235 km from Aizwal, the capital of Mizoram and is easily accessible by well maintained roads.

The district of Lunglei has been further divided into major sub divisions of Hnahthial SDO (S), Lunglei SDO (S) and Tlabung SDO (S) for the administrative convenience of the district officials. The important towns of the district of Lunglei in Mizoram are Tlabung, Lunglei and Hnahthial. Lunglei town is the administrative headquarter of the district.

Lunglei has 9.97% of the forest land within its total area. Most of the indigenous local inhabitants of the district of Lunglei depend on agriculture and earn their livelihood from growing crops. The cash crops of coffee and rubber help the district to earn its revenue. The farmers of the district mostly practice the traditional method of shifting cultivation, which is popularly referred to as jhum.

Blessed with unmatched natural scenic beauty, Lunglei draws several tourists from far and wide who are absolutely thrilled with the captivating sight of the place. Some of the notable tourist spots of the district of Lunglei are:

- Zobawk
- Kawmzawl

For those tourists who want to add a bit of adventure in their sojourn to Mizoram, Lunglei offers them with a plethora of picnic spots to explore their inherent sporting skills and sportsman spirit. Lunglei district offers the tourists to enjoy natural splendour coupled with the rich cultural traditions of the region.

Saiha

Located among the northernmost regions of the country, Saiha is one of the most significant districts of Mizoram. According to the 2001 census, the Saiha district has a population of 60, 000. The district has been divided into Sangau and Tuipang blocks. Sangau has a population of 15, 000 while the population figure of Tuipang is around 45, 000.

The largest ethnic group of the Saiha district is the Mara Tribe. The main clans among the Maras are the Hawthai, Tlosai, Zynho, Chapi and Vytu. The Saiha Town is the headquarter of the district. The Saiha district is governed by two autonomous councils - the Lai Autonomous District Council or LADC and the Mara Autonomous District Council or MADC. Both the councils hold immense administrative powers and have the right to pass their own rules and laws.

The main occupation in the district is agriculture. A considerable amount of revenue is also earned by industries and fisheries. The moderate climate of the district is very suitable for horticulture and floriculture.

The tribal people in the district of Saiha live in the mountain slopes. The villagers are expert jhum cultivators. They have their own culture and customs. The Saiha College is the most prestigious educational institute of the district.

Geography and History of Mizoram

To know about the northern state of Mizoram, a basic idea on the Geography and History of Mizoram is very essential. Mizoram history goes back to the 16th century when the Mizo Tribes crossed the Chinese border to settle in erstwhile Shan state. During the 18th and 19th century, the area witnessed numerous tribal wars and in 1898, the region came under the British rule.

Mizoram's first political party was the Mizo Common People's Union, which was formed in 1946. After the Indian independence of 1947, the Bordoloi Committee was set up to advice on the tribal affairs of the north east. In 1952, the Lushai Hills Autonomous District Council was formed. However a demand for a separate state was raised and in 1955, a new political outfit - the Eastern Indian Union was founded. After many years of protests, Mizoram was recognized as a full fledged state of the country in 1987.

Mizoram geography includes the climate of the area, the flora and fauna of the state, the lakes, rivers and the general topography of the region. The state is blessed with many natural resources. Adorned with lush green mountains and free flowing rivers, Mizoram takes a paradisaical look. The region receives heavy rainfall and enjoys a very pleasing climate throughout the year. The presence of some major rivers like Tlau, Tlawng, Tuirini, Serlui and Mat and some picturesque lakes is also a highpoint of Mizoram's geography.

Climate of Mizoram

The general climate of Mizoram is one of the most pleasing one in the country. With moderate temperatures throughout the year, the Mizoram climate is loved by the tourists and visitors.

The summers are not very hot as the temperature remains between 20° to 30° Centigrade. The winters are very pleasing and cool with temperatures ranging from 21° to 11° Centigrade. Mizoram witnesses heavy rainfall in all parts of the state during the rainy season. Monsoon starts from June and lasts till the month of August. An annual average rainfall of 3000 millimeters is recorded in the state. During the

months of March to April, heavy storms occur in most parts of the state. A report of a normal day during the summer will give a rough idea of the usual weather of Mizoram.

