

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS  
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF MIZO TRIBE**

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**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE  
MANAGEMENT OF MIZO TRIBE**

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**CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **‘SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF MIZO TRIBE’** submitted by **ESTHER LALRUATPUII** for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Library and Information Science is carried out under my supervision and incorporates the students bona-fide research and this has not been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other university or institute of learning.

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**DECLARATION**

I, **Esther Lalruatpuii**, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/ Institute.

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### **List of Abbreviations**

ICT:	Information and Communication Technology
IFLA:	International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions
IJTK:	Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge
IK:	Indigenous Knowledge
IKS:	Indigenous Knowledge Systems
ILO:	International Labour Organization
IP:	Intellectual Property
IPR:	Intellectual Property Rights
IT:	Indigenous Technology
IUCN:	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KM:	Knowledge Management
KMS:	Knowledge Management System
LEISA:	Low External Inputs Sustainable Agriculture
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
NISCAIR:	National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources
SD:	Sustainable Development
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
TK:	Traditional Knowledge
UN:	United Nations
UNDESA:	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WWF:	World Wide Fund for Nature
YMA:	Young Mizo Association

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. Introduction

The significance of indigenous knowledge extends beyond its intrinsic value, since it also holds considerable importance in terms of the advantages it confers onto the indigenous communities that possess and engage with it. Indigenous communities across the world face recurrent challenges in preserving their rights, cultural practises, and knowledge. Indigenous communities perceived the earth as a vital entity that sustains, educates, and provides nourishment, considering it a sacred endowment from the divine creator. Indigenous knowledge is widely regarded as a valuable kind of social capital among marginalized communities. Investing in the pursuit of survival, the production of sustenance, the provision of shelter, and the attainment of autonomy are considered primary assets for individuals. Throughout the course of history, indigenous communities have endured the detrimental effects of invasion and persecution, resulting in the subjugation of their knowledge and the imposition of Western knowledge onto them through the establishment of Western institutions.

The erosion of indigenous knowledge is mostly attributed to the encroachment of foreign technologies and development ideologies, which often prioritize immediate benefits or problem-solving approaches that lack long-term sustainability. However, indigenous cultures have demonstrated remarkable resilience over the course of millennia, successfully adjusting to challenging climate circumstances and establishing sustainable subsistence systems. The indigenous communities' wide range of knowledge, which is deeply intertwined with their environment and cultural cohesion, have enabled them to effectively utilize and oversee natural resources in a sustainable manner. Additionally, this knowledge has empowered them to safeguard their environments which enhance their adaptability. The indigenous communities' capacity to observe, adapt, and mitigate has proven invaluable in navigating the challenges posed

by novel and intricate circumstances that frequently pose significant threats to their way of life and territories.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) encompasses the comprehensive range of beliefs, faith, wisdom, culture, practices, and experiences that are held by individuals within aboriginal society. This information has served as the primary means of survival and sustenance throughout several domains of their everyday existence. The aforementioned phenomenon serves as a manifestation of the cultural attributes inherent to a particular group within the broader societal context. Interpersonal connectivity is established among individuals, which becomes particularly evident within a multicultural societal context. The aforementioned concept serves as the foundation for decision-making processes at the local level in several domains such as agricultural production, medical care, and the preparation of food, education, natural resources management, and numerous other endeavours within rural communities. The transmission of indigenous knowledge has occurred through oral tradition, ritual engagement, adherence to norms, and integration into daily cultural practices, ensuring its continuity over successive generations.

### **1.1 Indigenous People**

Indigenous peoples are characterized by their unique cultural identities and communal structures. The connection between the land they inhabit, the natural resources they rely on, and their identities, cultures, livelihoods, and overall physical and spiritual well-being is inseparable. According to the World Bank (1991), indigenous peoples are defined as social groups possessing a unique social and cultural identity that distinguishes them from the dominant society, rendering them susceptible to disadvantages resulting from the development process. Indigenous communities, peoples, and countries are characterized by their historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that thrived on their respective territory. These groups

perceive themselves as separate from other sectors of the dominant societies in those territories, or specific parts thereof.

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2004), these groups currently exist as marginalized segments of society and are committed to safeguarding, advancing, and passing down their traditional lands and cultural heritage to future generations. This serves as the foundation for their ongoing survival as distinct communities, in accordance with their unique cultural practices, social structures, and legal frameworks. Indigenous peoples refer to individuals residing in a certain geographic region prior to the establishment of a nation-state, while also potentially identifying with such nation-state. These individuals have successfully preserved a significant portion of their unique linguistic, cultural, social, and organizational attributes. These characteristics distinguish them to some extent from the neighboring populations and the prevailing culture of the nation-state. It is important to acknowledge that, in order for this assertion to hold true, it is necessary for other individuals or entities to perceive these groups as indigenous. Indigenous populations, who have been in their respective regions for millennia, currently occupy around one-fifth of the Earth's landmass. The current discussion around the identification of indigenous individuals has prompted the use of the terms 'autochthones' to refer to native residents and 'non-indigenes' to describe migrant immigrants.

All definitions of the concept of 'indigenous' regard self-identification as a fundamental criterion for determining the groups to which the term indigenous should be applied. Within the UN (United Nations) family, the ILO (International Labour Organization) defines Indigenous and Tribal people as follows:

- Tribal individuals residing in sovereign nations, characterized by distinct social, cultural, and economic circumstances that set them apart from other segments of the national population. Their legal standing is governed either entirely or largely by their own customs, traditions, or specific laws and regulations.



- Individuals residing in sovereign nations who are recognized as indigenous due to their ancestral ties to the populations that occupied the nation or geographic area during the period of conquest, colonization, or the formation of current state borders. These individuals, regardless of their legal standing, maintain certain or all aspects of their distinct social, economic, cultural, and political systems.

## **1.2 Indigenous Knowledge**

Indigenous knowledge refers to the distinct local wisdom that is specific to a particular culture or civilization. Alternative terms for it encompass: ‘indigenous knowledge’, ‘community knowledge’, ‘ancestral wisdom’, or ‘traditional ecological knowledge’. The transmission of this information occur intergenerational, typically through oral tradition and cultural practices. It serves as the foundation for several societal functions, including agriculture, culinary practices, healthcare, education, environmental preservation, and numerous other activities that uphold communities throughout diverse regions globally. Local and indigenous knowledge encompasses the accumulated understandings, abilities, and ideologies that have been cultivated by communities with extensive historical engagement with their natural environments. Local knowledge plays a crucial role in shaping the decision-making processes of rural and indigenous communities, influencing various fundamental aspects of their daily lives. This knowledge is a fundamental component of a cultural complex that incorporates several aspects such as language, systems of categorization, resource utilization practices, social interactions, rituals, and spirituality.

The many modes of knowledge acquisition discussed herein hold significant value as they contribute to the rich cultural diversity observed worldwide, while also serving as a basis for the implementation of sustainable development strategies that are tailored to specific local contexts. Indigenous knowledge can be defined as the knowledge utilized by local communities to sustain their livelihoods within specific ecological contexts. The notion referred to in the realm of sustainable development is

commonly denoted by several terms, such as such as indigenous technological expertise, conventional environmental expertise, rural and regional expertise, and farmer or expertise. Indigenous Knowledge may be broadly defined as the knowledge that native (local) societies have amassed over the course of numerous centuries of habitation in a particular area. This thorough definition includes a wide variety of skills, practices, attitudes, and understanding that enable a group to achieve sustainable lifestyles in their own natural surroundings.

Indigenous populations possess a comprehensive understanding of sustainable living practices. Nonetheless, the implementation of formal education systems has had a detrimental impact on the practical components of indigenous knowledge and learning methods in everyday life. These systems have substituted concrete knowledge and traditional means of learning with abstract information and academic approaches. In contemporary times, there exists a significant concern regarding the potential loss of a substantial amount of indigenous knowledge, thereby leading to the forfeiture of invaluable insights pertaining to sustainable lifestyles.

Indigenous or local knowledge has been defined as knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society and communities. It is local know-how and cultural practices that belong to a community and are transmitted orally between generations (Raseroka, 2002:2) lists the following characteristics of indigenous knowledge:

- i. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is produced and transmitted within unique communities.
- ii. The generation and dissemination of IK is influenced by the geographical location and cultural context in which it is situated.
- iii. The aforementioned concept serves as the foundation for the process of making informed choices and developing effective methods for ensuring survival.
- iv. The documentation lacks a systematic approach.

- v. The subject matter encompasses significant topics, including primary production, the well-being of human and animal life, and the management of natural resources.
- vi. The phenomenon under consideration is characterized by its dynamic nature, which is rooted in the principles of innovation, adaptability, and experimentation.

### **1.3 Importance of Indigenous Knowledge**

There exist two fundamental rationales for researchers to give due consideration to Indigenous Knowledge (IK) when undertaking research endeavors. The integration of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) into research endeavors has the potential to foster local empowerment and development, hence enhancing self-sufficiency and bolstering self-determination (Thrupp, 1989). The utilization of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in research projects and management plans enhances its validity and credibility among both local communities and external scientists. This, in turn, fosters cultural pride and consequently motivates individuals to address local challenges through the application of local inventiveness and resources. Local capacity-building plays a pivotal role in the realm of sustainable development, necessitating the design of strategies by academics and development specialists that foster the reinforcement and empowerment of relevant indigenous knowledge and institutions.

Furthermore, the indigenous people possess significant knowledge and insights on the local ecosystem and the optimal strategies for sustainable management of its natural resources. The global ecological problem and the recognition of its origins in the unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, driven by inadequate attitudes and technology, have generated increased attention towards indigenous knowledge systems. It is currently acknowledged by the scientific community that indigenous populations have demonstrated a capacity for sustainable environmental management over extended periods of time, resulting in little disruption to local ecologies (*Emery, 1996*).

There is a widespread belief that indigenous knowledge possesses the potential to serve as a robust foundation for the development of alternative resource management approaches. Indigenous knowledge (IK) technologies and expertise possess a notable advantage over introduced forms due to their reliance on locally accessible skills and resources. Consequently, they frequently prove to be more economically viable compared to the introduction of exotic technologies from external sources. Moreover, individuals residing in the vicinity possess a comprehensive understanding of these entities, hence obviating the necessity for any specialist instruction.

The following are some of the features of IK which have relevance to conservation and sustainable development:

- i. **Locally appropriate:** IK represents a way of life that has evolved with the local environment, so it is specifically adapted to the requirements of local conditions.
- ii. **Restraint in resource exploitation:** Production is for subsistence needs only; only what is needed for immediate survival is taken from the environment.
- iii. **Diversified production systems:** There is no overexploitation of a single resource; risk is often spread out by utilizing a number of subsistence strategies.
- iv. **Respect for nature:** A ‘conservation ethic’ often exists. The land is considered sacred, humans are dependent on nature for survival, and all species are interconnected.
- v. **Flexible:** IK is able to adapt to new conditions and incorporate outside knowledge.
- vi. **Social responsibility:** There are strong family and community ties, and with them feelings of obligation and responsibility to preserve the land for future generations.

#### **1.4 Sustainable Development**

Following the publication of the renowned report ‘Our Common Future’ by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, the term ‘sustainable

development' rapidly gained extensive recognition within the global scientific community.

The concept of 'sustainable development' (SD) pertains to a framework for human progress that aims to safeguard the environment while simultaneously addressing the immediate and long-term needs of both current and future generations. Despite its inherent innovativeness, the concept of sustainable development is unfortunately challenging to effectively define in practical terms. The chronology of sustainable development is quite recent. The concept of sustainable development is characterized by inherent tensions, stemming from its vague and ambiguous definition, as well as the lack of a comprehensive and universally applicable framework that is both pragmatic and practical. One of the primary challenges impeding the achievement of sustainable development lies not only in the need to educate the general populace about it, but also in the essentiality of elucidating its concepts in a manner that is accessible and understandable to them (*The Concept of Sustainable Development*, n.d.).

The concept of sustainable development is commonly acknowledged to be multidisciplinary, intricate, and systematic, hence presenting a considerable challenge in terms of its precise definition. The term 'sustainable development' was initially employed in 1980, during a time when its conceptualization was relatively straightforward. The concept of sustainable development was conceptualized as the preservation of the earth's natural resources within the framework of the World Conservation Strategy, a joint effort by three prominent environmental non-governmental organizations, namely the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) (*The Concept of Sustainable Development*, n.d.).

The concept of sustainable development, as articulated by the Brundtland Commission, entails the pursuit of development that effectively meets present societal demands without compromising the capacity of future generations to fulfill their own

requirements (*What Is Sustainable Development, and Why Is It So Important?*, n.d.). The statement is factually correct and presents a desirable objective that is sought for by a significant number of individuals. However, it does not provide any specific suggestions or assurances regarding the methods or criteria for assessing advancements towards achieving sustainable development. The term ‘sustainability’ is often employed synonymously with the concept of ‘sustainable development’. Expansion can be conceptualized as a form of growth, and hence sustainable development entails the consideration and resolution of challenges arising from continuous economic expansion, while ensuring that it does not jeopardize its own viability (*What Is Sustainable Development, and Why Is It So Important?*, n.d.).

The concept of sustainable development refers to the deliberate adoption of expansion while concurrently employing resources in a more prudent manner. This approach entails considering the immediate as well as the enduring benefits for both the Earth and its inhabitants. Sustainable development approaches facilitate the progress of nations by addressing the challenges associated with climate change, thereby contributing to the preservation of essential natural resources for present and future generations (*What Is Sustainable Development, and Why Is It So Important?*, n.d.).

The term ‘sustainable development’ encompasses a wide array of programs, initiatives, and financial obligations that aim to provide immediate benefits while ensuring the preservation of the environment, society, and individual well-being in the future. These policies are occasionally labeled as ‘green’ due to their focus on mitigating the adverse impacts of expansion on the environment. Nevertheless, the benefits of sustainable development are experienced in various aspects of human health and well-being. These include reductions in illnesses caused by pollution and environmental factors, improved health outcomes, and decreased levels of stress (*Sustainable Development*, n.d.).

### 1.4.1 Three dimensions of sustainable development

- i. **Economic:** In order for a system to be economically sustainable, it must be able to generate products and services continuously, maintain acceptable levels of public and external debt, and prevent excessive sectorial imbalances that harm industrial or agricultural production.
- ii. **Environmental:** In order to be environmentally sustainable, a system's resource base must remain stable. Over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions must be avoided, and non-renewable resources must only be depleted to the degree that suitable replacements are invested in. The preservation of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecological services not often categorized as economic resources are included in this.
- iii. **Social:** A socially sustainable system must accomplish distributional righteousness, appropriate provision of social services, including health and education, equal opportunity for women and men, and political responsibility and involvement.



*Fig1.1: Dimensions of Sustainable Development*

(Source: <https://www.redalpi.com/web/sustainability/>)

### 1.4.2 Scope of Sustainable Development

It is commonly acknowledged that the interaction of a firm's legal responsibilities with economics, politics, civil society, and culture, as well as the connection between government and business, are mutually reinforcing aspects that help achieve sustainable development. It should be understood, nevertheless, that social ties do not just result from them. The physical and material cohesion of civilization is contingent upon the carrying capabilities of diverse ecosystems, landscape ecology, and ultimately the biosphere of the Earth, commonly referred to as Nature. The level of an individual's capacity to demonstrate concern and empathy towards others serves as a significant measure of the spiritual and psychological distinctiveness of a community.



Therefore, it can be argued that sustainable development is a complex concept that encompasses a minimum of four dimensions (*Sustainable Development - Scope, Features, Examples and FAQ*, n.d.).

### **1.4.3 Basic Characteristics of Sustainable Development**

The fundamental attributes of sustainable development can be delineated as follows:

- i. The continuous growth of real per capita income and economic prosperity is vital.
- ii. Sustainable development is characterized by the prudent utilization of resources in order to prevent excessive exploitation.
- iii. Sustainable development endeavors to optimize the utilization of natural resources and the environment, with the aim of enhancing living standards while ensuring the preservation of resources for future generations.
- iv. One of the objectives of sustainable development is to engage in sustainable planning for the replacement or replenishment of resources, while also advocating for the use of environmentally friendly and biodegradable products.
- v. Additionally, sustainable development places a high emphasis on prioritizing green architecture and other construction techniques that are in line with environmental sustainability (*Sustainable Development - Scope, Features, Examples and FAQ*, n.d.).

### **1.4.4 Goals of Sustainable Development**

The primary goals of sustainable development are:

- i. To develop new areas while using the fewest natural resources possible.
- ii. To build a sustainable environment that won't harm the environment in any way.
- iii. To offer a technique for reconstructing current developments so that they have eco-friendly initiatives and facilities.

International institutions such as the United Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), humanitarian agencies, and even governments are consistently providing financial support for efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development for all individuals worldwide. In addition to the aforementioned objectives, these groups have delineated further targets for sustainable development such as:

- i Global poverty eradication
- ii Ensure overall health and excellent well-being
- iii Provision for healthy water and sanitation
- iv Offering all students a high-quality education
- v Making Gender Equality a reality
- vi Facilitating the availability of affordable and clean energy
- vii Establishing a solid infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and supporting innovation (*Sustainable Development - Scope, Features, Examples and FAQ*, n.d.).

#### **1.4.5 Principles of Sustainable Development**

The notion of sustainable development is based on the following principles:

- i. Sustainable development is an alternate approach to growth that is, by definition, resource- and environment-friendly.
- ii. The natural systems of the consumer and the producer work together in harmony.
- iii. The current generation must fulfill its wants without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, i.e., without unfairly undervaluing the productive assets that will be accessible to them.
- iv. By unnecessarily destroying the Earth's finite resources and harming its ecosystem and environment, those who benefit from economic progress must take care not to worsen the resources of future generations.
- v. Instead of concentrating just on growth, development should aim for more general objectives of social transformation.

- vi. Sustainable development has two main facets: internal sustainability and external sustainability. Both would prevent the emergence of true sustainable development.
- vii. Long-term sustainable development requires maintaining relationships with nature, resources, and people as well as their service providers, institutions, and other components of their social networks.
- viii. Economic advancement that depletes natural capital is rarely effective.
- ix. The poor are a major cause of sustainable development, thus it is important to make sure they have appropriate access to safe and secure living conditions.
- x. Due to historical patterns of environmental degradation, it is best to avoid repeating past environmental blunders.
- xi. Development is not inherently incompatible with the environment. Economic development is dependent upon both a healthy environment and an active economy (*Sustainable Development - Scope, Features, Examples and FAQ*, n.d.).

#### **1.4.6 Importance of Sustainable Development**

The significance of sustainable development lies in its efforts to address the environmental crisis, which may be associated with unregulated economic growth. An environmental crisis arises when the natural environment becomes incapable of sustaining living organisms or fulfilling essential functions vital for the continuation of life.

The principle of sustainable development endeavors to restrict the exploitation of resources in a manner that does not surpass the rates at which resources are generated. Furthermore, it strives to mitigate the generation of waste in order to prevent it from beyond the ecological carrying capacity (*Sustainable Development - Scope, Features, Examples and FAQ*, n.d.).