- Maximum Temperature - 26° Centigrade
- Minimum Temperature - 16° Centigrade

Topography of Mizoram

The topography of Mizoram is not very different from its other north eastern neighbours. Mizoram topography is conspicuous with the presence of hills and mountain ranges. The tall green hills are moated with free flowing rivers. The eastern side of the state is situated at a higher altitude than the western side of the state.

The average height of the Mizoram hills is approximately 900 meters. The tallest among the hills is the Phawngpui - Blue Mountain with a height of 2210 Meters. The picturesque valleys and flat lands of Cachar, Mat, Champhai, Chamdur and Tlabung are blessed with very fertile soil and natural resources suitable for excellent agricultural and horticultural productions.

The geographical location of Mizoram lies between East longitude 92°15' to 93°29' and North Latitude 21°58' to 24°35'. Covering a total area of 21, 087 square kilometres, the state is blessed with rich forest resources and beautiful lakes.

Mizoram Flora and Fauna

The lush green vegetations and forests infested with many type of animals signify the rich Mizoram Flora & Fauna. The excellent flora and fauna of Mizoram is a strong reason behind its popularity among the tourists.

The abundance of bamboo forests is one high point of Mizoram's flora. The hills of Mizoram have dense deciduous vegetations. The valleys and the mountain peaks are blessed with many known and unknown orchids. The ever admirable rhododendron is seen in abundance in these areas. The Blue Mountain is one such place where the Veitchiunum and Arboretum species of Rhododendron are found in plenty.

The presence of thick forests and good climate facilitated the fauna of Mizoram. The animal kingdom of Mizoram comprises of several rare and endangered species. Some of the animals found in the Mizoram forests, wild life sanctuaries and national parks are:

- Bear
- Tiger
- Hoolock Gibbon

- Leopard
- Porcupine
- Mongoose
- Claw-less Otter
- Chinese Pangolin

The forest areas and the lakes of Mizoram attract large number of migratory birds beside the local birds. Several species of Pheasants, Hawks, Eagles, Bulbuls, Herons and Egrets are sighted in Mizoram. Numerous species of butterflies, moths and many colorful insects are also found in these regions.

Lakes of Mizoram

The picturesque Lakes of Mizoram have emerged as popular tourism destinations of the state. Mizoram's lakes are the venues of a lot of activities like boating, fishing, camping and trekking. Some of the important lakes in Mizoram are:

- Palak Lake
- Tamdil Lake
- Rengdil Lake
- Rungdil Lake

The Tamdil Lake has an interesting legend attached with its creation. Situated in Aizwal district, the Tamdil Lake is 110 kilometres away from the capital city. One of the most beautiful lakes of the state of Mizoram, the Palak Lake lies in the Lakher region. The oval shaped lake is bordered with stretches of deciduous and tropical evergreen forests.

The lake is visited by numerous migratory birds making the place a haven for the bird watchers. The Rendil Lake is an artificial lake in Aizawl. It has emerged as one of the prime tourist attractions of the state. The Rungdil Lake covers an area of 2.5 hectares. The lake is divided into two parts and surrounded by long stretches of forests.

All these lakes are blessed with breath taking natural landscapes. The sheer beauty of the lakes has made them so popular with the tourists.

Tamdil

Tamdil is one of the few natural lakes of Mizoram. Located in the Aizwal district of the state, the Tamdil Lake lies at a distance of 110 kilometres from the capital city. The Saitual village is the closest locality, located at a distance of 7 kilometres from the lake.

As per legendary beliefs, the Tamdil Lake was created when a huge mustard plant was brought down. Water sprinkled out of the stems of the plant and created the lake giving the name of Tamdil, which means a lake of mustard plant.

The serene atmosphere of the Tamdil Lake of Mizoram goes in sync with the picturesque landscapes, blessed with imposing hills and green forests. Anglers have a gala time here and so do the campers. The tourists can enjoy boating in the waters of the Tamdil Lake. It has indeed emerged as one of the popular picnic and tourist spots in Mizoram.

Palak Lake

Palak Lake is one of the biggest natural lakes of Mizoram. The Palak Lake lies in the southern part of the state in the Lakher region. Located only 5 kilometres from the Pahu village, the Palak Lake of Mizoram falls in the Chhimituipui district.

The oval shaped lake has a width of 150 meters and a length of almost 200 meters. According to the local beliefs, the Palak Lake was created by a flood, which engulfed an entire village. Bordered by deciduous and tropical evergreen forests, the Palak Lake in Mizoram is one of the most beautiful lakes of the state. The Palak Lake is a paradise for bird watchers and fishing freaks. The serene ambiance, the crystal clear water and the presence of rich flora around the lake attract local and migratory birds. Various species of wild ducks and other aquatic birds are seen in abundance. No wonder it is one of the main tourism attractions of the state.

The unpolluted water of the lake is the home to many rare species of fish, crabs and other creatures of the aqua kingdom. The forest area near Palak is full of animals like bear, deer, tiger and boar, making it a must visit place for the wild life buffs and nature lovers.

Rungdil

Rungdil is one of the most significant natural lakes of Mizoram. Located at a distance of 14 kilometres from Saungpuilawn Village, Aizwal, the Rungdil Lake is one of the tourist attractions in Mizoram.

The Rungdil Lake has earned its name from the Rungdil birds. The lake was once the habitat of thousands of Rungdils - a species of partridges. The Rungdil Lake in Mizoram has a very interesting shape. The lake is actually divided into two parts by a single strip of land but with subterranean link.

The Rungdil Lake of Mizoram covers an area of 2.5 hectares and is surrounded by vast stretches of deciduous and tropical evergreen forests. The place is a must visit for the nature lovers. The area also serves as a lovely picnic spot. The adjoining forest

is infested with animals like bear, deer, tiger, wild boar etc. and can be a much admired destination for wildlife freaks. The crystal clear water of the lake is home to many known and unknown fish, making it an angler's paradise.

Rivers of Mizoram

The rivers of Mizoram constitute a major part of the topography of Mizoram. Aided by heavy rainfall during the rainy seasons and occasional rainfall throughout the year, most of the Mizoram rivers are perennial in nature.

Some of the rivers flowing through Mizoram are:

- Tlawng or Dhaleshwari
- Tiak
- Teirei
- Tuirini
- Serlui
- Chhimmtuipui or Kolodyne
- Khawthlangturipui or Karnaphuli
- Tuichang
- Tuirial or Sonai
- Tuichawng
- Mat
- Tuipui or Khawchhak
- Tuivawl

The northern part of the state comprises of some important rivers like the Tlawng or Dhaleshwari, Tuirial or Sonai and some other rivers. Rivers like Mat, Tyao, Tuichang, and Tuipui fall in the southern part of Mizoram.

The rivers of Mizoram are the main source of water for the people of the state. The perennial rivers of the state feed the lush green vegetation of Mizoram.

Culture of Mizoram

The culture of Mizoram reflects the quintessential lifestyle and traditional heritage of the inhabitants of the Mizoram, popularly known as the 'Songbird of the North east'. The people of Mizoram are collectively known as the Mizo.

Etymologically, the term Mizo can be bifurcated into 'Mi' meaning people and 'Zo' that signifies the hill. Thus the very nomenclature of the tribal community illustrates the fact that they hail from the highland.

The residents of Mizoram are very proud of their cultural legacy and go great lengths to preserve it despite considerable foreign intrusion. With changing times, Mizoram too is moving towards modernization but the state government has ensured that every bucolic hamlet in the state, irrespective of its remote location, is endowed with an YMA (Young Mizo Association). This body has been designed with the sole aim to leave a distinct tincture of the traditional societal values and customs among the state's youth. This is reflected in the state's cultural extravaganzas and numerous fairs and festivals and music and dance that have been passed down through the generations.

It is rather interesting to note the indelible impact of Christianity on the state's culture. The advent of the 19th century Christian missionaries considerably enriched the state's culture. Not only was a new and formal writing script developed, the strong impact of Christianity have resulted in the Mizo inhabitants emerging some of the finest choir singers in the Indian subcontinent.

The patriarchal Mizo society strictly follows "Tlawmngaina", a code of ethics that emphasizes on every individual to be kind, generous and hospitable to his peers, irrespective of caste and creed.