### **1.4.7 Sustainable Development Goals**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were approved by all UN Member States in 2015 with the aim of eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, and fostering the growth of more stable, wealthy society. The SDGs, sometimes referred to as the Global Goals, are an appeal for action to make the world a place where no one is left behind.

1. No Poverty: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. Zero Hunger: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. Good Health and Well-Being: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. Quality Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. Gender Equality: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. Reduced Inequalities: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
13. Climate Action: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

14. Life below Water: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
15. Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Partnerships for the Goals: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development (*Goal 17 / Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.*).



*Fig1.2: Sustainable Development Goals*

(Source: <https://www.sundancefamilyfoundation.org/measuring-earn-learns-success-sdgs/>)

#### **1.4.8 Sustainable Development and Indigenous Knowledge**

The comprehensive sustainable development agenda encompasses a diverse array of subjects that exert an immediate influence on the well-being of indigenous populations. Indigenous populations have encountered and persistently confront a multitude of challenges, encompassing issues pertaining to education, poverty, equitable access to justice, and the impacts of climate change. The proficiency of these individuals, rooted in the historical and cultural connections between indigenous communities and their surroundings, has demonstrated efficacy in tackling some challenges. However, it is important to note that their approach alone is not comprehensive enough. If prompt measures are not taken to ascertain solutions, the survival of these communities, together with their knowledge systems, will be jeopardized. The individuals in question find themselves caught in a predicament where they are confronted by environmental hazards on one hand, and development endeavors on the other. The vulnerability and risk faced by indigenous populations have already increased due to the loss of traditional knowledge (*Rebeka Sultana, Noor Muhammad, A.K.M, Zakaria, 2018*).

Hence, it is imperative for local, national, and global societies to recognize the significance of indigenous peoples and their knowledge as essential collaborators in addressing the challenges of sustainable development and climate change, as well as in safeguarding global biodiversity. Given the recent adoption of the post-2015 sustainability agenda, there is an immediate need to collaborate in order to formulate and execute appropriate initiatives that empower indigenous populations to uphold and actualize their rights, while also engaging them in decision-making processes. This will enable them to become proactive agents of change (*Rebeka Sultana, Noor Muhammad, A.K.M, Zakaria, 2018*).

The imperative to save, revitalize, and advance Indigenous knowledge necessitates a simultaneous commitment to defending Indigenous rights, nurturing

cultural diversity, and bolstering the well-being of Indigenous communities. The concept of sustainable development of Indigenous knowledge refers to the understanding and implementation of practices that ensure the long-term preservation, utilization, and transmission of traditional knowledge systems held by indigenous communities. In order to facilitate the continuous development of indigenous knowledge, it is imperative to prioritize the following aspects:

- i. **Respect and Recognition:** Respect Indigenous knowledge as a distinct and equal system of knowing and acknowledge its significance. Observe Indigenous communities' rights to knowledgeable consent, ownership, and intellectual property protection as well as their right to control and make choices regarding their knowledge.
- ii. **Indigenous-led Initiatives:** Give indigenous communities the authority to take the helm of projects geared towards the long-term advancement of their knowledge. Support initiatives, enterprises, and institutions run by and for Indigenous peoples that work to preserve, record, and transmit Indigenous knowledge.
- iii. **Capacity Building and Education:** Invest in initiatives that help Indigenous communities develop their capacity to record, safeguard, and disseminate their knowledge. Assist Indigenous people in obtaining the tools and training they need to further their careers as knowledge bearers, researchers, educators, and defenders of their own indigenous knowledge systems.
- iv. **Intergenerational Knowledge share:** Encourage programmes that help Indigenous groups share knowledge between generations. Encourage elderly people and those who have traditional knowledge to mentor and educate newer generations. Keeping Indigenous knowledge alive and passing it on for future generations is made possible through this.
- v. **Cultural Revitalization:** Understanding the connection between Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices is a key step towards cultural revitalization. Encourage initiatives to revive and maintain Indigenous cultures, languages, and

customs. Considering how deeply ingrained Indigenous knowledge is in the cultural framework of Indigenous communities, cultural revitalization is essential for ensuring its long-term viability.

- vi. **Ethical study and Collaboration:** Ensure sure that any study or collaboration with Indigenous populations is done ethically and in accordance with Indigenous customs and values. Provide top consideration to cooperative, culturally respectful, and Indigenous rights and interests-protecting community-based research.
- vii. **Accessibility and Benefit Sharing:** Validate that Indigenous groups have equal accessibility to and ownership of the benefits attained from their knowledge. Support systems, such as databases of traditional knowledge, licenses, and alliances that foster the growth of Indigenous communities, which make it easier for fair and mutually beneficial benefit-sharing arrangements.
- viii. **Policy and Legal Frameworks:** Promote the creation and application of laws and policies that safeguard Indigenous knowledge, intellectual property rights, and cultural assets. Ensure sure that these frameworks represent the opinions and aspirations of the Indigenous communities in which they are being built.
- ix. **International Collaboration:** Encourage information sharing and international cooperation between organizations, researchers, and communities that are part of the Indigenous world. Encourage the creation of forums for the exchange of successful models, lessons learned, and best practices for the sustainable development of indigenous knowledge in various contexts.
- x. **Funding and Resources:** Provide funding and assistance for sustainable development projects that draw on Indigenous knowledge. Make ensuring that Indigenous communities have access to financing possibilities and that there are resources available for long-term projects that support the preservation, revival, and transfer of Indigenous knowledge.

Through the implementation of these measures, it is possible to foster the conservation, rehabilitation, and dissemination of Indigenous knowledge, all the while



safeguarding the rights of Indigenous peoples and advancing the welfare of Indigenous communities. The integration of Indigenous knowledge is employed within sustainable development efforts with the aim of promoting environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, community resilience, and the establishment of equitable and sustainable communities. In order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development goals, it is imperative to recognize the importance of Indigenous knowledge and engage in substantive collaboration with Indigenous communities.

## **1.5 Concept of Culture**

The Latin term *colere*, which means to occupy, cultivate, or honour, is the source of the English word *culture*, which primarily describes the patterns of human behaviour and the symbolic frameworks that give that behaviour meaning. A community of people, which can be as small as one's family or a clan or as vast as a racial or cultural group, a nation as a whole, or in the era of globalization, by individuals all over the world, has a complex of characteristics known as culture. A society's whole way of life has been referred to as its culture. As a result, it comprises systems of belief as well as rules of conduct, dress, language, religion, rituals, and norms of behaviour like law and morality. Individuals who are members of society acquire cultural components first, evaluate their use, and then spread or transmit them to others. In this approach, culture is determined through the social interactions within the group and the behaviour of its members. But culture is neither static nor unchanging; rather, it includes an evolving procedure as individuals react to shifting circumstances and difficulties.

Different definitions of culture reflect different theories for understanding, or criteria for valuing, human activity. Edward Brunett Tylor wrote, in 1871, that "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". The United Nations agency UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has defined culture as the 'set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society

or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs’.

## **1.6 Knowledge Management**

The organized administration of an organization’s knowledge sources with the goal of creating value and meeting tactical and strategic goals is known as knowledge management (KM). It includes a variety of tasks, procedures, plans, techniques, and frameworks that facilitate and enhance the retention, assessment, exchange, improvement, and production of knowledge. KM is primarily concerned with the efficient dissemination of appropriate knowledge to the appropriate individual within the appropriate timeframe. The aforementioned concept may first appear straightforward, although it encompasses a significant connection to corporate strategy, a comprehensive comprehension of the existence and manifestations of knowledge, the establishment of cross-functional processes, and the assurance of acceptance and support from individuals within the firm. Knowledge management encompasses both the generation of novel knowledge and the processes of sharing, storing, and refining existing knowledge.

Knowledge management (KM) is closely linked to the objectives and strategic direction of a company. It encompasses the administration of knowledge that serves a specific purpose and contributes value to the organization. Building upon the preceding definition of knowledge management, KM encompasses the comprehension of various aspects, including the identification of the locations and formats in which knowledge is present, the identification of the organization’s knowledge requirements, the cultivation of a culture that fosters learning, sharing, and knowledge generation, the facilitation of appropriate knowledge dissemination to relevant individuals at the appropriate moments, the optimization of methods for generating or procuring new pertinent knowledge, and the effective management of all these factors to enhance performance in alignment with the organization’s strategic objectives and immediate challenges.

Knowledge management (KM) is essential for organizations to optimize learning and effectively utilize newly created knowledge. To achieve this, KM should focus on establishing appropriate tools, personnel, knowledge, structures (such as teams), and fostering a conducive organizational culture. Furthermore, KM should recognize the value and practical applications of the generated knowledge, ensuring its storage and accessibility for relevant individuals when needed. Additionally, KM should consistently evaluate, apply, refine, and eliminate organizational knowledge in alignment with specific short and long-term considerations. Based on the above knowledge management definition, it is evident that knowledge management relies on the effective management of several components inside an organization. These components include methods for knowledge creation and conversion, facilities for organizational memory and retrieval, processes for organizational learning, and the overall organizational culture.

### **1.7 Documentation**

Documentation refers to the systematic process of substantiating claims and attributing sources to the written content. Citations serve as the substantiation for information and ideas that have been derived from external sources. The evidence encompasses a combination of primary sources and secondary sources. Documentation plays a key role within the context of any therapy environment. The provision of continuity of care is facilitated by this. There exist numerous significant occasions within the context of treatment. Adequate documentation can assist the practitioner in recollecting those instances.

Documentation is a highly effective instrument for safeguarding against legal actions and grievances. Ensuring consent and managing expectations are beneficial practices. The preservation of indigenous knowledge is imperative to prevent its potential loss, as it has traditionally been transmitted orally between generations. Formal documentation and preservation efforts are necessary to safeguard this knowledge. The erosion of traditional knowledge is exacerbated by a communication gap, since both children and adults are increasingly detached from their communities. The oral

transmission of IK renders it vulnerable to modification, particularly in cases when individuals relocate to unfamiliar territories or choose lifestyles that diverge from those of their forebears. Charyulu highlights the significant difficulty in capturing and preserving Indigenous Knowledge (IK) due to its inherent tacit character, mostly transmitted through interpersonal channels such as mentorship, neighborly interactions, and intergenerational transfer within families.

The process of documenting Indigenous Knowledge is commonly perceived as straightforward from a technical standpoint, yet it can prove to be arduous, time-intensive, expensive, and occasionally unsatisfactory. The significance of recording Indigenous Knowledge lies in its role in preventing the impoverishment of communities, as the preservation of such knowledge is essential for maintaining genetic variety of species and diverse knowledge systems within the global context. Intelligence Quotient (IQ) can be recorded and documented in various formats, including:

- Descriptive texts such as reports
- Taxonomies
- Inventories (For example, lists of plant species, tables listing remedies and their preparations, etc.)
- Seasonal pattern charts
- Maps
- Matrices
- Decision trees
- Audiovisual forms, such as - photos films, videos, or audio cassettes
- Dramas, stories, songs, etc.
- Drawings
- Daily calendars

## **1.8 Description of Case Study Area**

Mizoram is located in the north-eastern part of India and is bounded by Myanmar (Burma) to the east and south, and Bangladesh to the west and by the state of Tripura to

the northwest, Assam to the north, and Manipur to the northeast. The capital is Aizawl, in the north central part of the state. Mizoram (Land of the Mizos) was known as the Lushai Hills District of Assam before it was renamed the Mizo Hills District in 1954. In 1972 it became a centrally administered union territory under the name of Mizoram, and in 1987 it achieved statehood. Little is known of Mizoram's early history. Between 1750 and 1850 the Mizo (formerly called Lushai) tribes migrated from the nearby Chin Hills, subjugated the indigenous peoples and assimilated them into their own society.

The residents of Mizoram consist almost entirely of Scheduled Tribes (an official embracing indigenous group). These groups are loosely called Mizo, a local term meaning 'highlanders'. Among the most prominent of the Mizo peoples are the Kuki, Pawi and Lakher. Most of the Mizo are Tibeto-Burman peoples, speaking Mizo or a closely related Tibeto-Burman language or dialect. Mizo and English are the principal and official languages. Having no script of its own, Mizo uses the Roman alphabet. The origin of the word 'Mizo' is not known. Mizo language has no script of its own. Christian missionaries began to work in the Mizo Hills area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Consequently the great majority of the population is Christian-predominantly Protestant, with most conversions having occurred in the 1920s and 1930s. Buddhists form the largest religious minority in Mizoram, followed by Hindus and Muslims; there also are tiny groups of Sikhs and Jains.

Agriculture is the dominant economic activity of Mizoram, engaging more than two-thirds of the work force in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Two types of agriculture are practiced: terrace cultivation, in which crops are planted, graduated terraces on the side of the hills and mountains to conserve water and reduce soil loss; and shifting agriculture, in which tracts-called-Jhum- are cleared by burning, cultivated for a limited period of time, and then abandoned for a number of years to allow regeneration of the natural vegetation and nutrients in the soil. An increase in number of people farming in the 20<sup>th</sup> century forced a reduction in the traditional eight-year cycle of Jhum regeneration, which in turn

resulted in a decrease in farm productivity. Rice, corn (maize), cotton, and vegetables are the main crops.

Music and dance hold significant importance in the cultural fabric of the Mizo community, and they are closely intertwined with many festive celebrations that are observed in conjunction with Christian holidays. The Mizos, frequently referred to as the ‘Song bird of the East’, possess a remarkable innate musical aptitude bestowed upon them by a divine entity. Festivals are commemorated by the inclusion of lively music, melodious lyrics, and captivating energetic dances. Among the various traditional dances, Cheraw, which is done using bamboo, is often regarded as the most aesthetically pleasing and renowned style of dance. However, there are other festivities that revolve around important stages of the agricultural cycle. The Mim Kut festival, for instance, is traditionally observed during the months of August or September, following the initial harvest of the year. This festival serves the dual purpose of expressing gratitude and paying homage to deceased ancestors. The Pawl Kut is a traditional harvest festival that often occurs during the months of December or January. The Chapchar Kut festival is observed by shifting agricultural communities during the commencement of the agricultural cycle, following the deforestation phase and preceding the initiation of field burning, typically occurring in the month of March.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant since there has not been a study on the Mizo people’s indigenous knowledge management’s sustainable development. To have an impact on indigenous organizations’ and local communities’ attempts to achieve sustainable socio-economic progress, indigenous and outside knowledge must be acquired, disseminated, and used to influence change. Because the genuine findings of this study would add to the body of theoretical and scientific research already in existence, it is necessary. Additionally, it is believed that the study’s findings would provide policymakers with information regarding IK practices around which strong and comprehensive policies must be created, particularly for the sake of the nation’s socioeconomic growth.

## **1.10 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to the indigenous knowledge of the Mizo Culture in Mizoram. In the Indian Constitution (Schedule Tribes), under 1950 (Part III- Rules and Orders under Constitution) there are 15 different tribes in Mizoram. Further study was limited to indigenous knowledge of Mizo tribes with special reference to the cultural life, agricultural practices, traditional dress, festivals and dances and religious beliefs of the Mizo (Lushai) tribes in Mizoram.

## **1.11 Literature Review**

**Omwoyo (2022)** intends to examine the parallels and discrepancies of the three terms, like indigenous knowledge, traditional knowledge, and local knowledge, which are frequently used to characterize the knowledge of traditional and indigenous cultures. The results show that although IK and LK are more ancient concepts than TK, the latter has gained more visibility in the literature than the former; there is little overlap in the use of the labels in the literature; the literature of the three labels is primarily centered in the social sciences; and there were differences in how the labels were portrayed across different nations and geographical areas.

**Safiqur et al., (2021)** analyze the global research productivity in traditional knowledge from 2013 to 2017. The study demonstrates that most researchers decide to publish their work as journal articles. The USA has been the most active nation and the recipient of the most citations overall over the past five years of traditional knowledge analysis. The most prolific author was 'Reyes-Garcia V' and the '*Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*' which is published by NISCAIR (National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources), is the premier journal for international scientific research in traditional knowledge. Biodiversity, conventional medicine, and therapeutic plants with targeted effects are the newest frontier subjects in this field.

**Santosh and Rakesh (2021)** reveal research trends in traditional knowledge by a critical scientometric analysis of 705 research articles published in 28 issues of the *'Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge (IJTK)'* between 2014 and 2020. In the current study, several scientometric techniques have been used to analyze the research output of IJTK, including article distribution, journal annual growth rate, authorship pattern, author productivity, level of collaboration, collaborative index, and city, state, and national article distribution.

**Sultana, Muhammad and Zakaria (2018)** revealed the importance of IK in sustainable development of different sectors like conservation of nature, forestry development, medicine, climate change, disaster risk reduction, agricultural practices etc. They also discussed various issues and challenges for preserving and promoting IK along with recommendations. **Hangsing and Laloo (2017)** discuss a model for preservation of Kukis Agricultural Knowledge in the library, and community participation in establishing a common platform for accumulating and dissemination of the rich indigenous knowledge. The model aims providing library resource of local indigenous knowledge freely accessible to all members of the community. It also enables the communities to manage their own indigenous knowledge in an economically viable manner.

**Sinha and Das (2017)** study an attempt to document oral culture, traditions and ethnic values of the indigenous communities residing in Silchar town of Barak Valley, Assam. The documentation of traditional knowledge is useful to address the Intellectual Property Right issues and for evidence-based research work. **Magni (2017)** explored the indigenous culture and their knowledge growth despite of mercy of climate hazards and misleading political decisions, the importance of role of sustainable development agenda for the IK system, explained the relationship among IK, sustainable practice, and land resource management along with climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction strategies. **Sarkhel (2016)** discusses strategies of indigenous knowledge management in libraries. While highlighting the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations



& Institutions) mandate towards the management and preservation of IK, different activities associated with the management of IK — such as, collection, recording and documentation, organization, preservation and storage, dissemination and networking are discussed and conclude that library professionals need to be proactive in devising strategies for the management and preservation of IK with the help of their professional knowledge and skills in order to ensure access to this valuable resource.

**Nomusa (2016)** study the management and preservation of indigenous knowledge in Dlangubo Village in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa and find that that the practices that were predominantly used in the area of study included agricultural crop farming and livestock keeping, the initiation of girls into adulthood and beadwork. The in-situ preservation strategies were more common than the ex-situ preservation strategies. Most of the respondents indicated that they acquired IK through apprenticeship of family line. The majority did not have knowledge nor had insufficient knowledge about the South African IP laws. In addition, they were not using the libraries and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in managing their IK **Choudhury (2015)** attempts to explore the oral folk tradition of Barak Valley of Assam which includes the oral folk and cultures and literatures that survived in the memories of people since time immemorial and passed on from generation-to-generation as a sustained form of verbal exchange dealing with their day-to-day lives. **Devi (2015)** discussed about traditional knowledge system of indigenous people and challenges for proper documentation of the whole system of knowledge of Assam, India.