People of Mizoram

People of Mizoram primarily include several tribal communities that have inhabited the hilly terrains for several decades. Popularly known by the name of Mizos, the people of Mizoram are deft in various handicrafts work. According to the historic records, Tibetan, Burmese and Chinese people had a great influence on the lifestyle and behaviour of core groups of Mizoram.

The major tribes that are found in the land of Mizoram are Dulien, Ralte, Poi, Jahao, Pankhup, Lakher, Paite, Falam, Tangur, Khuangli, Dalang, Sukte, Fanai, Leillul and Mar. All of these tribes are known to exist in Mizoram ever since this hilly landscape came into existence. Apart from main tribal groups Mizoram people are divided into different sub-tribes too. Some of the sub-tribes of Mizoram include Lakhers, Pawis and Lushais.

The culture of Mizoram has been immensely enriched by the diverse communities of people who live in this region. From the arts and crafts to festival every socio-cultural domain of Mizoram indicates the rich heritage of the people of the place.

Most of the people of Mizoram belong to Christian faith. This is due to the fact that in the ninth century Mizoram became a dominion of the British missionaries. With the development of the Mizo language in the form of Roman script the people got access to full-fledged education. Today the literacy rate of Mizoram is counted as

one of the highest in the entire country. Symbolizing one of the oldest traditions, people of Mizoram are proud to have preserved their inherent cultural and social dynamism with full grace and success.

Mizos

Mizos are the core inhabitants of Mizoram who have adopted the religion of Christianity. The British missionaries who visited Mizoram in the 9th century had great influence on the social norms of the people of the place. The term Mi connotes to people and Zo means hills. Hence the combination of Mizo indicates people belonging to the hills.

Mizos are mainly divided into tribes and sub-tribes. The tribal groups that inhabit the land of Mizoram include Mar, Dulien, Poi, Jahao, Lakher, Paite, Falam, Tangur, Khuangli, Pankhup, Dalang, Sukte, Fanai, Leillul and Ralte. The sub-tribes of Mizoram comprise of Lushais, Lakhers and Pawis. The prime costume of Mizos is known by the name of Puan.

The society of Mizos is characterized by the unity of all the tribal communities. Major decisions related to the daily affairs of the village are taken by the chief, who lives at the centre of the village. Also, there is a dormitory for the bachelors in the Mizoram villages. Known by the name of Zawlbuk, these dormitories are generally set in a prominent location of the villages of Mizoram.

The sermons of Christianity are followed by the Mizos in their day-to-day life. The core dogma of the people of Mizoram is based on Tlawmngaihna. As per Tlawmngaihna, Mizoram people are supposed to live their life with an altruistic attitude practicing honesty and peace.

Although there are many a tribes and sub-tribes in Mizoram yet the Mizos are known to have a peaceful and harmonious co-existence. During major festivals or social events all the communities of Mizoram enthusiastically participate in the same. It can be said that the Mizos are the living manifestation of brotherhood and unity.

Festivals in Mizoram

Festivals in Mizoram mostly centres around the harvest seasons. However, several other general festivals are also celebrated by the people of Mizoram with great enthusiasm and vigour. Since cultivation is the mainstay of the people of Mizoram hence most of the festivals are celebrated to reflect the fertile bliss of the place. The term Kut means festivals. As such the names of all the festivals of Mizoram are followed by this common term of Kut.

Mim Kut festival of Mizoram is based on the harvesting of maize crop. This festival is also followed to pay respect to the dead. The Pawl Kut festival is followed by the

people of Mizoram for two whole days. During the months of December and January the festival of Pawl Kut is celebrated in Mizoram.

Chapchar Kut is another significant festival of Mizoram which is celebrated at a time when trees and bamboos are kept for drying so that these can be burned for jhum cultivation. It is believed that Chapchar Kut existed in the land of Mizoram from the era of 1450 to 1600.

Once the weeding of the crop land is over, the festival of Thalfavang Kut is celebrated in Mizoram. Followed in the month of November the Thalfavang Kut festival has become an inherent part of Mizoram culture.

Christmas is another major festival which is celebrated by the people of Mizoram with merriment. From kids to aged people all inhabitants of Mizoram engross themselves from the previous night of Christmas in the festive spirit. The Christmas festivals last for three long days in Mizoram.

As a whole the festivals of Mizoram reflect the rich cultural aura of the place.

Mim Kut

Mim Kut is one of the important festivals in Mizoram, which is celebrated in the months of August and September. When the maize crop is ready for harvesting, the people of Mizoram indulge themselves in the festival of Mim Kut. A memorial platform is built during Mim Kut festival where people of Mizoram gather to pay respect to those who died in the preceding year.

Apart from maize, vegetables, apparels, accessories and bread are offered to the soul of the deceased during the Mim Kut festival in Mizoram. This is done with the age-old belief that the dead people come to their dwelling places while the festival is celebrated in Mizoram.

Zu, a special type of beer prepared from rice, is a customary drink which is consumed by the inhabitants of Mizoram on the occasion of Mim Kut. Apart from rituals the Mim Kut festival of Mizoram also involves dance and song performances by the tribal communities of the place. There are elaborate arrangements of feasting during the days on which Mim Kut is celebrated in Mizoram.

Farming activities are the prime source of sustenance of the people of Mizoram. The hilly terrains of Mizoram are suitable for jhum cultivation. Majority of local inhabitants living in Mizoram are engaged in this form of cultivation. As such, the festivals of Mizoram reflect the spirit of the local cultivators who till, sow and reap the benefits of land every year.

Mim Kut is an apt symbolization of the deep faith of the inhabitants of Mizoram in the revisit of the deceased souls as well as the enjoyment of the maize harvest.

Pawl Kut

Pawl Kut is a part of thanksgiving ceremony, which is celebrated in Mizoram when the harvesting activities are completed by the local inhabitants. Followed in the month of December to January, Pawl Kut festival lasts for two days in Mizoram. Feasting with meat and egg is a customary practice followed by each and every household of Mizoram during the festival.

In the ancient ages the tribes of Mizoram used to go out on hunting spree to collect as much meat as possible. In fact every single inhabitant of Mizoram was bound to make a feast of meat during the Pawl Kut festival.

An integral part of the traditional festivals in Mizoram, Pawl Kut involves dancing, singing and merriment by the villagers of Mizoram. The rice beer, which is locally known by the name of Zu, is consumed by all the people of Mizoram to celebrate Pawl Kut festival.

Chawnghnawt is a distinct trait of Pawl Kut festival in Mizoram. As an old custom Chawnghnawt requires the mother and her children to sit on a memorial platform constructed specially for the Pawl Kut festival. While the mother feed her kids with various palates of meat and egg preparations, the child does the same. This way both of the mother and child feed each other while the other villagers stand around the platform.

The origin of Pawl Kut tells of an interesting event which took place many centuries back in Mizoram. When the people of Mizoram used to inhabit the land on the eastern corner of river Tiau, famine occurred continuously for three years. However, there was an exemplary crop yield in the fourth year and people took it as blessing of the God. In order to offer their gratitude to the Almighty, people of Mizoram initiated the tradition of Pawl Kut festival in the place.

Today, Pawl Kut is counted as one of the main harvest festivals of Mizoram.

Chapchar Kut

Chapchar Kut is celebrated by the local people of Mizoram in the month of March every year. During the seven whole days of Chapchar Kut the Mizoram people engross themselves into an infinite aura of mirth and merriment. As one of the oldest festivals in Mizoram Chapchar Kut has a distinctive identity.

Dance and music competitions are an integral part of the Chapchar Kut festival in Mizoram. The various tribal communities inhabiting the land of Mizoram perform the local dances wearing colorful dress apparels. It is said that in the ancient times Chapchar Kut was celebrated by the local inhabitants by indulging in drinking sessions. However, with the passage of time the focus of Chapchar Kut has been

shifted to music. The folk music of Mizoram plays a vital role in providing a rejuvenating look to the Chapchar Kut festival. Since the tribal youths of Mizoram are blessed with melodious vocal chords, hence the music performances during Chapchar Kut are the prime attractions of the festival.