**Rudnev (2015)** illustrated the perspectives of different scholars from all over the world on indigenous people and their ways to live and sustain themselves in their environment. The role played by the Commission on Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development in balancing the human, society and nature by the help of knowledge and wisdom of indigenous people through various ways were discussed. **Hani (2015)** illustrates how people irrespective of age, profession, location agree about high contribution of traditional knowledge to almost every sector especially to

agriculture. Traditional agricultural practice is very potent tool for improving the economic position of farmers irrespective of their category and for banishing unemployment and underemployment.

**Lwoga, Stilwell, & Ngulube (2014)** studied Indigenous Knowledge Management Practices in Indigenous Organizations in South Africa and Tanzania and seek a suitable knowledge creation model for South African and Tanzanian indigenous organizations. It applies Myer's seven C's model (2014) to determine how knowledge management may assist organizations in addressing challenges effectively. The findings demonstrate that Myers's model (2014) has been successful in part in explaining the knowledge management practices of indigenous organizations in these two countries. It is also difficult for indigenous organizations to motivate people to share knowledge because indigenous knowledge is individualized and used as a source of power, status and income in the communities.

**Khatri (2014)** describes the initiatives taken by the Indian government to preserve the Indian indigenous knowledge of medicinal and health care. AYUSH established some database portal for the access of Ayurveda research. **Slade and Yoong (2014)** studied the types of IK that older New Zealand based Samoans desired to retain by younger age Samoans. The tacit nature of IK creates difficulty in sharing and explaining by old Samoans (Grandfather) to younger Samoans to carry out their legacy in custom, culture, practices and tradition especially if they live outside of Samoa. Fa'aSamoa (Samoan way of life) in New Zealand, role of Fa'aaloalo (Respect), importance of Lotu (Church), Gagana Samoa (Samoan language), role of Aiga (Family), plants and herbs as medicine were the IK to be retained by the new generation of Samoans.

**Manabete, Umar and Reg (2014)** described the importance and relation of IK and Indigenous Technology (IT) in sustainable development in West Africa. They mentioned about how IK finds applications in tools, technologies, process and methods

to solve the problems for societal development. Highlighted threats of IK & IT including language, risk of extinction, exploitation by foreign technologies that led to neglect of indigenous development programs. Further they recommended IT system towards sustained and focusing technology efforts for product brand and marketing, trade practices, preservation and conservation of knowledge. **Sinha (2014)** discussed the role of archives and museum in preservation of cultural and national heritage and highlighted the diverse culture and national heritage of North- East India. **Chiwanza, Musingafi and Mupa (2013)** explored the challenges of managing IK in context of IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) and bio-piracy threats. They analyzed the effects of IK on local people, investigates the level of extent of IK threat, evaluate strategies for protection of IK along with IPR and related laws systems on IK in African countries.

**Sharma and Singh (2011)** on their survey of food practice revealed a wide range of variability in ethnic food made of cereals, pulses, milk and tubers. The meals are usual boiled rice, roti/ chapatti, dish of vegetable and dal. **Reyes-Garcia (2010)** discussed potential theoretical contributions of Traditional Knowledge (TK) system for ethnos pharmacological research and how holistic nature of TK system has improved in understanding of ethnos pharmacological knowledge of the societies in generation, maintenance, spread, cultural traits and innovations.

**Yumnam and Tripathi (2010)** conducted a study on traditional knowledge of eating raw plants by the Meitei of Manipur as medicine/ nutrients supplement in their diet. The raw plants include stems, leaves, flowers/ inflorescences, fruits, bulbs/ corms and whole plants. The beliefs behind this mode of eating are good for health and acts as a remedy for various ailments.

**Dlamini (2009)** study the management of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) initiatives in Swaziland and found that there are no policies specific to the management of IK in Swaziland which the institutions, which are the focus of this study could rely on for the effective management of IK. Most of the institutions use tape recorders, video cameras

and digital cameras to record IK. Sometimes IK is collected by writing down what informants give to those who collect IK, but this strategy is not used very much. **Nagpur, Channal and Channamma (2008)** shows that the people in Haveri district of Karnataka used spices and condiment from the kitchen and backyard as the indigenous remedies for gastrointestinal problems, diarrhea, vomiting and stomach-ache. **Reyes-Gracia et.al., (2008)** studied nutritional and traditional knowledge in the Tsimane' (a native Amazonian society in Bolivia) in relation of traditional plant knowledge and nutritional status measuring through body mass index, also relation of schooling knowledge with traditional knowledge of plants were observed by them on Tsimane' population.

**Charles (2007)** study indigenous knowledge of Central Africa and expressed how the Central African region represents just one example of how existing property rights regime have denigrated the value of indigenous wealth largely due to lack of codification, documentation and a legal cover. **Quynh (2007)** reviewed IK system in Vietnam by highlighting experiences and knowledge of local people in thrust areas like conserving nature, food security, farming system, and use of medicinal plant. Different type of difficulties in conservation of IK were discussed along with suitable measures to overcome from such problems such as collection, documentation and dissemination of IKS (Indigenous Knowledge Systems), building & strengthen of IK related institutions, bringing into mainstream of IKS in national development policies & marketing of IK values. **Msuya (2007)** describe the challenges and opportunities in the protection and preservation of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in Africa. He argued that there is a threat of IK extinction due to lack of recording and problems associated with preservation and protection of the knowledge from pirates. **Kothari (2007)** examines the claim that traditional knowledge is critically relevant to the human quest for sustainable living on earth. It starts by examining the concepts of 'traditional knowledge' (TK) and 'sustainable development' (SD). It goes on to show the essential links between the two and contributions of TK to various sectors of human welfare and development.

**Xurong et al., (2005)** discussed traditional methods and Indigenous Knowledge of low external inputs sustainable agriculture (LEISA) farmers for coping with climate variability particularly in agro meteorology. They discussed strategies like water flows including mechanical impacts of rain, heat & temperature flows including fires, and fitting cropping periods according to variation in seasons to cope with agricultural production and expectations on the climate variability. **Hunter (2005)** describe the role of information technologies in indigenous knowledge management in Australian Academic & Research Libraries and how the information technology tools have been designed to enable Indigenous communities to capture, control and share their knowledge within local knowledge bases according to their unique, specific local needs. **Renganathan (2004)** studies indigenous knowledge of rural women on environmental management and sustainable development and the proposed strategies involve an effective collaboration between the Government, research, extension and client systems aimed at developing an environmental ethic in children, through women, as children are going to be the pillars of the country in the years to come.

**Materer et al., (2001)** discuss the importance of indigenous knowledge systems in developing countries around and also describe how scientific advancements can aid poor countries only if knowledge systems are accessed and understood. **Gorjestani (2000)** describe the opportunities and challenges of indigenous knowledge for development. He mentioned about how The Indigenous Knowledge for Development Program of the World Bank will continue to champion IK and join others in their efforts to harness indigenous knowledge for development in a process of continuous learning from local communities. **Langill (1999)** prepare the resource kit for sustainable development researchers in dry land Africa which will assist them in planning ethical and effective approaches to indigenous knowledge research. The resource kit will provide researchers and development specialists with an introduction to the ethical and methodological issues surrounding indigenous knowledge research, and gives them some suggestions on how to deal with these issues in a practical sense when working in local communities.

## ***Research Gap***

From the literature available, it could be found that a great deal of works has been carried out in the sustainable development of indigenous knowledge of many different tribes but no study has yet been found concerning to indigenous knowledge of the Mizo people and therefore, to bridge the gap, this study, “Sustainable Development of Indigenous Knowledge Management of Mizo Tribe” had been done.

### **1.12 Research Design**

#### **1.12.1 Statement of the Problem**

The study analysed the sustainable development of the indigenous knowledge management with special reference to the Mizo people. The culture of Mizo concerned with knowledge collection and storing was to a large extent based on oral communication. Local knowledge was not recorded, but kept in people’s minds. This knowledge has been passed on from generation to generation through story-telling, poems, songs or through informal ways of teaching. A disadvantage to this form of knowledge management is that, the human mind has a limited capacity. Knowledge in someone’s mind could be forgotten altogether. It can also be distorted in the process of sharing or else it can even be lost if someone who has it dies. Indigenous Knowledge is tacit knowledge as it is in the beholders’ minds, but it can then be re-classified as predominantly explicit when it has been documented. Due to lack of documentation as well as preservation of indigenous knowledge of Mizo tribe, need arises to conduct the study and record, document and preserve the indigenous knowledge up to some extent in proposed area.

### **1.12.2 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the cultural history of Mizo tribe.
2. To examine the different practices and traditions within Mizo indigenous knowledge.
3. To identify the preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe through librarianship.
4. To examine the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge among the Mizos.

### **1.12.3 Methodology**

This research is a qualitative as well as an exploratory research in nature. So in order to accomplish the objectives of the study, the data/ information/ knowledge required is collected from primary, secondary and tertiary sources available in various places and in various forms. Apart from this, the following methods are used for collecting the required data/ information/ knowledge related to indigenous knowledge:

#### *a) Survey Method*

In this method, the detailed survey of the villages within Mizoram is made and indigenous knowledge of Mizo people is assessed. Additionally, the qualitative data are obtained from a number of interview conversations that are semi-structured using a recording device (with the interviewees' permission) to record their exact words in order to prevent data loss and a digital camera in order to record tangible items (images and video formats) related to local indigenous knowledge. Questionnaire was also used to gather data from Library professionals and general public to understand the role of Libraries and Civil Society Organizations in the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge.

b) *Observation*

The fact that it occurs where the event really takes place brings the scholar more closely to the activity. The scholar observes their actions, decisions, behaviours, practices, rituals, and so on, from their perspective. The audio-visual and image format is most commonly used to record and preserve the indigenous knowledge during observation. The information is thus being collected from all the available sources in Mizoram.

### **1.13 Chapterization**

The study comprises of the following chapters:

**Chapter 1:** This chapter contains an introduction to indigenous people, indigenous knowledge, and its significance as well as the study's overall introduction. It also includes the idea of sustainable development, which includes its dimensions, scope, basic characteristics, goals, principles and importance. Along with the sustainable development goals, the chapter discusses the link between indigenous knowledge and sustainable development, the idea of culture, knowledge management, documentation, and a description of the case study location. The study's significance and scope are also included, as well as a review of the relevant literature, a gap in the field's knowledge, and a research design that includes a description of the issue, study goals, a methodology, and references.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter contains the introduction of Indigenous Knowledge, the concept of knowledge management, definition of Indigenous Knowledge along with its definition, characteristics, scope and importance. It also highlights the importance and benefits of indigenous knowledge for the communities and local people; significance of and types of indigenous knowledge. In this chapter, the concept of indigenous knowledge management was point out with its steps involved in the management of indigenous knowledge, along with its benefits, and challenges. It further emphasize the



importance of documenting and disseminating of indigenous knowledge, and how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Library can take part in the management of indigenous knowledge

**Chapter 3:** This chapter contains the definition of cultural history, geographical presentation of selected area, sources of Mizo history, definition of Mizo tribe, explanation on different Mizo Customs such as Mizo Chiefs, Upa, Village Officials, Zawlbuk, Tlawmngaihna, Bawi and Construction of House. The Mizo Customary Law given by The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014 was also mentioned in this chapter under different acts such as Mizo Marriage Act, Dissolution of Divorce, Welfare Matters, Jurisdiction and Division of Property on Divorce.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of the study in accordance to the scope and objectives (No.1 and 2) of the study taken up. It elaborates and presented the cultural life of the Mizo people such as the patriarchal system in household, will and property inheritance given by The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014, food habits, hunting and hnatlang (social service); agricultural practices, agricultural tools, the influence of agriculture on traditional organizational systems, traditional attire of the Mizo (Lushai) ethnic groups and festivals and dances as well as the religious practices of the Mizo tribe.

It also contains the data analysis and findings in reference to the objectives of the study (No. 3 and 4), which were presented in tables for better understanding.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter contains the conclusion and suggestions of the study.

## **Conclusion**

The philosophy behind sustainable development applies to the intentional pursuit of growth while simultaneously utilizing resources in a more rational manner. This method involves taking into account the short-term alongside the long-term advantages for both the planet and its population. Sustainable development strategies play a crucial

role in promoting the advancement of nations by effectively tackling the issues linked to climate change, thereby making significant strides towards the safeguarding of vital natural resources for future generations as well as current ones.

The approach to sustainable development of indigenous knowledge thus, pertains to the comprehension and application of methodologies that guarantee the enduring conservation, implementation, and dissemination of traditional knowledge systems possessed by groups of indigenous peoples.

Thus, sustainable development of indigenous knowledge was also imperative towards the challenges posed by agents of globalization, in order to preserve, conserve, protect and safeguard Mizo traditional knowledge.

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## CHAPTER 2

### INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: CONCEPT

#### 2.1 Introduction

The natural world is comprehensively understood not only within the realm of science, but also in other academic disciplines. Human societies around have accumulated vast repositories of knowledge and rationales concerning their respective living conditions. The aforementioned ‘other knowledge systems’ is commonly recognized in contemporary discourse as traditional knowledge, indigenous knowledge or local knowledge. This text pertains to the diverse areas of knowledge, understanding, and interpretations that guide human societies worldwide in their multifaceted engagements with the natural world. These engagements encompass a wide array of activities such as agriculture, animal rearing, hunting, fishing, and gathering. Additionally, they encompass efforts to combat diseases and injuries, as well as the processes of naming and explaining natural phenomena. Furthermore, these engagements involve the development of strategies to adapt to changing environments (*Pandey, K. 2014*).

#### 2.2 Knowledge Management Concept

Knowledge Management (KM) refers to the systematic utilization of existing knowledge to effectively tackle contemporary business challenges and generate innovative strategies through the analysis of patterns inherent in the existing knowledge (*Mc Adam, 2000*).

Knowledge Management refers to the systematic procedure of collecting an organization’s collective knowledge from various sources such as databases, physical documents, and individuals’ intellectual capacities, and subsequently disseminating this knowledge to the areas where it can provide the most significant benefits. Knowledge management (KM) refers to the strategic practice of extracting value from an

organization's intangible assets. The process of organizing, distributing, and classifying information and individuals inside an organization is referred to as information and people management.

Alavi and Leidner (2001) provide a comprehensive definition of knowledge management (KM) as a systematic and organizationally defined procedure aimed at obtaining, organizing, and disseminating both tacit and explicit information possessed by employees, with the objective of enabling others to utilize it in order to enhance their effectiveness and productivity. The authors proceed to provide a definition for a knowledge management system (KMS) as 'an information system that is specifically designed to facilitate the processes of codifying, collecting, integrating, and disseminating knowledge within an organization' (Alavi & Leidner, 2001).

### **2.3 Definition of Indigenous Knowledge**

The term 'Indigenous' is defined by UN as 'Groups of people whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national communities, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations. People in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous are considered as descent people who inhabited geographical region to which belongs, at the time of colonization or the establishment of present state boundaries'.

Indigenous knowledge, alternatively referred to as traditional knowledge or traditional environmental information, encompasses a range of observations, innovations, practices, and beliefs that contribute to the preservation of ecological balance and the responsible stewardship of natural and cultural resources through the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environment. The inseparable connection between indigenous knowledge and the individuals who possess it is undeniable. It finds applicability across a wide range of phenomena, including those pertaining to physical, biological, sociological, cultural, and spiritual systems. For



thousands of years, Indigenous communities have been actively developing their knowledge systems, which continue to evolve now. These systems are rooted in their intimate interactions with the environment, a commitment to lifelong learning, and a vast repository of discoveries, lessons, and skills (*The White House, 2022*).

The absence of a universally accepted definition of ‘indigenous’ inside any United Nations-affiliated entity is a result of the vast array of indigenous populations and their inherent variety. The system has subsequently acquired a contemporary comprehension of this concept, which is founded upon the subsequent set of criteria:

- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/ or pre-settler societies.
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources.
- Distinct social, economic or political systems.
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs.
- Form non-dominant group of society.
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive people and communities.

The term ‘indigenous’ has been widely used as a general phrase for a significant period of time. However, in certain countries, there exists a preference for other names such as tribes, first people/nations, aboriginals, ethnic groupings, Adivasi, janajati, as well as geographical descriptors like hunter, nomads, peasants, hill people, and so on. The term ‘indigenous’ is often associated with negative connotations, leading many cultures to opt against disclosing or defining their heritage as indigenous.

Indigenous knowledge refers to the distinct local knowledge that is specific to a particular culture or civilization. Alternative designations for this concept encompass terms such as local knowledge, folk knowledge, people’s knowledge, traditional wisdom, or traditional science. The transmission of this information occurs inter-generationally, typically through oral tradition and cultural practices. It serves as the foundation for various societal functions, including agriculture, culinary practices,

healthcare, education, environmental preservation, and numerous other activities that contribute to the sustenance of communities throughout different regions globally.

Indigenous populations possess a comprehensive understanding of sustainable living practices. Nevertheless, the implementation of formal education systems has resulted in the displacement of indigenous knowledge and experiential learning methods, substituting them with theoretical information and scholarly approaches. In contemporary times, there exists a significant concern regarding the potential loss of a substantial amount of indigenous knowledge, which consequently entails the forfeiture of invaluable insights pertaining to sustainable lifestyles. Indigenous knowledge (IK) refers to the knowledge utilized by the inhabitants of a specific area or community to sustain their livelihood within a particular environment.

This knowledge encompasses various aspects such as the utilization of herbal remedies for specific ailments, cultural beliefs, innovative practices, and other forms of cultural experiences and expressions that are specific to the indigenous group. In the realm of sustainable development, various terms are employed to denote this notion, such as indigenous technical knowledge, traditional environmental knowledge, rural knowledge, local knowledge, and farmer's or pastoralist's knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge (IK) can be comprehensively understood as the knowledge that is acquired and passed down through generations within an indigenous (local) population, resulting from their longstanding inhabitation of a specific region. This comprehensive definition incorporates a wide range of information, technology, skills, practices, and attitudes that empower a group to attain sustainable lifestyles within their own environment. Indigenous, traditional, or local knowledge is commonly characterized as information that is distinct and specific to a particular culture, society, and its respective communities. Local knowledge and cultural practices are inherent to a certain community and are passed down through oral tradition across generations.