People of Mizoram earn their livelihood through cultivating the fertile lands. Jhum cultivation is the major source of farming which is practiced by almost all the Mizoram peasants. Cutting of trees for making space for jhum is a common practice of Mizoram people. The chopped trees are kept under the sun for several days to be dried. After drying these trees are finally burnt. When the trees are kept for drying purposes the cultivators of Mizoram take this opportunity to celebrate the festival of Chapchar Kut.

Ziapur Ni, being the final day of the Chapchar Kut festival, is ended with a sumptuous feast which is savoured by all the diverse communities of Mizoram.

Thalfavang Kut

Thalfavang Kut festival is considered as one of the most significant festivals in Mizoram. Completion of weeding of the crop fields to make them suitable for harvesting activities is a primary farming operation of the cultivators of Mizoram. Thalfavang Kut is celebrated at a time when this weeding of the farm lands in Mizoram is completed by the cultivators.

Since cultivation is the prime source of socio-economic survival of the people of Mizoram hence most of the festivals are associated with some or other harvesting processes. Thalfavang Kut is one such occasion when the local inhabitants of Mizoram are involved in a wide array of festive activities.

The tribal groups living in all corners of Mizoram participate in various cultural events that are organized during the Thalfavang Kut festival. With vibrant shades of dance costumes the local people of Mizoram present an awe-inspiring range of performances to celebrate Thalfavang Kut.

The entire region of Mizoram becomes a vibrant platform of enjoyment and enthusiasm when Thalfavang Kut is celebrated in the place. With sumptuous feasts the Mizoram people engross completely in the festive spirit of Thalfavang Kut.

Another interesting trait of the festival of Thalfavang Kut is that it provides a scope to the tribal communities living in the far flung corners of Mizoram to represent their inherent cultural characteristics. Otherwise inhabiting remotely approachable places, the different tribes and sub-tribes of Mizoram get a pulsating base during the Thalfavang Kut festival where their talents are viewed by other people.

In a way, Thalfavang Kut is not only a festival but also an opportunity to showcase the hidden cultural traits of the tribes of Mizoram.

Christmas in Mizoram

Christmas in Mizoram is regarded as one of the biggest celebrations of the place. Held from the 24th to 26th of December, Christmas is followed in Mizoram for three whole days. Since the majority of the Mizoram population belongs to the Christian faith, Christmas festival is followed in the place with much fanfare.

From 24th December itself the celebrations of Christmas start in Mizoram. Every household of Mizoram becomes a part of the festive mood during the three days of Christmas festival. While on the first day of Christmas, people of Mizoram get ready for the final celebration, the second day that is on 25th December inhabitants gather in the local church.

Since 25th December is the prime day of Christmas celebration hence on this day people from various corners of Mizoram come to visit the main church of the place. Kids play around the Christmas tree in the evening hours while elder people sit and chat with their share of cakes and snacks. Apart from exchanging wishes, the people of Mizoram also visit the places of their relatives on this day.

On 26th of December the people of Mizoram enjoy the delicacies of a sumptuous feast. Various tribal communities and even sub-tribes participate in this famous feast of Mizoram on the last day of the Christmas festival.

The influence of Christianity in Mizoram was initiated in the ninth century when the British missionaries came to the region. Ever since its inception the faith of Christianity has inspired the living style and social customs of the Mizoram people. Today, Christianity is the widely practiced religion of Mizoram. As a symbol of this widely acknowledged acceptance of the faith Christmas is celebrated as one of the prime festivals in Mizoram.

Christmas in Mizoram is an ideal manifestation of the rich heritage of the Christian faith in the place.

Mizoram Ethnicity

Mizoram ethnicity comprises of a variety of social elements like the different tribal groups, religions, rituals and festivals. The people of this region have kept alive their age-old socio-cultural lineage. Their colorful and bright clothes and traditional customs are still in use at this hilly part of India.

The state of Mizoram has a number of ethnic groups, which constitute the basic structure of Mizoram society. The names of the major ethnic groups of the state are Pawis, Lushais, Raltes, Paithes, Himars, Pangs and Kukis.