## **2.4 Characteristics of Indigenous Knowledge**

- i. It is dynamic, systematic and universal in principle. It is unwritten and known through the oral traditions.
- ii. It is practical common sense, based on teachings and experiences passed on from generation to generation.
- iii. It is holistic - it cannot be compartmentalized and it is rooted in the spiritual health, culture and language of the people.
- iv. It sets out the rules governing the use of resources - respect; an obligation to share. It is dynamic, cumulative and stable.
- v. It is a way of life - wisdom is using knowledge in good ways. It is using the heart and the head together. It comes from the spirit in order to survive.
- vi. It gives credibility to people.
- vii. It is based on experience, acquired from observations over time - it is argued that it may be most useful for local scale decision-making;
- viii. It is frequently linked with sustainable use of local resources.
- ix. It describes the health of the local environment, wildlife, etc., promotes consideration of the relationships between human and biological systems;
- x. It often describes these symbiotic relationships and provides the basis for life-sustaining decisions about how to relate to the environment.
- xi. It can show an understanding of the complex relationships between these individual components and the dynamic ecosystems within which they act;

## **2.5 Scope of Indigenous Knowledge**

According to Martine (1998), Indigenous Knowledge (IK) encompasses the historical knowledge of humankind, serving as the foundational layer upon which our scientific and cultural advancements have been built. It encompasses the localized solutions that have facilitated the establishment and maintenance of ecosystems and cultural landscapes over the entire globe. This technology facilitates the creation of

solutions that exhibit low energy and resource consumption, possess the capability to adjust to environmental fluctuations, and respond to emergencies and catastrophes in versatile and multifaceted manners. In the present period, where numerous planetary systems face the imminent threat of ecological collapse, IK (Indigenous Knowledge) offers valuable insights on how to engage with the environment in a manner that promotes the enhancement of its resource potential while avoiding depletion. Furthermore, it is imperative to acknowledge the potential industrial use of traditional knowledge, especially in cases where the tangible entity associated with the intangible information has not undergone any scientific intervention or alteration. Information and Knowledge (IK) is considered to be a very important and reliable source of knowledge. Information and knowledge (IK) can potentially contribute to the identification and implementation of effective solutions to contemporary challenges, often in conjunction with contemporary scientific and technological advancements.

Information and knowledge (IK) comprises a wide range of diverse knowledge categories. These distinctions can be made based on the constituent elements, the potential or existing applications of knowledge, the degree of documentation, the individual or collective ownership, and the legal status of the knowledge. The aspiration to safeguard IK has engendered a substantial corpus of scholarly writing and several regulatory ideas and calls to action within various international arenas. The precise definition of IK holds significant significance for the nature and extent of a potential protective framework. Intellectual property (IP) encompasses a wide range of subjects, such as the application of biological and other substances in the fields of medicine and agriculture, manufacturing methodologies, creative designs, literary works, musical compositions, ceremonial practices, and various other technical and artistic practices. This comprehensive category encompasses both functional and aesthetic aspects, encompassing procedures and products applicable to agriculture and industry, as well as intangible elements of cultural significance. Primarily, the field of information and knowledge encompasses the accumulation of knowledge that has been previously generated, yet is subject to on-going advancement. The majority of Indigenous

Knowledge (IK) can be characterized as non-contemporary, as knowledge has been transmitted across generations and often documented and disseminated by anthropologists, historians, botanists, and other scholars and observers. Nevertheless, the field of IK is not characterized by a fixed state; rather, it undergoes a process of evolution and creates novel insights through enhancements or adjustments in response to shifting conditions. The setting of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) exhibits considerable variation in terms of its manifestations and modes of presentation. Certain aspects of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) are codified, meaning they have been institutionalized in various ways. For instance, this can be observed in the context of textile patterns and the practice of Ayurveda traditional medicine. A significant component of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is comprised of non-codified or tacit forms, including folk, tribal, or indigenous medicine. These practices are rooted in traditional beliefs, norms, and accumulated experiences spanning centuries. They have been developed through a process of trial and error, encompassing both successes and failures at the household level. This knowledge is transmitted to succeeding generations in the form of oral tradition (*Martine, 1998*).

Individuals may potentially hold IK through many means such as engaging in healing practices and rituals. Additionally, certain members within a group may also possess IK, while in some cases it may be accessible to all members of the group, known as common knowledge. An example of this is the extensive knowledge on herbal-home remedies, which is carried by a significant number of women and elders, amounting to millions of persons. When IK-based products are distributed through commercial channels, their application and delivery might result in commercial value. Although many aspects of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) can be applied and comprehended beyond its local, traditional, and communal setting, this generalization does not hold true in all instances. The IK communities frequently have distinct spiritual elements. Knowledge that lacks practical application beyond its own community holds minimal or negligible economic worth, notwithstanding the potential significance it may possess within the community from which it originates (*Martine, 1998*).

## **2.6 Importance of Indigenous Knowledge**

Indigenous Knowledge constitutes a fundamental component of the impoverished population's social capital, serving as their primary resource to allocate towards the pursuit of survival, the cultivation of sustenance, the acquisition of shelter, and the attainment of autonomy. Due to its dynamic nature, this phenomenon adapts its characteristics in response to the demands of individuals and derives its energy from being deeply ingrained in the lives of people.

- i. Indigenous knowledge provides problem-solving strategies for local communities, especially the poor. Indigenous knowledge represents an important component of global knowledge on development issues.
- ii. Indigenous knowledge is an underutilized resource in the development process.
- iii. Learning from indigenous knowledge can improve understanding of local conditions.
- iv. Understanding indigenous knowledge can increase responsiveness to clients.
- v. Adapting international practices to local conditions can improve the impact and sustainability of our work.
- vi. Investing in disseminating indigenous knowledge can help to produce poverty.
- vii. Sharing of Indigenous Knowledge within and across communities can enhance cross-cultural understanding.

## **2.7 Importance of Indigenous Knowledge for Communities**

- i. Connecting to the past: IK represents a powerful link to a community's past. It offers information about a people's history, the land they have lived on, how they procured and processed resources and their relationships to other communities, other species, and the cosmos.
- ii. Expressing the present: IK informs a community's self-identity - how they understand themselves, each other, and how they fit in the wider world. To know how one's ancestors lived, what they valued, and what they knew is vitally

important to understanding that is in the present. In many cases, practices based on IK - from harvesting plants to telling stories - connect generations, both living and long gone.

- iii. Anticipating the future: Retaining and using IK may contribute to a community's future wellbeing. Skills learnt from IK can contribute to concrete endeavours such as asserting land claims, protecting traditional territory and natural resources, and continuing cultural practices of living on the land. IK can also be a key to affirming culture, particularly for indigenous communities living in colonial contexts. IK is the foundation of efforts to keep indigenous languages alive, enrich cultural expressions such as visual and performing arts and share community cultural values with the wider world.

## **2.8 Benefits of Indigenous Knowledge for Local People**

It is extremely important that local people benefit from the recording of their knowledge. Beyond contributing to project goals, documentation and storage of IK can benefit local people in the following ways:

- i. IK can be preserved for future generations so that it does not disappear with the passing away of elders.
- ii. IK can be legitimized in the eyes of younger generations by presenting it in a format that puts it on equal footing with the international knowledge system, which they are exposed to in state-run schools and through television and radio.
- iii. IK can be taught to younger generations in schools or other fora as a regular program.
- iv. IK can be made available to the least knowledgeable of a community. People can use research or their own experience to enhance IK, which they can pass on.
- v. Problems and solutions can be identified through analysis of IK, resulting in further projects that can benefit the community.

Indigenous Knowledge is not only important in its own right, but is also important for the benefits it brings to the following people:

- i. The indigenous people who own and live it;
- ii. All the other people around the world who can learn lessons for living sustainably from it; and
- iii. The Earth which would be treated more carefully if indigenous knowledge and values were followed more widely.

## **2.9 Significance of Indigenous Knowledge**

Indigenous Knowledge is simple and practical. It links the survival of every human being to the wholeness of nature and its elements that supports life. It provides the concrete situations of communities in relation with the environment and provides practical solutions to the problems of the people. Indigenous Knowledge defines a worldview of people and provides direction for their survival socially, economically, politically and spiritually. It explains the cultural evolution behaviors that resulted from the efforts of the people to adjust to their environment. In cases where the people have failed to resolve particular problems, the same became an opportunity for them to gain deeper understanding of the human situations. The key significance of Indigenous Knowledge is the development of peoples' capability to understand the world in a very simple manner as understanding the human self. The fact that people has survived for generations since the beginning of time, is a simple reason why this kind of knowledge cannot be simply undermined. Indigenous Knowledge deals with simple but applied education, economics, politics, religion, sciences and technologies of indigenous societies. This knowledge is basic but provides a rich ground for the development of the modern society. The significance of Indigenous Knowledge is sustainability based on the holistic understanding of the relationship between human beings and nature. The concept of sustainability in this context offers solution to the environmental problems confronting the world today. Based on the framework and structure of the common



sense which is the significant tool of the indigenous peoples towards survival, environmental conservation and sustainability does not need to be expensive. As a matter of fact, the recognition and support to local knowledge and cultures can make environmental conservation more meaningful, efficient and effective.

## **2.10 Types of Indigenous Knowledge**

The following types of IK were identified by Tavana, (2002) who stated two types of indigenous knowledge – explicit indigenous knowledge and tacit indigenous knowledge. These are discussed further below.

- i. **Explicit Indigenous Knowledge:** Explicit knowledge consists of “facts, rules, relationships and policies that can be faithfully codified in paper or electronic form and shared without need for discussion” (*Wyatt, 2001*). Furthermore, Smith (2001) defines explicit knowledge as ‘academic knowledge’ or ‘know what’ that is described in formal language, print or electric media, often based on established work processes, use people-to-documents approach. Explicit indigenous knowledge refers to traditional knowledge that is easily articulated, expressed, communicated and recorded. According to Tavana, (2002) examples of explicit indigenous knowledge is Samoan indigenous knowledge that include the names of reef fish, the breeding times of birds or the way in which to use certain plants for medicinal purposes. The nature of explicit knowledge is that it is easy to store, transfer and communicate with others. As the erosion of explicit IK and indigenous communication are increasing, the need to transfer, store and retain this knowledge amongst indigenous communities is greater now more than ever before.
- ii. **Tacit Indigenous Knowledge:** In contrast to explicit knowledge, tacit knowledge refers to the “practical, action-oriented knowledge or know-how based on practice, acquired by personal experience, seldom expressed openly, and often resembles intuition” (*Smith, 2001*). Tacit knowledge is often difficult

to express openly with words because it encompasses carrying out something without having to think about, like riding a bicycle for example. The very nature of tacit knowledge is that it is difficult to extract from the heads of individuals. It is very seldom found in books, manuals, databases or files as it is developed from mental models, values, beliefs, perceptions, insights, experiences and assumptions (*Smith, 2001*). Tacit indigenous knowledge refers to the types of traditional knowledge that cannot be easily expressed or articulated to outsiders (*Tavana, 2002*). Tacit IK is largely based on an individual's emotions, experiences, insights, observations and perceptions. Examples of a tacit indigenous knowledge are Samoan tacit indigenous knowledge which includes the deep respect that indigenous people have for their indigenous elders or the process of reaching a unanimous consensus within their society (meeting).

With respect to its nature and holders, IK can broadly be classified by United Nations Environment Program as:

- i. **Community indigenous knowledge:** indicates information that is not known to all but known only to a small group of people e.g. Tribal Knowledge. This knowledge is generally being transmitted verbally only to the members of the community.
- ii. **Publicly known indigenous knowledge:** refers to the information commonly known and used by the people with or without documentation. The medicinal use of neem, mahogany, and other trees provides examples of this class.
- iii. **Individual indigenous knowledge:** is available only with an individual or certain member of a family. Usually this information is handed over orally from the elder to his successor.
- iv. **Documented indigenous knowledge:** means information that is well documented and available to the public.
- v. **Vocal indigenous knowledge:** covers knowledge which is unwritten but preserved and handed over through generations orally.

- vi. **Sacred indigenous knowledge:** It consist both sacred tangible as well as sacred intangible rights. Sacred tangible rights suggest the property rights in tangible objects used as part of or pertaining to something sacred. Community's right over sacred sites is an example for this category. There are also sacred intangible rights which include intellectual property and other intangible rights applicable to the costume, choreography and photographs etc. of traditional sacred dance belonging to the community.
- vii. **Secular indigenous knowledge:** refers to the communities' right over arts and crafts. In this context, it includes material proper for commercial exploitation, items such as the family crests used in ceremonial occasions on clothing, masks, dance screens, etc. It also includes rights in photographs, choreographies, music or audio-visual productions used in non-sacred events and ceremonies.

## **2.11 Indigenous Knowledge Management**

The management of indigenous knowledge (IK) encompasses a range of activities including the identification, collecting, codification, documentation, organization, preservation, transfer, connecting, application, dissemination, and sharing of information pertaining to the livelihoods and ecosystems of indigenous communities. These efforts are undertaken with the aim of promoting sustainable development. Kaniki and Mphahlele (2002) assert that the majority of principles pertaining to knowledge management may be used to the management of Indigenous Knowledge (IK). However, it is crucial to acknowledge and solve several difficulties in order to effectively manage IK for the collective benefit of all stakeholders. One matter that warrants consideration is the marginalization and occasional distrust directed towards Indigenous Knowledge (IK). It is imperative to create knowledge regarding the significance of IK, as this would lead to societal recognition of its use and consequently justify the allocation of resources towards its preservation and promotion. Another aspect to consider in the management of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is to its distinct nature compared to Western knowledge. While Western information is typically organized and readily available for collection

and preservation in libraries, IK is predominantly owned by communities and transmitted within specific contexts and in accordance with particular protocols. Individuals undergo continuous lifelong training within their respective habitats, acquiring the skills necessary to control and coexist harmoniously with the natural world. There exists a necessity for specialists in the field of information to establish, identify, and oversee the management of said information. It is imperative to acknowledge that the issue does not lie just with the user's perceived disinterest in utilizing IK. Rather, it is crucial to align with the users' reasonable desires, needs, and preferred format for accessing information.

An additional salient concern in the realm of intellectual knowledge (IK) management pertains to the imperative of comprehending the intended objective of IK management and the intended beneficiaries of the knowledge, in order to effectively undertake the task of knowledge management. The initial purpose of managing indigenous knowledge (IK) may be compromised if a clear objective for IK management is not explicitly defined. Due to its unique characteristics, the field of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) necessitates the utilization of creative approaches for its definition, gathering, and transmission. The effective management of knowledge holds significant importance. Merely possessing knowledge is insufficient; it is imperative to establish a connection between knowledge and its practical, theoretical, or philosophical application in order to achieve desirable societal outcomes. Information and knowledge (IK) systems typically facilitate the integration of cognitive processes, emotional experiences, and practical actions. Similar to scientific knowledge, indigenous knowledge also requires technical management. According to Gorjestani (2000), the fundamental procedures involve the transformation of data, which include recognition and identification, validation, recording and documentation, storage in retrievable repositories, as well as transfer and dissemination. The aforementioned steps can be expounded upon in greater detail as follows:

- i. **Recognition and identification:** Some IK may be embedded in a mix of technologies or in cultural values, rendering them unrecognizable at first glance to the external observer (technical and social analyses may, therefore, be required to identify IK).
- ii. **Validation:** This involves an assessment of IK significance and relevance (to solving problems), reliability (i.e., not being an accidental occurrence), functionality (how well does it work?), effectiveness and transferability.
- iii. **Recording and documentation:** Recording IK and its documentation is a major challenge because of the tacit nature of IK (it is typically exchanged through personal communication from master to apprentice, from parent to child, etc.).
- iv. **Storage in retrievable repositories:** Storage is not limited to text document or electronic format; it could include tapes, films, storytelling, gene banks, etc.
- v. **Transfer:** This step goes beyond merely conveying the knowledge to the recipient; it also includes the testing of the knowledge in the new environment. Pilots are the most appropriate approach in this step.
- vi. **Dissemination:** Dissemination to a wider community adds the developmental dimension to the exchange of knowledge and could promote a wider and deeper ripple impact of the knowledge transfer.

The awareness, pilot applications, and mainstreaming are necessary steps required for a successful integration of IK into the development process which could help in managing indigenous knowledge. Higher education institutions need to play a role in harnessing and disseminating indigenous knowledge for sustainable development providing the knowledge base and transmitting of new skills. Libraries can be used for collecting, preserving and disseminating indigenous knowledge. Incorporating IK into an educational environment can help students feel ownership of the knowledge they bring to learning environments. IK needs to be addressed and integrated into educational programs settings or learning environments, and students better connected to material

taught can become a major knowledge source for their community sustainable development. To manage indigenous knowledge, the following four factors are important: dissemination of information, facilitating exchange of IK among developing countries, applying IK in development processes, and building partnerships.

## **2.12 Steps in Indigenous Knowledge Management**

The major steps in the management of IK as discussed by Mabawonku (2002) are:

- i. **Collection:** In collecting IK, there is a need to define the knowledge to be collected, and the likely inhibitors (that could disturb the collection of IK). The culture and knowledge systems have to be identified and taboos considered. The resource person (IK holder) has to be identified and the media to be used for documentation. The resource person or IK holder is the key figure in documenting IK. It is therefore important that she/he is not only knowledgeable, but is also seen as a reliable source. This is to ensure that the IK collected is reliable and authentic. Having more than one resource person would be an advantage especially if there are divergent opinions or some vital links or even if the knowledge has been distorted somehow. Some IK is best collected at specific times or seasons. An example would be that IK from ceremonies can only be collected during the time of the ceremony; therefore collection should coincide with the most appropriate period so that collection of IK will be successful (*Mabawonku, 2002*).
- ii. **Organizing:** If the IK has been recorded on cassette and/or video tapes, the next step is to edit the tapes and produce pictures and graphics. The content of the recording should then be summarized in writing either on computer or on a notebook, in other languages like English. Tapes must be labeled with labels containing bibliographic description and subject classification of the content (*Mabawonku, 2002*).

- iii. **Storage:** The collected IK should be stored in large cupboards in an air-conditioned room that is suitable for storage. More copies of the IK should be made on audio and /or video cassettes and circulated to other departments so that they could be borrowed if the need arises (*Mabawonku, 2002*).
- iv. **Dissemination:** Dissemination of IK is very crucial in its management. This, as Mabawonku (2002) says, is because knowledge that is gained but is unavailable to others is wasted. IK dissemination should begin by distributing the collected IK to the respective indigenous groups (IK holders) and hand copies of their recordings distributed to other people. Abstracts and indexes that would create awareness of the collected IK should be compiled and made available (*Mabawonku, 2002*).

### **2.13 Benefits of Indigenous Knowledge Management**

The indigenous knowledge system is the knowledge as well as experience that the indigenous people have developed for them in their lifestyles and environments. It enables people to manage difficult circumstances, obtain food and income, make future plans, and preserve their cultural legacy. Additionally, it supports the preservation of ecological harmony and biodiversity, as well as the awareness of the bio cultural worth of their lands and the otherworldly creatures they cohabit with. Indigenous knowledge supports the preservation of biodiversity, the upkeep and restoration of ecosystems, sustainable water management, the recovery of tropical ecosystems, and the management of other resources.

The utilization of local experience can be essential in determining the most favourable course of action for growth. Extension professionals and researchers can enhance their understanding and engagement with local communities by cultivating familiarity with them. The integration of Indigenous knowledge, in conjunction with Western-derived information, contributes to the formulation of culturally relevant sustainable development plans for societies in need of support.