One of the fascinating aspects of Mizoram ethnicity is their ethical code. The focus of the ethical code of the Mizos is the *tlawmngaihna*. This local term implies that each

person who belongs to this place is cordial, helpful, soft-hearted and sociable. The ethnic character of Mizoram is clearly felt in the dances and festivals of the region. Apart from New Year's Day and Christmas, the ethnic festivals of Mizoram are Pawl Kutand, Chapchar Kut and Mim Kut. Chapchar Kut is celebrated after the bushes are cleared for jhum cultivation in the period between February and March. The Pawl Kut is organized to celebrate after the harvest season in the month of December. The Mim Kut is celebrated in September to pay homage to the souls of the deceased following the harvest season of maize.

The ethnic villages are a significant part of the society of Mizoram. The zawlbuk and the leader's house are important segments of a tribal village in the region. A zawlbuk is actually a community shelter for unmarried young men. The main ethnic language that is used in the state is Mizo.

Religion in Mizoram

The main religion in Mizoram is Christianity. The religion of Christianity plays in shaping the socio-cultural life of the people of the state.

The people of this state are strong followers of Christianity. The majority of the population is Protestants. One of the significant aspects associated with the Christian religious group of Mizoram is the Mizoram churches. The Christians often make huge donations to these churches.

The popularity of the Christian religion at Mizoram can be understood from the statistical fact that about 83.81 % of the total population of the state in the year 1981 was Christian by faith.

The people who follow the Christian religion in Mizoram take part in a number of religious festivals like New Year's Day, Christmas and Easter. Singing carols and greeting other people by visiting their homes are significant parts of the Christmas celebration.

The denominations of a Mizoram church include many different groups like the United Pentecostal, Welsh Presbyterian, Seventh-Day Adventist, Salvation Army, London Baptist, Roman Catholic, Sabbath Church and also the sects created by the Jews and Khuangtua Vanawi, a famous religious leader. The pastors sing, preach, take part in various rituals and give blessings to the people. Each denomination has a separate clergy.

There are also some other religious groups in Mizoram, which can be termed the minority religious groups. The people of these groups follow the religions of Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. An important fact about the Jew population of Mizoram is that about half of the total Jew population of India lives in this state.

Food in Mizoram

Food in Mizoram is one of the main attractions for the tourists who plan to visit this Indian state on a vacation. The Mizoram cuisine offers mainly non-vegetarian delicacies. The people who belong to this place do eat vegetables, but they prefer to add some non-vegetarian ingredients to each and every dish they prepare.

One of the main specialties of the food of Mizoram is that it is very different from the food available in other parts of the country of India other than the northeast. However, the food in Mizoram is quite similar to the food in the other northeastern states of India. The cuisine of the northeastern states of the country including Mizoram has an identity of its own.

The staple food of these people is primarily rice. One of the most popular non-vegetarian items of the people of the state is fish. The most commonly used medium of cooking is mustard oil. The Mizos do not like to eat oily food and they prefer to cook most of the dishes with little oil.

Some of the most demanded delicacies of Mizoram are made with ingredients like bamboo shoots and ducks. Some very well known Mizo dishes are Misa Mach Poora, Panch Phoron Taarkari, which is actually a grilled preparation of shrimps, Dal with Eggs, Poora Mach and Koat Pitha.

Art and Crafts in Mizoram

There are various kinds of art and crafts in Mizoram, which form an important sector of the industrial market of the state. The main art and crafts of Mizoram are textiles, bamboo and cane works and basketry.

The textile industry is one of the main art and crafts of Mizoram. Generally, the Mizo women are engaged in weaving which constitutes a major sector of Mizoram cultural life. The people of Mizoram produce a wide range of textile products. Some of the most popular textile products of this part of India are puanspuon dum, puon pie, thangou puon, puon laisen, jawl puon, thangsuo puon, hmarm and zakuolaisen.

The bamboo and cane works constitute one of the well known art and crafts in Mizoram. The state is quite advanced in this craft and has a big role to play in the economic growth of the state. It is the domain of the Mizo men. The major bamboo and cane works of the state are hats, animal and fish trapscones, different types of baskets, japis, wide range of jewellery and circular boxes.