## **2.14 Challenges Associated with Indigenous Knowledge Management**

A significant challenge in the realm of indigenous knowledge management, as highlighted by Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005), pertains to the dearth of individuals possessing both sophisticated indigenous competence and experience in western research. This scarcity hinders the attainment of equilibrium within the indigenous knowledge enterprise. Indigenous knowledge falls within the realm of tacit knowledge, as it primarily resides inside the cognitive faculties of individuals. Therefore, the process of recording, transferring, and disseminating is challenging. Furthermore, indigenous populations exhibit a tendency to be hesitant in regards to the dissemination of their knowledge. Insufficient protection of intellectual property rights is evident. Indigenous knowledge is frequently perceived as pseudoscientific or antithetical to scientific principles. Kaniki and Mphahlele (2002) have highlighted that knowledge management enables the processes of knowledge development, sharing, and re-utilization.

The primary obstacles to effectively managing Indigenous Knowledge (IK) encompass the processes of identification, accessibility, intellectual property rights, and the selection of appropriate media and formats for its preservation. Lawas and Luning (1996) argue that the process of gathering Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is arduous, requires a significant amount of time, and incurs substantial costs. Therefore, it is imperative to provide appropriate storage and administration in order to facilitate the availability and accessibility of information for the sake of humanity. The implementation of knowledge management typically incurs significant costs, since it necessitates the allocation of financial, material, human, and other resources to achieve desired outcomes (*Davenport, 1988*).

## **2.15 Importance of Documenting and Disseminating Indigenous Knowledge**

The understanding of documenting Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is not a recent development (*Ngulube, 2002*). During the colonial era, missionaries and colonial district officers undertook the task of gathering data pertaining to customary practices related to



land tenure, livestock, and traditional beliefs and rituals. The process of documenting Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is essential to mitigate any disadvantages faced by communities and villages due to their distinct beliefs and cultural practices that shape their way of life. The concept of IK mostly exists in a tacit form, meaning that it is deeply ingrained into the actions and experiences of those who possess it.

Tacit knowledge is transmitted via interpersonal conversation and practical demonstration, typically from a mentor to an apprentice or from parents to their offspring. Indigenous knowledge (IK) is commonly transmitted through diverse familial narratives, cultural restrictions, symbolic representations, mythical and legendary accounts, ceremonial practices, and communal celebrations. The transmission of Indigenous knowledge between generations mostly occurs through oral tradition, underscoring the imperative to document and safeguard it to prevent its potential loss or misattribution. While the transmission of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is primarily oral, its significance is becoming recognized on a global scale due to its application in various domains such as herbal medicine, animal husbandry, and agriculture. It is highly logical and justifiable to undertake the documentation of this information and provide indigenous individuals the appropriate acknowledgment for their contributions.

## **2.16 Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Indigenous Knowledge Management**

Throughout history, crucial knowledge pertaining to health, child raising, and the management of natural resources has frequently been conveyed through distinctive mediums, including proverbs, myths, rituals, and ceremonies. In light of technological advancements, it is crucial to explore methods for incorporating indigenous knowledge into the realm of scientific information processing. The utilization of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has significant implications for the enhancement of indigenous knowledge systems, as well as its integration with contemporary scientific

and technical information. According to Adam (2012), information and communication technology (ICT) has the potential to be utilized for:

- i. Capture, store and disseminate indigenous knowledge so that traditional knowledge is preserved for the future generation
- ii. Promote cost-effective dissemination of indigenous knowledge
- iii. Create easily accessible indigenous knowledge information systems
- iv. Promote integration of indigenous knowledge into formal and non-formal training and education
- v. Provide a platform for advocating for improved benefit from IK systems of the poor

Indeed, the appropriate utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is crucial in facilitating the dissemination of indigenous knowledge and the integration of contemporary scientific and technical insights into traditional knowledge. The integration of indigenous knowledge, which has been depended upon by local communities for generations, with scientific weather forecasts has the potential to enhance the credibility of such forecasts within the community. The utilization of contemporary information and communication technology (ICT) remains very uncommon in the direct transmission of indigenous knowledge among and between groups. As nations strive to build connectedness, the adoption of contemporary information and communication technology (ICT) has the potential to serve as a significant facilitator for the sharing of indigenous knowledge (IK). In the foreseeable future, it is plausible that conventional and suitable methods of transmission may be employed to promote the exchange and transmission of Indigenous Knowledge (IK). The instruments utilized in a given context are contingent upon the specific conditions and the level of connectivity and accessibility available to a country and its population. The process of exchanging Indigenous Knowledge (IK) could be facilitated through the provision of external support aimed at enhancing local capacity, as well as the dissemination of tools and resources within local communities.

Sources of ICT for disseminating Indigenous Knowledge can be:

- i. **Video and radio broadcasts** in local languages could disseminate IK practices using story telling techniques, especially in the rural areas;
- ii. **Telecentres** could help make knowledge flow in a two-way street from the local community's outward (indigenous practices) and from the global community inward (international practices). Telecentres are being introduced in several countries (e.g., Senegal, South Africa, etc.).
- iii. **Electronic networking** would be most appropriate to establish exchanges among civil society groups and to link the nearly dozen existing local IK centers in various countries. The main use of ICT for promoting indigenous knowledge such as capture, store and disseminate IK so that traditional knowledge is preserved for the future generation, promote cost-effective dissemination of IK, create easily accessible IK information systems, promote integration of IK into formal and non-formal training and education, provide a platform for advocating improving and gets benefits from IK systems to the poor. During natural disasters in rural areas survival mostly rely on IK, because the non-formal means by which IK is disseminated provides a successful model for other education on disaster risk reduction (*Lodhi & Mikulecky, 2000*).

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) encompass a range of telecommunications technologies, including telephony, cable, satellite, and radio. Additionally, digital technologies such as computers, information networks, software, desktops and laptops, digital cameras, scanners, smartphones, CDs, DVDs, pen drives, microchips, cloud computing, the internet, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, mobile device technology, email, and cell phones are also considered part of ICTs. The utilization of modern information and communications technology, such as computers and the Internet, has the potential to facilitate economic prosperity and employment opportunities, foster enhanced collaboration between governments and citizens, establish connections among various organizations and communities, and enhance the provision

of vital services to underprivileged individuals. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has had a significant and far-reaching influence on the domain of indigenous knowledge management. The utilization of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly enhanced the processes of capturing, storing, and disseminating indigenous knowledge (IK). When effectively employed, information and communication technology (ICT) can play a crucial role in safeguarding and facilitating the retrieval of existing indigenous knowledge. Undoubtedly, information and communication technologies (ICTs) possess considerable potential in facilitating the documentation, administration, distribution, and enduring conservation of indigenous knowledge.

### **2.17 Role of Libraries in Indigenous Knowledge Management**

Libraries have the capacity to facilitate the dissemination of indigenous knowledge by establishing a conducive setting that enables in-person discussions and networking sessions for the purpose of engaging in discussions pertaining to indigenous knowledge. According to Anyira, Onoriode, and Nwabueze (2010) as well as Okore, Ekere, and Ekere (2009), it is proposed that lectures delivered by traditional healers, priests, and similar individuals should be documented through the use of audio or video recordings. This method seems to be a more suitable approach for preserving IK for future reference compared to the traditional practice of transcribing it manually. The process of transcribing narratives, belief systems, and similar concepts can sometimes lead to the inadvertent loss of their fundamental core. Due to this particular circumstance, the capture, documentation, and preservation of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) cannot be conducted in a manner analogous to that of scientific knowledge.

According to the scholarly works of Kaniki and Mphahlele (2002), Ngulube (2002), and Sithole (2007), it is imperative for librarians to assume new responsibilities in order to effectively capture and safeguard Indigenous Knowledge (IK). In addition to acquiring new competencies, librarians are responsible for ensuring the appropriate

preservation and organization of information in order to facilitate its universal availability and accessibility. According to Ngulube (2002), the insufficient management of indigenous knowledge (IK) has led to the depletion of a significant portion of the indigenous knowledge that was documented by colonial district administrators. The initial stage is instructing the librarians in educational institutions on the management of Indigenous Knowledge (IK). Another aspect to consider is the inclusion of indigenous communities by global organizations in this endeavor. An indigenous individual has the capacity to contribute to the development of frameworks and maybe deliver lectures on the protocols and expectations surrounding interviews conducted within indigenous contexts.

According to the International Federation of Library Associations' statement on indigenous traditional knowledge (International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions [IFLA], 2014), libraries can help in the following ways:

- i. In the collection, preservation and dissemination of IK.
- ii. To inform the public on the contribution and importance of IK.
- iii. To involve indigenous people in the community with collection, dissemination and preservation of IK.
- iv. To support efforts aimed at ensuring that indigenous people and their IK are protected by intellectual property laws.

In its statement on Indigenous Traditional Knowledge, IFLA (2008) recommended that libraries to:

- i. Implement programs to collect, preserve and disseminate indigenous and local traditional knowledge resources.
- ii. Make available and promote information resources which support research and learning about indigenous and local traditional knowledge, its importance and use in modern society.

- iii. Publicize the value, contribution, and importance of indigenous and local traditional knowledge to both non-indigenous and indigenous peoples.
- iv. Involve Elders and communities in the production of resources and teaching children to understand and appreciate the traditional knowledge background and sense identity that is associated with indigenous knowledge systems.
- v. Urge governments to ensure the exemption from value added taxes of books and other recording media on indigenous and local traditional knowledge.
- vi. Encourage the recognition of principles of intellectual property to ensure the proper protection and use of indigenous traditional knowledge and products derived from it (*IFLA, 2008*).

Libraries play a crucial role in ensuring the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge (IK), while encountering numerous problems. Being the custodians of knowledge, libraries bear the responsibility of preserving and managing IK to facilitate its effective utilization and ensure its availability for future generations. The utilization of indigenous knowledge is being recognized as a substantial factor in fostering sustainable development within local communities. This knowledge encompasses a collection of perspectives, information, and practices that serve as a guiding framework for community members in their utilization of land and natural resources. The objective of successfully handling indigenous knowledge is to ensure the timely dissemination of accurate information to the appropriate recipients. Libraries have the potential to facilitate the dissemination of indigenous knowledge by establishing a promising setting that enables in-person forums and networking opportunities for the purpose of engaging in discussions pertaining to indigenous knowledge.

## **Conclusion**

Library professionals have the ability to make valuable contributions towards the preservation and management of indigenous knowledge. This can be achieved through the preservation, dissemination, and application of traditional knowledge and practices

that are specific to local populations. They have the capacity to significantly contribute to the advancement of sustainable development, the enrichment of cultural diversity, and the promotion of social inclusion, thereby enabling even marginalized individuals within the community to attain social recognition. In the current era of globalization and digitalization, there exist numerous opportunities for the management of indigenous knowledge.

The imperative of co-designing and co-creating technologies in collaboration with indigenous communities, while upholding their values, needs, and preferences, was of paramount importance. Furthermore, it was essential to amplify the significance of indigenous and local knowledge in the realms of disaster risk mitigation and climate change adaptation, as a means to address the pressing issue of climate extremes that the global community confronts. Additionally, advocating for the acknowledgment and safeguarding of indigenous rights and interests within both national and international frameworks and policies was indispensable in safeguarding and fostering indigenous cultures within our diverse society.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **CULTURAL HISTORY OF MIZO TRIBE**

#### **3.1 Cultural History**

The study of cultural history serves to vividly depict a past age and geographical setting. The examination of cultural history involves an enquiry into the beliefs and convictions of previous periods. The perspectives of individuals who are socioeconomically disadvantaged and have limited access to education are considered, alongside the contributions of intellectual elites, even if these perspectives are not formally documented. These phenomena are reflected in the artistic expressions of intentionally innovative societies, as well as in the material objects and occurrences of everyday existence, such as attire or cuisine (*Yale University*, n.d.).

Moreover, culture has deeply rooted concepts pertaining to magic, gender roles, and racial hierarchy, and the rituals and customs that symbolize and uphold these perspectives. The field of cultural history seeks to gain insight into the cognitive processes of persons belonging to diverse cultures. Individuals who are deeply immersed in a particular culture often exhibit a clear awareness of the cultural context that influences their worldview. By examining the historical development of culture, we are able to gain a broader perspective and acknowledge that many aspects of our daily lives, which we often consider to be universal and immutable, are in fact distinct and contingent upon various factors that can lead to transformation (*Yale University*, n.d.).

A comprehensive understanding of historical civilizations and their collective self-perceptions and worldview can be attained through the examination of cultural history. This field of study encompasses an exploration of several aspects, such as attitudes, values, rituals, everyday objects and experiences, as well as the beliefs, ideas, and practices of both individuals and communities (*The History Press*, n.d.).

### 3.2 Geographical presentation of the selected study area

Mizoram is situated in the northeastern region of India. The etymology of the term *Mizoram* may be traced back to its constituent elements: *Mi* referring to the local populace, *Zo* denoting an elevated or hilly terrain, and *Ram* signifying a geographical region. Consequently, the term collectively signifies the region as the ‘Land of the hill people’ or the region inhabited by the indigenous hill-dwelling tribes. Mizoram was formerly a constituent of the state of Assam until 1972, when it was delineated as a distinct entity, following a pattern observed with other states in the northeastern region of India. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1987, it attained the status of being the 23<sup>rd</sup> state within the nation of India. Aizawl serves as the capital city of the state of Mizoram. The region under consideration exhibits territorial demarcations with neighboring states in the northeastern part of the country, namely Assam, Tripura, and Manipur. Additionally, it has an international boundary with both Myanmar and Bangladesh. According to the 2011 census, the population of Mizoram was recorded as 1,097,206 (*Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2020*). The state in question ranks as the second least populous among all states in the nation. The geographic coordinates of the region encompass a latitude range of 21.58 to 24.35 degrees north and a longitude range of 92.15 to 93.29 degrees east. The total land area covered by this region measures around 21,081 square kilometers. Mizoram is geographically partitioned into a total of eleven districts, namely Aizawl, Lunglei, Siaha, Champhai, Kolasib, Serchhip, Lawngtlai, Mamit, Saitual, Hnahthial, and Khawzawl. Additionally, Mizoram encompasses three (3) Autonomous Districts Councils, namely the Lai, Mara, and Chakma Autonomous District Councils, situated in the southern region of the state (*Mizoram Portal - Mizoram at a Glance, n.d.*).

Mizoram is characterized by its topographical features, which encompass undulating hills, expansive valleys, meandering rivers, and numerous lakes. The state is traversed by a total of 21 prominent hill ranges or peaks of varying elevations, spanning across its whole expanse, interspersed with occasional lowlands. The mean elevations of

the hills located in the western region of the state approximate 1,000 meters (3,300 ft). The elevation gradually increases to 1,300 meters (4,300 ft.) in an eastern direction. Certain regions, however, exhibit elevated altitudes that surpass 2,000 meters (6,600 ft.). *Phawngpui Tlang*, commonly referred to as the Blue Mountain, is located in the southeastern region of Mizoram state. With an elevation of 2,210 meters (7,250 ft.), it holds the distinction of being the highest peak in the region (*Mizoram Portal - Mizoram at a Glance*, n.d.).

The primary river in the state of Mizoram is *Chhintuipui*, which is alternatively referred to as Kaladan, Kolodyne, or Chintuipui. The beginning of the aforementioned route may be traced to Chin state in Burma, from there it traverses through Saiha and Lawngtlai districts located in the southernmost region of Mizoram. Subsequently, the route returns to Burma's Rakhine state. While numerous rivers and streams originate from the hill ranges, the Tlawng, Tut, Tuirial, and Tuivawl rivers hold significant importance and use. These rivers traverse the northern region and finally converge with the Barak River in the Cachar District. The rivers exhibit a gradual decline in elevation, particularly in the southern region (*Mizoram Portal - Mizoram at a Glance*, n.d.).

The *Palak Dil* Lake, situated in Mizoram, holds the distinction of being the largest lake in the region, encompassing an expansive area of 30 hectares (equivalent to 74 acres). The lake is located in the Saiha district in southern Mizoram. The formation of the lake is hypothesized to have been caused by either seismic activity or a hydrological event. According to local beliefs, there exists a buried settlement that remains preserved at significant depths beneath the waves. The *Tam Dil* Lake is a naturally occurring body of water located at a distance of 85 kilometers (53 miles) from the city of Aizawl. According to local folklore, there exists a longstanding narrative around the presence of an immense mustard plant that originally occupied this particular location. Upon the severance of the plant, water jets emanated from its core, resulting in the formation of a body of water. Consequently, the aforementioned body of water acquired the appellation

*Tam Dil*, denoting its association with the mustard plant. Presently, the lake holds significant prominence as a prominent tourist destination and a popular vacation spot.

The lake of utmost importance in the historical context of the Mizo community, *Rih Dil*, is situated in close proximity to the Indo-Burma border within the territory of Burma, which is an intriguing coincidence. According to popular belief, it was postulated that the spirits of the deceased traverse this body of water before to their journey towards *Pialral* or the celestial realm. The designated State Animal of Mizoram is the *Saza*, scientifically known as the Serow. The State Bird is the *Vavu*, also referred to as the Hume Bartailed Pheasant. The State Flower is the *Senhri*, which is a species of Red Vanda. Lastly, the State Tree is the *Herhse*, known by its scientific name *Mesua Ferrea* or *Nahar* (*Mizoram Portal - Mizoram at a Glance*, n.d.).

#### MAP OF MIZORAM



*Image 3.1: Map of Mizoram highlighting different districts of Mizoram*

Source: *Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2020* from [pages-223-2020.pdf](#) ([mizoram.gov.in](http://mizoram.gov.in))



## POPULATION TREND IN MIZORAM (1901-2021)

Table 3.1: Mizoram Population

1. ARE A &	Year	Males	Females	Total	Decadal Variation (%)	
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	
	1	1901	39,004	43,430	82,434	-
	2	1911	43,028	48,176	91,204	10.64
	3	1921	46,652	51,754	98,406	7.90
	4	1931	59,186	65,218	124,404	26.42
	5	1941	73,855	78,931	152,786	22.81
	6	1951	96,136	100,066	196,202	28.42
	7	1961	132,465	133,598	266,063	35.61
	8	1971	170,824	161,566	332,390	24.93
	9	1981	257,239	236,518	493,757	48.55
	10	1991	358,978	330,778	689,756	39.70
	11	2001	459,109	429,464	888,573	28.82
	12	2011	555,339	541,867	1,097,206	23.48

*(Source: Directorate of Census Operations, Mizoram)*

*Source: Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2020 from [pages-223-2020.pdf](#)  
([mizoram.gov.in](http://mizoram.gov.in))*

### 3.3 Sources of Mizo History

The sources of history of Mizo can be classified as:

1. **Oral Sources:** The oral tradition holds considerable importance as a source of historical information, as it adheres to specific transmission guidelines that greatly impact the interpretation of history. Consequently, the significance of oral tradition lies in its role in comprehending the evolution of cultures lacking written records, necessitating the interpretation of fables, myths, and folklore to

establish origins. The field of Mizo writing about history suffers from a scarcity of available historical records. The availability of literary works among the Mizo people only occurred with the advent of the British and afterward the adoption of the Roman alphabet. During that period, JH Lorraine and FW Savidge, two missionaries, commenced their instructional activities in Mac Donald Hill, Aizawl. Given the limited availability of written sources pertaining to Mizo history, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the significance of oral sources. In contemporary historical research, oral materials are recognized as a supplementary resource to written sources. The word oral sources encompasses a wide range of non-conventional sources, including folklore, folk music, beliefs, ceremonies, hymns, rituals, and other related elements.

2. **Archaeological Sources:** The archaeological evidence for the history of the Mizo Tribe encompasses the discovery and analysis of artifacts, relics, and structures discovered within the traditional habitats of the Mizo people. The assemblage may consist of historical items, including pottery, tools, weaponry, ornamentation, and various forms of material culture. Insights pertaining to the prehistoric behaviors and traditions of a certain society can also be derived through the examination of rock art, megalithic buildings, and burial sites. The historical and contemporary aspects of the Mizo Tribe are being reconstructed through the utilization of archaeological discoveries and surveys carried out in the Mizo Hills and surrounding regions.
3. **Foreign accounts:** The data obtained from foreign narratives is as limited as the information derived from epigraphy. A wide range of materials, such as historical records, travelogues, missionary narratives, anthropological inquiries, and academic studies conducted by individuals or groups outside the Mizo community, can be utilized to construct external accounts of Mizo cultural history. The narratives often focus on different aspects of Mizo social structures, ceremonies of religion, language, traditions, and culture. During the colonial era in Northeastern India, British officials, missionaries, and scholars documented

the various aspects of Mizo culture upon their interaction with the indigenous population.

The aforementioned accounts offer valuable perspectives on the dynamics between the Mizo community and colonial powers, the influence of Christianity, and the transformation of customary customs under colonial rule. The examination of the expansion of Christianity within the Mizo tribe and the subsequent cultural transformations resulting from this doctrinal shift can be gleaned primarily from accounts of missionaries. Additionally, it is worth noting the existence of initiatives aimed at translating the Mizo dialect and documenting oral traditions. Anthropologists and ethnographers have made significant contributions to the understanding of Mizo culture by conducting studies and engaging in fieldwork. Their research mostly centers on various aspects of the Mizo people's economic daily lives, folklore, rituals, kinship, and other relevant issues.

4. **Existing literature:** Existing literatures such as books, magazines, government records and articles on research perspectives related to Mizo culture can be found from writings of Christians Missionaries, Mizo writers and various Indian authors. This collection of literature not only serves as a medium for the preservation and dissemination of a diverse history of culture but also fosters intercultural comprehension among individuals and communities. Indigenous literature provides valuable insights into several facets of indigenous societies, encompassing spirituality, land connection, traditional healing methodologies, and social frameworks. Through an in-depth examination of these texts, experts acquire a comprehensive comprehension of indigenous perspectives and cultural practices, which can serve as valuable insights for the formulation of policies, design of educational curricula, implementation of conservation initiatives, enhancement of healthcare methodologies, and various other domains. Furthermore, this collection of work exemplifies the enduring strength and skill transmitted across generations after generations, providing invaluable

perspectives on sustainable lifestyles and remedies for present-day societal dilemmas.

5. **Archival Records:** During the eighteenth century, the significance of official records and archival materials increased as European archives gradually became accessible to historians. These sources have since become widely utilized by scholars in many historical inquiries. The historian specializing in modern India benefitted significantly from the accessibility of the colonial government's archives to scholars. This facilitated the acquisition of a substantial amount of information, so greatly enhancing the comprehension and evaluation of the various occurrences in India throughout the period of British rule. The accessibility of the official archives pertaining to the British monarchy has presented both challenges and opportunities in documenting the historical narrative of India's colonial era throughout the previous four decades. Until a few decades ago, historians had access to a limited range of literature, including studies on Viceroys, works on constitutional developments, biographies, and general histories primarily authored by British officers or British professional historians. However, the examination of both official records and private papers has resulted in a reevaluation of the colonial history of India, leading to a revised understanding of the subject. The British annexed Mizoram in 1890, initiating a subsequent period of consolidation and examination of the indigenous system of governance. The British individuals, driven by their curiosity about uncharted territories, embarked on exploratory missions and documented their observations on the customs and practices of the indigenous populations (*Malsawmdawngliana, 2015*).

### **3.4 Definition of Mizo Tribe**

The term 'Mizo' is a general term that is used to represent a collection of the many tribes or clans that are present in the current state of Mizoram as well as some of the adjacent states and nations that will be mentioned later. Thus, there are several tribes

that make up the term Mizo, which may be generally classified into five major and eleven smaller sub-tribes. These tribes and sub-tribes are further broken down into many clans. The major ones are: *Lusei, Ralte, Hmar, Pawi* and *Paite*.

There exist a maximum of eleven minor sub-tribes; however their numerical representation is comparatively smaller. Upon engaging with larger collectives, individuals exhibited a tendency to either neglect or misplace their unique linguistic variations due to a lack of practice. Nevertheless, their unique identities have not been obliterated.

In the early history of the Mizo people, several of these tiny sub-tribes produced some of the most noteworthy figures. These sub-tribes include: *Chawngthu, Chawhte, Ngente, Khawhkring, Khiangte, Pautu, Rawite, Renthlei, Tlau, Vangchhia, Jongte*. *Awzia* refers to these eleven subtribes. Additional sub-tribes including *Mirawng, Bawng, Biate, Hrangkhawl, Dawn, Tlanglau, and Mualthuam* were added by certain historians. These clans can communicate with each other because there are not many dialect distinctions between them.

The ancestral origins of the Mizos are enigmatic due to the absence of written records, hence precluding any definitive conclusions from being reached. The Mizos maintain that their initial place of origin was referred to as '*Chhinlung*.' *Chhinlung*, a term derived from the combination of '*chhin*' (covered) and '*lung*' (stone), is purportedly a cavernous structure of significant proportions. According to the Mizo community, their forebears sprang from the confines of this cavern. The individuals gradually appeared in succession, and upon the emergence of the *Ralte* tribe, a considerable commotion ensued, prompting the cave's protective deity to obstruct the entrance with a stone, either due to apprehensions of discovery or concerns regarding population growth.

A contemporary endeavor has been undertaken to thoroughly examine the myths. Legend has it that *Chhinlung* is associated with a Chinese prince within the confines of

China, rather than being attributed to a cave. The appropriate designation would have been Chin Lug. He was the son of Huang Ti, the ruler of the Chin dynasty, who is renowned for his construction of the Great Wall. The prince incurred the displeasure of his father and subsequently relocated to Burma, where he resided among other members of his family. This perspective, devoid of any supernatural aspects, presents the benefit of increased reliability.

According to an alternate mythology of notable historical significance, there exists a Chinese prince named Chin Lung, whose paternal lineage remains undisclosed. Due to his father's discontent, the prince embarked on a journey to Burma accompanied by a substantial entourage. The individual in question moved to *Aupataung*, a region in Burma that is alternatively referred to as '*Awksatlang*' by the Mizo community. In the aforementioned elevated urban settlement, Chin Lung had already passed away, resulting in the dispersal of his adherents towards various destinations. Each of these persons self-identified as '*Chin Lung chhuak*,' a term denoting affiliation with Chin Lung. The appellation '*Chin Lung*' underwent a transformation to '*Chhinlung*' subsequent to its dissemination through oral means.

Based on the aforementioned assumptions and introspective analysis, it appears plausible to posit that the Mizos trace their origins to Central Asia, afterwards undertaking a migration towards their present geographical milieu from an eastern direction. The relocation of individuals to Kabaw Valley in Burma during the seventh century A.D. is well-documented. After being expelled from the valley in the year 1200 A.D. by consecutive Shan invaders, the Mizos resettled individually as independent tribes. The primary indigenous group, referred to as the *Luseis*, is recognized to have inhabited the region throughout the period spanning from 1250 to 1400 A.D. Subsequently, the individuals proceeded to traverse the river and established their habitation in the vicinity of the *Lentlang* and *Tiau* rivers throughout the period spanning from 1450 to 1700 A.D. Prior to the year 1700 A.D., individuals embarked on a westward journey, through the *Tiau* River, and ultimately reached the region presently

known as Mizoram. Additional communities established their settlements in various regions such as Manipur, Tripura, Cachar, Bangladesh, and the Chin hills in Burma.

The Mizo constitution has been a subject of significant discussion due to the distinct pathways and settlements of numerous tribes throughout different governments and nations. Furthermore, it is worth noting that each tribe and clan possesses a unique appellation for the specific language they utilize. During that period, the existence of a tribe known as ‘Mizo’ was not documented. Hence, it is imperative to consider the originator and the period of initial prominence associated with the appellation Mizo. According to T. Gougin’s *The Discovery of Zoland*, the authentic characterization of a Zomi (or Mizo) pertains to an individual who has resided on a hillside for an extended duration, exhibiting consistent demeanor, habits, and other related attributes. Some historians theorize that the residents of the hills may have been referred to as ‘People of the Cold Region (the inhabitants residing in the frigid geographical areas) or ‘Zomi’ by their brothers and sisters in the hot valley.

Based on the many perspectives presented, it can be inferred that prior to their settlement in the Chin Hills, the Mizo community lacked a shared nomenclature. Following their successful conquest of various Mizo clans, the Sailo chief’s proceeded to disseminate the term ‘Mizo’ among their subordinates, despite their preexisting familiarity with the terms ‘Mizo,’ ‘Zomi,’ and ‘Zo’. As previously said throughout the course of numerous centuries, the Mizo sub-tribes experienced geographical separation due to the presence of international and state boundaries. Consequently, this led to the gradual divergence of their traditions, customs, lifestyles, behaviors, and even languages across different locations. The early historical accounts of Mizo mostly rely on stories, traditions, practices, and beliefs.

### **3.5 Mizo Customs**

The customs of the Mizo tribe have contributed to the development of a unique social and cultural legacy. Over the course of time, certain traditions have undergone

modifications in order to serve the betterment of society. The customs observed by the Mizo people exhibit distinct characteristics, but several of them have experienced modifications throughout the course of time. Consequently, the Mizo tribes experienced substantial transformations in their way of life due to the influence of Christianity. Over time, society has made significant progress in eliminating negative and futile activities. However, the state or society persists in adhering to specific foundational customs (*India Netzone*, n.d.).

### **3.5.1 Mizo Chiefs**

The Mizos resided within a social structure characterized by gerontocracy, wherein chiefs held a position of paramount authority. The chief held the role of being both the progenitor and guardian of the Mizo community. The leader was traditionally referred to as *Lal*, a term denoting a position of authority or nobility. He maintains his status by his personal character rather than relying solely on his inherent rights. The role of the chief in the village might be characterized as that of a generous and influential leader. The inhabitants of his village were regarded as his familial or filial relations.

The function assumed by the Chief within Mizo society had significant importance. He was obligated to provide assistance to the individuals residing in his village during their state of distress, offer guidance through their arduous endeavors, acknowledge their achievements, and administer disciplinary measures in cases of wrongdoing or violation of established societal norms. The villagers, in their respective roles, were expected to adhere unquestioningly to the directives of the chief. They were responsible for executing tasks entrusted to them both individually and collectively, while also providing assistance to the chief to the fullest extent feasible. It is important to note, however, it can be argued that the chief did not possess autocratic tendencies and was compelled to avoid such a leadership style in order to sustain his position of authority. The villagers would abandon him and seek refuge under a new chief in another village if they perceived him as despotic or insensitive to their needs and comforts.



The chief demanded respect in exchange for the effective governance they exercised over their subjects. The *Sailo* clans, who assert their ancestral lineage, claim to have originated from the celestial region situated between the moon and the sun. The act of eliminating the *Sailo* leader was seen as an egregious offense during that period, and it was conventionally understood that a captured *Sailo* individual should neither be subjected to enslavement nor execution.

The Mizos were a nomadic tribe, with several clans and sub clans engaging in a pattern of migration in pursuit of sustenance, specifically Jhum land, accompanied by their respective leaders. The settlers established themselves in locations that had been chosen by the Chiefs. The chiefs established boundary pillars as a means of enforcing their respective jurisdictions. The land, referred to as *ram*, was under the ownership of the chief, who held ultimate authority over it.

### **3.5.2 Upa**

The chiefs received support, direction, and advice from a collective body of elders known as *Upa*. The matters pertaining to the villages would be thoroughly examined and deliberated upon, with efforts made to address any differences that may arise. In the process of adjudicating and rendering judgments, a group consisting of three or four *Upa*'s would convene alongside the chief. In each of these scenarios, customary traditions would be meticulously maintained. Punishments were implemented in conformity with established customs and practices. The *Upa* family received *salam* payments as remuneration for their legal services rendered in the pursuit of legal disputes. In customary practice, the *salam* was traditionally remunerated by the party that incurred a loss in the legal dispute.

In the pre-existence of the monetary system, a prevalent practice for imposing penalties involved the payment of fines in kind, sometimes taking the form of offerings such as mithun, pigs, or birds. The emergence of a cash alternative has evolved over time in response to the introduction of currency into the Mizo economy. In that era, a

substantial sum of 40 rupees was established as the upper limit for penalties. The price of *salam* was denominated in a favorable amount of rupees. The restitution would be awarded to the individual who has suffered harm. The chief and his *Upa*'s would allocate the *salam* towards hosting a feast. The individuals who have violated the regulations would be required to remit the prescribed monetary penalty within the designated period as determined by the chief authority. In the event of a default, the individual's property will be seized in accordance with the level of demand. If the individual were to consistently fail to meet their obligations, the chief would take measures to remove them from the community.

### **3.5.3 Village Officials**

In addition to the *Upas*, there existed many additional customary village officials who held positions under the administrative structure of the chief. The chief assigned them a range of responsibilities. In each village, a designated individual known as the *tlangau*, or village crier, would undertake the task of disseminating the chief's directives by traversing the community during the late afternoon. The *tlangau* would get provides a basket of rice as compensation in return for the individual's services from each household. Within every village, there resided a proficient craftsman known as a third, colloquially recognized as a blacksmith, who possessed expertise in fabricating diverse implements and armaments for the indigenous populace. The aforementioned items encompassed a diverse array of equipment, which included those that were explicitly designed for agricultural applications. Each residence will provide him with a basket comprising of undusted rice. In addition, he would have the right to receive a predetermined distribution of the vertebrae and three ribs from every animal that was shot or captured by any individual inside the village. The individual designated as the *puithiam*, a village priest, assumes the role of supervising and conducting diverse communal rituals within the hamlet.

He performed all sacrifices with the intention of pacifying the spirits. In exchange for his services, the local inhabitants would provide him with paddy. The chief

was given guidance by the *ramhuals* as to where Jhum should be performed for the year. In compensation for their assistance, the *ramhuals* would be granted highest priority for their jhum plots at the specified spot, ahead of the chief. They gave the chief a *fathang* (bigger tariffs) in exchange for the right to choose their own plots. To assist the chief in his private business, other selected persons were available. When the chief's family ran dry of rice, the *Zalen* would assist him and would additionally support him in future occasions where he was facing a similar problem. He obtained a *fathang* waiver of rice because of recognition of his services to the chief. Two other individuals were ready to support the chief with his very own personal concerns. To fulfill the chief's sacrifices and ceremonies, the *sadawt* acted as his personal priest. The *tlahpawi*, who was usually a close companion of the chief, would assist him.

#### **3.5.4 Zawlbuk**

In parallel to the establishment of chieftaincy, a significant number of tribes have implemented a structure of bachelor's dormitories, wherein young men get instruction on the customs and values of their own tribes, thereby fostering their assimilation into accepted norms of social conduct. Each *Lushai* village was equipped with a *Zawlbuk*, which served as a residence for unmarried men.

The *Zawlbuk*, a significant structure in the community, would frequently be situated in a prominent position directly across from the chief's dwelling. The *Zawlbuk* hall is of ample size to accommodate all the young men residing in the area. The fire in the fireplace situated in the center of the hall was consistently smoldering. Upon the completion of their daily tasks, the youthful individuals would assemble within the *Zawlbuk*, where they would partake in communal pursuits such as wrestling, vocalizing melodies, narrating anecdotes, and other comparable endeavors. During the later afternoon and early evening, the adolescent boys would engage in a customary practice known as *nula rim*, when they would traverse the village with the intention of courting the young females. Late at night, individuals would retreat to the *Zawlbuk*, a structure equipped with raised sleeping platforms. When seeking accommodation for an overnight

stay in a community, it was common for travellers to choose the *Zawlbuk* as their lodging option. The *Zawlbuk* hall was utilized by the chief to organize village meetings, as it was the only common hall available and the biggest area accessible in the hamlet.

In the event of an emergency or for communal activities, the *Zawlbuk* would serve as a gathering place for the young men within the village. The promotion of completion would be encouraged alongside the cultivation of a cooperative mindset. The individuals who displayed exceptional dedication and prowess in hunting were bestowed with distinctive vessels of *zutaima zu* and *huai zuno*, respectively, as tokens of recognition.

In the *Zawlbuk* community, it was customary for juveniles or individuals in their early stages of development to reside with their families until they reached puberty. During this period, they were expected to engage in various laborious duties for the young men of the community. These chores included gathering firewood and providing assistance in grave excavation, which entailed lugging bamboo and stones. Upon reaching the stage of puberty, individuals would be granted permission to become members of *Zawlbuk* in its entirety. *Hotu*, the captain and leader, supervised the *naupang's* activities. In the village, it is seen that there exists a plurality of *hotus*, each designated to oversee a specific *veng* or part within the community. The *Zawlbuk* would be entrusted with complete control over all male individuals inside the society.

Every morning, roll calls were carried out in order to confirm the presence of all the individuals in the *Zawlbuk*, namely teenagers and young men. *Tlangval upa*, the individual in charge of the *Zawlbuk* establishment, assumed the roles of commander and disciplinarian for the young male inmates, overseeing the allocation of duties and ensuring compliance with regulations. The work of the individuals would be subject to review in order to ascertain the extent to which they have adhered to the predetermined timeline. The individuals who fail to meet their financial obligations would be assigned additional tasks as a kind of compensation. *Zawlbuk* adhered to a strict set of ethical guidelines. An intriguing type of punishment was employed for individuals displaying

stubbornness. The *tlangval* community would assemble at the residence of the individual in question and engage in forceful agitation of the home, causing it to tilt significantly, in response to any instance when a father reproached or physically assaulted a *hotu* for mistreating his child.

In order to mitigate interference from outside with the disciplinary measures of the *hotu*, it is proposed that this punishment be designed to hold a deterring effect of significant scale. The exclusive individual entrusted with the power and control over the *Zawlbuk* was the head of the community. If adolescent guys were producing an excessive amount of noise throughout nocturnal hours, it is conceivable that one may resort to the action of tossing a stone into the roof of the *Zawlbuk* as a method of conveying the necessity for them to uphold a state of tranquility. Engaging in the act of appropriating an item from the *Zawlbuk* will incur a financial sanction of forty rupees.

### **3.5.5 Tlawmngaihna**

There was a great custom called *Tlawmngaihna* that required people to help one another. It is also possible to refer to it as the Mizo people's moral code. Everyone, regardless of their personal pain, was required to always act with concern for others, according to this custom.