The basketry industry is a prominent segment of Mizoram art and crafts. Some of the popular products of the basketry industry of Mizoram are paiem, dawrawn, paikawng, tlamen, emsin, fawng-te-laivel, fawng and thul. The people of the state of Mizoram exhibit a great deal of expertise in all the above art and crafts of the region.

Basketry in Mizoram

One of the well known industries associated with the art and crafts of northwestern India is basketry in Mizoram. There are four major types of baskets created in Mizoram. These different types of baskets are given below.

The closed-weave basket is a type of basket, which is generally used by the Lushais of the state. There are three types of baskets that fall under this type of baskets of Mizoram. These are tlamen, paiem and dawrawn. Tlamen is used for carrying agricultural products and dawrawn is used for storing as well as carrying purposes. Paiem is used for carrying various agricultural products and also for marketing.

The open-weave baskets are meant for carrying purposes. There again two different varieties of such baskets are found in Mizoram. These are the emsin and the paikawng. The paikawng is generally used by the people belonging to the Lushai ethnic group. It is used by the women for carrying a variety of items like water tubes made out of bamboo, firewood and many other articles of daily use. The emsin is actually a decorated paikawng. It is similar to the paikawng in structure. It is used for carrying different items to the fields and also for marketing.

Thul is a type of basket produced here which is meant only for storage. It has a lid and is ideal for storing various household items. Some baskets are specially meant for storage and are small in size. There are two types of such baskets in Mizora. These are the fawng-te-laivel and the fawng. Both these types of Mizoram baskets are similar in structure, but the fawng-te-laive is smaller in size and is used to store yarn.

Bamboo and Cane Works of Mizoram

Bamboo and cane works of Mizoram is one of the major art and crafts that are associated with this part of northeastern India. The people of this state make a variety of beautiful and useful items out of cane and bamboo.

Generally, the men are engaged in making the cane and bamboo crafts at Mizoram. This art form is so rampant in this region of the country that the Mizo people even make their houses with bamboo. The floors and walls of the houses are made up of bamboo.

There is a wide range of Bamboo and cane works of Mizoram. The various kinds of cane and bamboo products of Mizoram are produced at the three different centres of handicraft located in Lunglei, Aizwal and Chimpluipui.

One of the most important bamboo and cane products of the region are hats made of cane. Different types of baskets are produced by the people of this state. The different kinds of baskets made in this region are meant for carrying or storing different household items.

Other bamboo items are animal and fish traps. The bamboo cones, japis and circular boxes are used for storage purposes. A wide range of jewellery that are worn by the Mizo people are made out of bamboo. One of the well known bamboo ornaments of Mizoram is a traditional headgear.

The Mizoram cane and bamboo crafts play a significant role in the economy of the state. There is a substantial market of cane and bamboo products as these handmade ethnic items are much in demand among the tourists.

Textiles of Mizoram

The textiles of Mizoram constitute one of the most significant art and crafts of the region. The textile industry of Mizoram offers a variety of garments, which are quite popular in the northwestern part of the country of India.

Many Mizo people are well known as skilled weavers. Weaving is one of the most important segments of the cultural life of the people of this state. The women are involved in weaving in Mizoram from a very early age.

The *puans* created by the Mizo weavers are in high demand in Mizoram. These resemble the *lungis*. The length and width of this piece of clothing are 3 inches and 4 inches respectively. This is one of the ethnic garments meant for the women of the place. With time, the Mizoram weavers are trying out various new designs on this piece of clothing.

The Paiteis are known for making intricate designs on the cloth. However, the designs woven by these people are unique. The most popular textile products of these people of Mizoram are *puon dum*, *thangou puon*, *puon pie* and *jawl puon*.

The Hmars are often associated with a variety of designs. Some of the most popular types of Mizoram garments that they can weave are *puon laisen*, *thangsuo puon*, *zakuolaisen* and *hmarm*.

The term *thangsuo puon* means well known cloth, while *puon laisen* means cloth that is coloured red at the middle portion. *Hmarm* means the loin cloth meant for the women and *zakuolaisen* means the upper garment meant for the unmarried women.

Therefore, the textiles of Mizoram offer a variety of designs and weaving expertise, which make the garments produced in this part of India quite popular among the people of the northwestern part of India.