Each person would compete to be the most helpful and philanthropic. This was a wonderful Lushai philosophy to follow. For instance, if one of the groups became ill while they were travelling, they would all halt until he healed before continuing. The definition of *Tlawmngaihna* has been attempted by a variety of writers. Some had called it altruism (Humane concern for the well-being of others), while others said it was a form of chivalry. In his work, Dictionary of Lushai Language, Christian Baptist Missionary J.H. Lorraine attempted to explain the meaning as follows:

- i To be unselfish, selfless, persistent, stern, strong-willed, courageous, bold, resolute, and independent (declining any form of relief).

- ii To set one's own preferences aside and act against one's better judgments in order to aid someone else, avoid disappointing someone else, or other similar goals such as sacrificing one's reputation.
- iii To act in accordance with the situation, regardless of how unpleasant or difficult it may be for oneself or on their own's inclinations (*Rev. Lalrinawma, V.S., 2005*).

A person who possessed *Tlawmngaihna* must be obedient and respectful to the elders; courteous in dealing with the weak and the lowly; generous and hospitable to the poor; give opportune moments in favor of others; ready to help those in distress; compassionate to a companion who falls sick while on a journey or become victims of a wild beast in the hunt by never abandoning him to his fate; heroic and resolute at war and in hunting; stoical in suffering and in facing hardship under trying circumstances; and persevering in any worthwhile undertaking however hard and daunting that might prove to be. An individual who possesses a strong sense of moral duty (*tlawmngai*) should prioritize fulfilling the requirements of a given situation, regardless of the unpleasantness or inconvenience it may pose to oneself or one's own preferences; vie with others in excelling in sports or any other corporate labor; and try to surpass others in hospitality and in doing his ordinarily daily task independently and efficiently. Its dimensions covered both personal and collective levels of activities wherein self-interest was subordinated to the interest of others individually and collectively and the self-sacrifices for the needs of others was to come in spontaneously as a natural part of one's life. *Tlawmngaihna* to a Mizo therefore stands for that compelling moral-force which finds expressions in self-sacrifice of others (*Malsawmdawngliana, 2015*).

Both the *Zawlbuk* institution and the *tlawmngaihna* custom eventually vanished with the arrival of Christianity. As a result, when the majority of a community converted to Christianity, the *Zawlbuk* in that village sluggishly declined until they eventually went extinct. The Christian in a village would not join a *Zawlbuk*. *Tlawmngaihna* suffered a same fate. The customary system of obligations and responsibilities was also broken

when individuals started to reject their long-held beliefs. There were emerging new buildings and institutions, including administrative centers, medical facilities, schools, and churches throughout the villages. Individually and collectively, the populace began to rely increasingly on churches and the government at large for direction and assistance.

### **3.5.6 Bawi**

In the hills, there existed a mixed-race social structure that combined elements of social security and slavery. This was the *bawi* (slave) system used by the Lushai people. In accordance with this arrangement, a chief would be provided with a number of dependents (*bawi*'s), who would stay with the chief, labor for him, and assist him in all ways in exchange for food and lodging from the chief. Only under particular circumstances, generally by offering a mithun or making a certain amount of cash, could he release himself from his duty to the chief.

The people who were taken prisoner during raids made up another class of dependents in addition to the *bawi*'s were known as *sals*. In a raid, the winning side would murder its adult warriors and elderly ladies. The children and women who were eligible for marriage would be kidnapped. In the captor's household, they would receive excellent care.

### **3.5.7 Construction of House**

The structure of the home itself is a sign of hierarchy, and it makes up a sizable portion of the average person's daily life. The dwelling is not permanently built since the Mizo were a semi-nomadic people that moved about. The separation in society was portrayed by the setting and architectural features of each dwelling.

The Mizo villages are typically found at the summit of a tall hill or ridge. Simple commoners would build the homes in two rows facing one other in the hamlet during the pre-modern Mizo civilization. Depending on the number of the family, the house's size could differ.

The chief's home, however, and *Zawlbuk* remains situated in the middle of the hamlet, *Mualveng*. *Upa* and *Thangchhuah's* homes are in the immediate vicinity, followed by those of the ordinary people, and then *Pahmei's* and *Hmeithai's* (residences of widowed person) for a man who has just his wife to assist him in his field labor. The rice was husked with long wooden mortars in the spacious verandahs in front of each home. These verandahs were fitted with the hollow basins cut out of the tree trunks. The internal space of the home was equipped with a sizable mud hearth, over which was stretched a substantial bamboo structure, on which platters of grain that was dry and herbs were placed. With the exception of the front door, commoner housing lacks windows and ventilation.

On the other hand, *Thangchhuah* enjoyed the freedom to open the windows in his side wall as he pleased, to publicly build separating walls in his home, and to build his home with a *vanlung* (verandah). The skulls of the many creatures he shot will hang on the walls of his home as trophies for his accomplishments.



*Image 3.2: Zawlbuk*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @Zokhua, Reiek)*





*Image 3.3: Mizo Lal In (Chief's House)*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*



*Image 3.4: Khawnbawl In*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*





*Image 3.5: Pum*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*



*Image 3.6: Thangchuhappa In*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*





*Image 3.7: Minaran In (Commoner's House)*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*



*Image 3.8: Hnamchawm In*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*





*Image 3.9: Hmeithai In (Widow's House)*

*(Source: Esther Lalruatpuii @ Zokhua, Reiek)*

### **3.6 Mizo Customary Law**

Customary law sometimes referred to as traditional laws or indigenous law represents a body of legislation that develops out of a particular tribe or community of people's custom, practices, and traditions. Unlike formal written laws produced by legislatures or governments, it is unique.

Customary law is a collection of historical norms, traditions, and laws that have grown up over time in a particular society. It frequently draws on ingrained cultural norms and ideas that have been handed down through the centuries. The scope of customary law, which can affect a variety of topics like social relations, entitlement to property, marriage, inheritance, and conflict resolution, varies greatly across various civilizations. Indigenous law can coexist with official legal systems in some areas, and the extent to which it is recognized will depend on the legal system and policies of the nation.

Customary laws are a component of tribal law; they are accepted, recognized, and upheld by society's citizens, and they play a significant role in social cohesion. The Mizo group places a great deal of value on its customary rules, much like the majority of tribes found in India's north-eastern region. Many of the customary practices in indigenous Mizo society can be seen even in contemporary society as a positive reinforcement of custom and continue to attach immense significance as the fundamental values of the people's socio-cultural and political lives, even though some traditional norms may have faded as a result of the encroachment of the Christian faith.

The Mizo Customary Law, also known as The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act of 2014, was enacted to establish a legal framework controlling marriage, divorce, property inheritance, and other relevant issues within the Mizo community. The Mizoram Legislative Assembly enacted it during the 65<sup>th</sup> year of the Indian Republic. Any member of any Mizo tribe is subject to this Act. It also refers to unions in which one or both of the parties' male members are a member of a Mizo tribe.

### **3.6.1 Definitions in the Act (The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014, Act No.9 of 2014)**

Acquired property refers to any asset other than inheritable assets that has been obtained by an individual or a family via any means; Ancestral property refers to a coparcenary property. The property that belonged to the father, grandpa, and great-grandfather - three male parents - in an uninterrupted line of descent; it does not include maternal ancestors who were also a person's ancestors. Hence, property received as an inheritance from a maternal grandparent is not classified as ancestral property. The term couple in this Act and other currently applicable statutes denotes a legally married husband and woman.

Court refers to any Civil Court with original jurisdiction over the area; Decree refers to the formal expression of an adjudication that, in the context of the court's expression, it clearly specifies the entitlements of the parties concerning any or all of the

matters under consideration in the lawsuit, and it may constitute a final decision in accordance with the relevant legislation; Desertion refers to abandonment that occurs against the will of the person alleging it; For the purposes of this Act, Divorce refers to any of the following Mizo customary methods of ending a marriage or separating a couple: *Mak*, *Sumchhuah*, *Kawngka Sula Mak*, *Uire*, *Atna avanga inthen*, *Nupui Fanau chhuahsan*, and *Sumlaitan*; An infant whose father is unknown is referred to as a *Falak*; Head of family refers to the person in charge of the family's movable and immovable assets.

Any person authorized or permitted to perform marriages for this Act is referred to as a licenced officer; a *lawichal* is a term used to describe a male individual who is selected by the bride's family to provide protection and support the bride and her entourage during their journey to the groom's residence. The primary role of the *lawichal* is to formally present the bride to the groom upon their arrival at their house. The term *Lawi* denotes the act of the bride entering the groom's home after departing from her own. The term Mizo encompasses individuals who are Mizo by birth, those who have been adopted as minors, and individuals who are recognized and accepted as Mizo by society as a whole; and Major refers to a person who, for the purpose of marriage, is a male or female who has reached the age of 21, if he is a male, has reached the age of 21.

*Man* refers to the bridegroom's payment of the marriage fee and the bride's family patriarch receiving it. However, if the marriage is solemnized in accordance with this Act, failure to pay the marriage price by mutual consent of the parties does not render the union null; *Man pui* refers to the primary marriage price, and the term *thutphah* denotes a monetary deposit that is paid in addition to the main marriage payment, with the understanding that it will be refunded to the groom's family upon the completion of the marriage ceremony, facilitated by the palai; *Man tang* refers to the secondary marriage price, which the head of the family distributes in various amounts, primarily to close relatives.

*Innei* (marriage) denotes the union between a male and a female, wherein they are legally acknowledged as spouses subsequent to the completion of a prescribed set of situations:

- i In order to propose to a woman for marriage, a man must first send a *Palai* to the woman's family head;
- ii If the family agrees to the proposal after receiving the woman's consent, the head of the bride's family will then fix the quantum of the man as well as the date and location for the marriage's solemnization;
- iii The man will send a *palai* to pay the marriage price
- iv The bride, accompanied by a *lawichal*, departs her house and relatives on the day of the wedding and at the designated hour to move in with the groom;
- v The proposed marriage is disclosed to and officially solemnized by the Licensed Officer who has been designated by the parties to conduct the ceremonial act of formalizing a marriage;
- vi The marriage becomes fully valid and enforceable in law once it has been conducted in accordance with the prescribed customary rituals and procedures mentioned earlier, or as allowed by a recognized official witnessing the marriage.

The term *Palai* pertains to individuals, specifically a minimum of two, who are selected by the groom's family to serve as intermediaries during the negotiations concerning the marriage; the term property refers to any item, movable or immovable; personal property is any item registered in a person's personal name as well as any additional item bought, given, administration, and ownership of assets by an individual. Re-marriage pertains to the act of entering into a marital union by an individual who has previously been married and afterwards divorced or widowed. Woman's personal property refers to all items a woman owns that she has purchased, inherited, received as a gift, or otherwise acquired. This includes any items that she brought to her husband's home at the time of marriage and that are registered in her name. *Sawn* refers to an illegitimate child, and the term *sawn man* describes the payment of Rs. 40/- made to a woman from whom a man has fathered a child, despite the fact that he is not married.

### 3.7 Mizo Marriage Act

Marriage holds significant importance within the Mizo community, according to longstanding conventions. It serves as a crucial institution, essential for upholding the continued existence of the clan and preserving their cultural heritage, rituals, and traditions.

#### 3.7.1 Marriage Price

- i. **Marriage price:** The cost of marriage includes a mandatory payment known as *man pui*, which is set at a minimum of Rs. 420/-. *Man pui* refers to the monetary sum that is traditionally bestowed upon the father or sibling of the bride. In situations where the father or brother is absent, the nearest male relative of the bride is entitled to claim this compensation.
- ii. **Settlement of marriage price:** The documentation of the marriage payment made through *palai* shall be formally recorded in written form, in accordance with Schedule I. The documentation should comprise a pair of copies, each of which necessitates the endorsement of the paternal family of the bride and the *palai*. Two versions of the paperwork exist, with one designated for the family of the bride and the other for the groom's family. The primary kind of price known as *man tang* is distributed by the head of the household to different individuals, typically immediate family members, in accordance with the specified allocation described in Schedule II.
- iii. **Subsidiary Marriage price:** The customary practice of bride price within the *Man tang* cultural category, wherein the individuals who get said price are as enumerated below:
  - a. **Sum hmahruai:** In the context of marriage, it is common for the father or receiver to get a portion of the marriage price, or alternatively, allocate it to his brother or son who maintains a separate household.
  - b. **Sumfang:** Within the realm of marital customs, it is conventionally observed that the individual assuming the role of the father or recipient of



the marriage price is expected to provide certain amounts of said price to either their sibling or their offspring, who possesses an autonomous household.

- c. **Pusum:** A share of the bride's price which was allocated to the maternal grandparents of the bride, namely the mother's father. In the event of his demise, the maternal uncle of the bride will assume the aforementioned role.
- d. **Palal:** A share goes on an individual whom the bride has selected to be her father within the village in which she is getting married, and who reciprocally assumes the role of caring for her as his own daughter.
- e. **Niar:** A share given to the paternal aunt of the bride. In the event that an aunt is not available, it is possible for a female relative to assume the role or position and get the designated portion.
- f. **Naupuakpuan:** The elder sister of the bride is traditionally bestowed with a share as an act of appreciation for her nurturing role and familial connection throughout the bride's infancy. In the event that a sister is not available, another woman who is capable of assuming a similar role or establishing a comparable relationship may be entitled to receive the bride's price.
- g. **Nu man:** The bride's price is sent from the groom to the mother of the bride, who is the biological parent of the bride. The occurrence of this situation is limited to cases where the parents of the bride are either unmarried or divorced.
- h. The person who takes on the title of the father of the bride or receiver of the marriage price is under no obligation to distribute the received sum of money (known as *sum hmahruai* and *sumfang*) to anyone else.



*Image 3.10: Bride's Price (Source: Zuala Kawlani)*

### **3.7.2 Notice of intended marriage**

The parties who wish to solemnize their marriage are required to provide a notice of their intention to marry to the Licensed Officer. Upon receiving the information, the authorized officer will determine the day and location for the ceremonial event in collaboration with the involved parties. The individual in question shall ensure that a notice of the forthcoming marriage is prominently displayed or announced in accordance with the regulations, methods, or customs of the religious organization to which they are affiliated as a licensed official.

### **3.7.3 Solemnization of marriage**

- i. The act of formalizing the marriage can be carried out by an authorized individual, such as an ordained minister, reverend, pastor, authorized elder (*Upa*), commissioned officer, priest (*Tirhkoh*), or ordained priest belonging to a certain religious denomination.

- ii. The marriage ceremony will be conducted in accordance with the rules, rites, ceremonies, and customs of the religion to which the official belongs and holds such office.
- iii. In order to officiate the marriage, it is required that at least two witnesses be present, in addition to the Licensed Officer who is responsible for conducting the ceremony. It is customary for those who are designated as the best man and the bridesmaid to assume the responsibility of serving as proficient witnesses.

#### **3.7.4 Voidable Marriage**

A cohabitating couple consisting of a man and a woman residing in *Inru*, *Tlandun*, *Fan*, or *Luhkhung* does not constitute a legally recognized marriage until it has been formalized in accordance with the provisions outlined in this legislation.

#### **Explanation:**

- i. *Inru* refers to a man who invites a woman to reside with him in a marital relationship.
- ii. *Tlandun* means the act of a man and a woman choosing to marry in a secretive or sudden manner, sometimes without the knowledge or approval of their families or communities.
- iii. *Fan* refers to a male individual who relocates from his own residence to cohabitate with a female individual in her dwelling, assuming the roles of husband and wife.
- iv. *Luhkhung* refers to the act of a woman relocating from her own residence to live with a man in his home, assuming the roles and responsibilities of a married couple.

#### **3.7.5 Degrees of Prohibited Relationship**

According to the regulations and customs of one's religious affiliation, an individual is restricted from marrying any person whom their religious denomination

prohibits. This applies to both men and women, who are bound by the laws and practices of their respective religious communities.

### **3.7.6 Void Marriages**

The cohabitation of (i) two individuals of the same gender as spouses, (ii) an individual with another person who is already married, and (iii) either or both individuals being underage, is considered null and void from the beginning.

### **3.7.7 Marriage Certificate**

- i The issuance of a marriage certificate is the responsibility of the Licensed Officer who conducts the solemnization ceremony. This certificate serves as the definitive evidence of the marriage.
- ii The certificate must include the sentence ‘See section 7 of the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014’ or ‘In accordance with the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014’ in order to indicate its judicial authenticity. (see Appendix III)
- iii In other case, the definitive evidence of a marriage is a certificate that is issued subsequent to the payment of the Marriage Price as outlined in Schedule I. This certificate must also be legally registered in accordance with the Mizoram Compulsory Registration of Marriages Act, 2007.

### **3.7.8 Registration of Marriage**

All marriages performed in compliance with the aforementioned legislation must be duly registered by the Mizoram Compulsory Registration of Marriage Act, 2007 or any other relevant legislation now in force.

## **3.8 Dissolution of Marriage**

The valid reasons for the dissolution of marriage in Mizo society are outlined in The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014, Act No.9 of 2014.

### 3.8.1 Grounds for dissolution of Marriage

- 1) Marriages, whether occurring before to or subsequent to the enactment of this legislation, have the potential to be dissolved and awarded a divorce order upon the submission of a petition to the court by either the husband or the wife, based on the specified criteria.
  - i. The other party has engaged in an act of adultery, or
  - ii. The marriage has become irreconcilably incompatible
  - iii. The petitioner has experienced such severe mistreatment from the respondent that it has resulted in a reasonable concern in the petitioner's mind that cohabitation with the respondent would be detrimental or harmful.
  - iv. The person in issue has been diagnosed with a persistent mental illness for a consecutive duration of at least three years prior to the submission of the petition.
  - v. The individual in question has experienced a continuous duration of at least three years immediately before to the presentation of the petition, during which they have been afflicted with an aggressive and untreatable variant of leprosy or any other contagious ailment that poses a significant risk to the life of their partner.
  - vi. The individual in question has not been officially confirmed to be alive for a period of at least seven years by those who would normally possess information regarding the individual's existence, if they were truly alive.
  - vii. The wife disdains to participate in the activity known as '*Lawi*'.
  - viii. The respondent has intentionally declined to engage in intimate relationships, resulting in the marriage remaining unconsummated.
  - ix. The respondent has abandoned the petitioner for a minimum duration of two years directly preceding the submission of the petition.
  - x. By mutual agreement.

- 2) In the context of marital dissolution, it is worth noting that a spouse, regardless of gender, has the option to file a petition seeking the termination of their marriage. This petition can be based on the grounds that the other spouse has been convicted of engaging in acts of rape, sodomy, or bestiality subsequent to the marriage ceremony.

### **3.8.2 Judicial Separation**

- i Both spouses in a marriage, irrespective of whether it was solemnized prior to or after to the implementation of this legislation, possess the entitlement to file a petition seeking a judicial separation decree on the basis of any of the grounds delineated in subsection (1) of section 13.
- ii In cases where a decree for judicial separation has been issued, the court has the authority to retract the decree upon application by either party through a petition. The court will evaluate the veracity of the statements made in the petition and determine whether it is just and reasonable to revoke the decision.
- iii The duration of a legal process for judicial separation shall not exceed six months. Following the completion of this six-month period, the court is required to declare the dissolution of the marriage within sixty days.

### **3.8.3 Power of the court to pronounce decree for dissolving marriage**

In the event that the Court, after careful evaluation of the evidence presented, concludes that the petitioner has adequately substantiated their case and discerns no indication of the petitioner's complicity or endorsement of the marriage in question, or that the petitioner has pardoned the purported act of adultery, the Court shall proceed to grant a decree and furnish a Certificate of Divorce, in accordance with the specifications outlined in Schedule III (see Appendix III). This official action will effectively dissolve the marriage.

### **3.9 Welfare Matters**

#### **3.9.1 Permanent Alimony and maintenance**

- i. The jurisdiction of the Court, as established by this Act, allows for the issuance of a decree or subsequent order regarding the payment of maintenance and support. The aforementioned order may be sought by individuals such as the wife, husband, underage male child, or unmarried daughter who find themselves in a state of financial dependency. The Court has the authority to decide whether the respondent should be obligated to deliver a lump sum payment or a recurring payment on a monthly or periodic basis, for a length of time that does not exceed the lifetime of the applicant. In making this determination, the Court will consider factors such as the respondent's income and property, the applicant's income and property, the conduct of the parties involved, and other relevant circumstances. In the event that it is deemed essential, the payment can be safeguarded through the imposition of a lien on the immovable property owned by the defendant.
- ii. In the event that the court ascertains that there have been changes in the circumstances of either party subsequent to the issuance of an order under subsection (1), or if the party who received the order has entered into a new marriage or engaged in morally objectionable behavior, the court possesses the jurisdiction, upon the request of either party, to modify, adapt, or annul said order in a manner that the court considers fair and just.

#### **3.9.2 Duty of the court to consider the welfare of the children**

Within the framework of legal processes defined by the aforementioned legislation, the court possesses the jurisdiction to issue interim orders and incorporate suitable measures in the final judgment with regards to the custody, maintenance, education, and general welfare of underage individuals. The court endeavors to take into account the personal choices of the children in all instances. Additionally, upon request

by the petitioner, the court may modify, suspend, or revoke any previously issued orders or provisions. If deemed appropriate, the court may also instruct relevant actions to be taken in order to ensure the protection of these children under the jurisdiction of the court. The determination of guardianship for the child will be made by the Court in accordance with the prevailing legislation, while prioritizing the child's best interests.

In accordance with the conditions, it is mandated that a child who is younger than three years old shall be in the care and guardianship of the mother, unless the Court determines, with justifiable cause, that the mother is unsuitable to fulfill the role of custodian for the child. The Court's rationale for deeming the mother unfit must be documented in written form.

### **3.9.3 Liberty of parties to marry again**

In situations where a court has issued a decree for the dissolution or nullity of a marriage, and the time frame for filing an appeal has expired without any appeal being submitted to any court, including the Supreme Court, or if an appeal has been submitted but subsequently dismissed and the decree or dismissal has become final, it is legally permissible for either party to the marriage to enter into a subsequent marriage. This also pertains to persons who have experienced singleness due to the demise of their marital partner.

## **3.10 Jurisdiction**

### **3.10.1 Court to which petition should be made**

Every petition submitted in accordance with this legislation must be brought to the court within the specific local jurisdiction that corresponds to its originating jurisdiction.

- i. The marriage was formalized; or
- ii. The individual being referred to as the respondent is currently residing at the time when the petition is being presented; or



- iii. The individuals involved in the marital union previously cohabitated.

### **3.10.2 Reconciliatory matters**

Prior to granting any form of remedy under this act, it is incumbent upon the court to, as a primary step, use all efforts to facilitate reconciliation between the parties involved, provided that such action aligns with the specific nature and circumstances of the case.

### **3.10.3 Adjournments of proceedings**

In order to facilitate the court's efforts in achieving reconciliation, it is permissible for the court to adjourn the proceedings for a reasonable period of time, not exceeding two months, if both parties express a desire for such adjournment or if the court deems it just and appropriate to do so. During this period of recess, the court has the option to assign the subject to a person chosen by those involved or chosen by the court, in the event that the parties do not nominate someone. This individual will be tasked with evaluating the feasibility and attainment of reconciliation. The court must consider this report when making a decision regarding the proceedings.

### **3.10.4 Supply of copy of decree**

In all instances where a marriage is terminated through a court-issued divorce decree, the court responsible for issuing said decree is obligated to provide a complimentary copy to each party involved, without any associated charges.

## **3.11 Division of Property on Divorce**

### **3.11.1 Ownership right of head of family over properties**

According to the prevailing legal framework, any mobile or immovable assets that have been inherited or obtained, but have not been officially registered under the name of any individual residing within the same household, are considered to be the rightful property of the family's primary decision-maker or head.

### **3.11.2 Right of head of family to dispose property**

The individual in charge of the household has the authority to transfer any of their assets, with the exception of service or pension benefits, using methods such as selling, exchanging, gifting, donating, or establishing an endowment. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that getting rid of a woman's private possessions should not take place without her explicit consent.

### **3.11.3 Right of a woman leaving her husband on *sumchhuah***

In the event that a woman chooses to separate from her spouse on *sumchhuah*, it is important to note that her entitlement to the acquired property will be limited solely to her own assets. If a woman feels obligated to break up with her husband due to circumstances of domestic abuse or cruelty, his deliberate dishonesty, his mental disorder, or his unfair rejection of marriage rights with the exception on health grounds, she should not be denied her constitutional right to the acquired property. (The term *sumchhuah* refers to the act of a married lady separating from her husband by returning the marriage price).

### **3.11.4 Right of a woman leaving her husband on *mâk***

- i. In the event of a divorce initiated by the husband on *mak*, unless on the grounds of adultery or the husband being deprived of his conjugal rights, the wife will be entitled to a share of the acquired property, regardless of its nature. The personal belongings of the woman shall not be disrupted.
- ii. In the event that a man initiates divorce proceedings against his wife based on grounds of adultery or denial of conjugal rights, except health-related reasons, she will be entitled to a portion of the acquired property, not exceeding 25%, in addition to her personal property. (The terms *ma* and *mâk* refer to a woman who has been divorced by her husband).

### **3.11.5 Share of acquire property**

- i. In the event of a woman's departure from her husband, whether on *mâk* or *kawngka sula mâk*, she shall be entitled to a portion of the property gained throughout the course of their marriage. This entitlement shall not exceed fifty percent of the acquired property.
- ii. In cases where a married couple has voluntarily separated, it is customary for them to divide their acquired property in a manner that is agreed upon by both parties or judged fair and appropriate.
- iii. In accordance with sub-section (1) of section 13 of the Act, couples who have undergone separation based on clause (iv) or (v) are entitled to an equal division of the acquired property.
- iv. An individual who has abandoned the family in accordance with clause (ix) of sub-section (1) of section 13 of the Act shall not be entitled to any portion of the acquired property. (The term *kawngka sula mak* refers to the practice when a man, upon finding a female, chooses to marry her and afterwards divorces his current wife either on the same day or after a certain period of time. The term *Kawngka sula mak* also refers to the act of taking on an additional wife, resulting in the departure of the existing wife and the arrival of a new wife).

### **3.11.6 Gift of property to a son/daughter leaving family on *indang***

If a child departs from their family on *indang* at the behest of the family's patriarch or matriarch, said family head has the authority to bestow any property belonging to them, excluding the personal belongings of said child. (The term *indang* refers to the act of a son or daughter departing from their father's residence in order to establish an independent and distinct household or family, a decision that is acknowledged and approved by the patriarch of the family).

### 3.12 Mizo Perspective on Death

The customs and behaviors surrounding death in the Mizo culture are highly complex and characterized by a deep reverence for the deceased. Upon the demise of an individual, the community comes together to perform funeral rituals and ceremonies. The aforementioned rituals serve a variety of objectives, encompassing the act of paying tribute to those who have passed away, providing solace to those who are grieving, and offering guidance to the departed soul as it embarks on its journey to the realm beyond life. The Mizo people possess a profound awareness of death that is firmly rooted in their belief systems of culture and religion. This understanding encompasses a complex concept of the transition from earthly life to the realm beyond. The concept of death is often understood as a transition rather than a definitive end, as the soul embarks on a spiritual journey in another place. The concept of the afterlife in Mizo tribes and religious beliefs exhibits variations, however a prevailing belief in the everlasting existence of the soul following a bodily demise is commonly held.

The Mizos possessed unified concepts within the myth of death and the existence of an afterlife. The classification of death was divided into five primary categories, which are outlined as follows:

- i **Hlamzuih:** *Hlamzuih* usually referred to an infant death occurring within the first three months of life. The infant's body is wrapped in a fabric material and afterward positioned within a receptacle made of clay. They are primarily cremated beneath their residential dwellings. According to traditional Mizo beliefs and practices, it was customary to place cotton in their mouth with the mother's breast milk soaked unto it, and a portion of rice on one hand when an infant passed away. This gesture was intended to provide sustenance to the spirit in case it experienced hunger in the afterlife. Additionally, a single egg would be placed on the other hand, symbolizing a guiding force for the spirit's journey in the realm beyond.

Mizos did not give much importance to an infant death. This can be observed on the way how the dead body was treated and the process of cremation was held. Even if the *Hlamzuih* death occurred at night, they used to instantly bury the body without holding a proper ceremony.

- ii **Raicheh:** The term '*Raicheh*' is used to refer to the tragic incident of a woman's death occurring during childbirth. When a mother died upon child's birth or when the natural way of giving birth was not successful and resulted in death of a mother, the kind of death is referred to as *Raicheh*.

This particular form of loss is regarded as dreadful and every woman carrying a child wanted to avoid this kind of death. In order to avoid this, even if the mother was badly hurt and injured while giving birth, the mother was sent to fetch very less amount of water from water pond. This is done because fetching water will signify that the mother was regarded as fit and healthy even if she succumbed to death as a result of injuries upon her child's birth. Thus, the reason of the death would become natural death or normal death rather than dying from *Raicheh*. Most of the women in the village do not want to associate themselves with the belongings or other weaving materials of the one dying with *Raicheh*. It was feared that unless they keep themselves away from the properties of the deceased woman, the same fate would occur to them in the near future. Further, when someone died because of *Raicheh*, Mizos believed that their spirit did not reach their resting place and thus roaming around in the streets. They feared that the spirit would enter their house which could result in occurrence of the same fate, fern plant or other available plants were mounted on the top of the door to keep away this fearful spirit.

- iii **Awmlai:** Death resulting from natural death such as old age, various sicknesses affecting the metabolism and death, and all other way of death were considered as *Awmlai*. It is the kind of death where family members and relatives of the deceased were cautious and aware of what was coming, and they were also able to prepare themselves mentally and physically to reduce the pain of their loss.

Mizos wanted *Awmlai* to be the way in which they shall unavoidably die because the ones that died with *Awmlai* were treated with much respect. The death body was thoroughly cleansed; they were dressed up in their best dress, with their hair combed properly.

- iv **Sarhi:** *Sarhi* refers to instances of accidental death that are deemed unnatural in accordance with cultural norms. *Sarhi* comprises of death as a result of death from – wild animal attacks, falling from tree, burned from fire, drowning and other tragic, instant deaths.

*Sarhi* was considered very dreadful that they believed a strong unprecedented wind will blow unconditionally out of nowhere on the day an incident took place. This wind is called ‘*Sarthli*’, while ‘*Sar*’ means *Sarhi* and ‘*Thli*’ means wind. When people died of *Sarhi*, the dead body was taken inside their house only from the back door and avoid taking in from the main door. The dead body was buried soon after the death without much mourning processes.

- v **Zachhamlak:** According to the beliefs of the Mizo forefathers, it was believed that a daily mortality rate of one hundred individuals was necessary. In the event that the numerical value does not reach one hundred, an abrupt and anomalous fatality would occur. They denoted this kind of death as ‘*Zachhamlak*.’ Deaths categorized under *Zachhamlak* were occurring unnatural but at the same time did not involve accidents.

Mizos perceived and considered death as an important part of one’s journey in life. Death was the final and ending stage in one’s journey and thus Mizos placed it in a very significant position which was incomplete without proper ceremonies and burials. Mizos were among various cultural groups who believe in life after death, and in order to be able to make it in the life beyond, the burial ceremony as well as how they died differ much.

When a person died because of any possible reason, members of the village community would gather to the house of the deceased person to help make necessary

arrangements for *Khawhar In*. *Khawhar In* literally mean 'house of a deceased person'. Arrangements were necessary because Mizos used to sing together inside the house of a deceased person to help sympathize or condole the recently bereaved family. This practice is still in active in modern Mizo culture. Generally, if death occurred in the forenoon, they will bury the dead body in the same day itself, while in the event of death in the afternoon, they will bury the body on the next day. During this whole night before burying, members of the community will come together and sing the whole night in the deceased person's house. This practice is called '*Mitthi lu men*' and is still practiced.

Mizos cremated dead bodies by burying deep into the soil, where a specific location outside the village called '*Thlanmual*' (graveyard) was used to bury the bodies. Young men from the village, usually headed by an abled and responsible bachelor called '*Val upa*' will organize the digging of grave for the dead body. These men were responsible for the digging, as well as for burying of the coffin. After the death of a person, to help relieve the pain of losing their beloved ones, people would gather together at the house of the bereaved family for three days and three nights which is called '*Khawhar in len*'. In the day, members of the community who were normally parents and old-aged used to go to the *Khawhar in*, while at night, youths of the community would gather at the *Khawhar in*.

## **Conclusion**

The Mizo people have a culturally significant and dynamic historical background that spans numerous centuries. The Mizos are renowned for their exceptional display of hospitality, strong sense of community, and profound appreciation for music and dancing. The cultural history of the Mizo people is closely intertwined with their traditional method of farming known as jhum cultivation, which is a type of shifting agriculture. The entirety of their activities revolves around the jhum activity, and the occasions they celebrate are all intricately linked to various aspects of these agricultural practices. Indeed, significant festivals are linked to the diverse phases of their evolving farming practices. These holidays are celebrated by communal banquets, musical

performances, traditional dances, and the use of rice-based alcoholic beverages. Their character is characterized by a greater emphasis on social interactions rather than religious beliefs. The Mizos are renowned for their profound appreciation of music and songs. Music holds great significance among the Mizos, constituting an essential element of their cultural fabric. A diverse range of traditional music and dances are performed on numerous ceremonial events, including celebrations, marriage ceremonies, and funerals.

The cultural history of the Mizo people has been influenced by their adherence to the Christian faith, resulting in a synthesis of ancient traditions and customs with Christian beliefs. Currently, a significant proportion of the Mizos identify as adherents of Christianity, a religious affiliation that has exerted a profound influence on their cultural and ethical systems. Nevertheless, the Mizos have successfully maintained numerous traditional rites and behaviors, despite their adoption of Christianity. Over the past few years, the Mizo culture has experienced various transformations as a result of the processes of modernization and urbanization. Nevertheless, some conventional customs persist, and the Mizo community takes great pride in their abundant cultural legacy.



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## CHAPTER 4

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

This chapter discusses several aspects of Mizo indigenous knowledge, including cultural life, agricultural practices, traditional attire, festivals and dances and religious beliefs of the Mizo (Lushai/Lusei) ethnic group. The purpose of this discussion is to provide clarification on objectives 1 and 2. In order to provide further clarity on objectives 3 and 4, a series of questions were formulated and posed to relevant individuals or a specifically chosen participant. These responses were subsequently reviewed and deliberated over in the present chapter.

#### 4.1 Cultural Life

The topic of cultural life encompasses all aspects of a society's artistic, intellectual, and social activities. Mizos lived a life of unique lifestyle where almost every day basic supplies were gathered around their environment, without the need for trade and commerce with the tribes neighboring them. They established their own village, a local structure, a way of living, and most importantly cultural life of their own. Some of the cultural life of Mizos could be manifested under different heads.

- i **Patriarchy (household):** Traditionally, Mizos are patrimonial, the father in the house decide and directed the family affairs. In a normal family, the family's daily life depended upon agriculture, i.e., farming. Mizos practice farming in the form of Jhum, which is a shifting cultivation. All the abled individuals in the family, leaded by the father took part in the overall process of shifting cultivation. In the domestic affairs, the mother of the house took responsibility of some household chores but however, in matters of inter-family matters, the father took the charge.

In terms of inheritance of property, male dominated the whole inheritance, whether in the form of movable or immovable assets, family property and assets were usually handed over to the youngest male son in the

family, while in the absence of son, daughters could also inherit the property. In the situation where a man dies, thereby left his wife and young children, the other male relatives took charge of family property until the children comes of age. This male relative thus acted as a trustee of the family and represents the family in terms of important matters where important decisions shall be taken.

According to Mizo customary law, the youngest male member of the family is the legal or natural heir to his father, but in practice, the father's property is typically split among all sons. The youngest brother receives preferential treatment because he gets first dibs on the items and doubles up on the money if the other brothers each get one. Only when there is no male successor on the deceased person's side, a daughter or wife inherit property. However, women have a right to own their own property. She receives dowry, or *thuam*, from her parents during the marriage, and it is solely hers. However, a formalized written 'will' may now grant women the privilege to inherit the family's assets. This is a welcome change from the old customary laws.

- ii **Food habits/cuisine:** Food habits are one of the means through which one's culture can be made known or introduce to other people. Mizo food habits are a means through which it shows about the ethnicity and culture of the Mizo. It helps in introducing the history and cultural background of the people. The land of Mizos, Mizoram is blessed with lush green forest vegetation which is suitable for different types of agriculture. The land is abundant with monsoon rain, and monsoon crops were cultivated all over the land. Not only this, forest offer variety of natural products which were used as alternative sources of food items.

The food practices of the Mizo are significantly shaped by the historical customs of agriculture and hunting-gathering in the region. Rice is considered the primary dietary staple in Mizo cuisine, commonly accompanied by an assortment of meat, fish, and vegetable preparations. The culinary tradition is renowned for its utilization of regionally sourced components, including bamboo shoots, foraged mushrooms, and an assortment of leafy vegetables and aromatic

plants. Mizo cuisine is renowned for its utilization of a diverse range of meats, including chickens, pork, seafood, fish, and indigenous fauna like deer, wild boar, and smaller mammalian creatures. Several well-liked culinary offerings from the Mizo community encompass the delectable bamboo shoots fried, smoked beef, fish, and several traditional stews.

One of the predominant cooking methods employed by the Mizos in contemporary times is the utilization of boiling (known as *chhum han* or *tlak*) as a means to prepare various components such as meat, grains, and vegetables. Notably, this cooking technique often involves the absence of flavoring agents or condiments, including salt.

Naturally, there exist variances in the methods employed for the making of boiled culinary preparations. While the inclusion of plain boiled veggies is a customary component in everyday culinary practices, it is a prevalent convention to incorporate aromatic herbs throughout the process of boiling meat. *Buhchiar*, food that is made with a meat which has been boiled stew with rice, is a culinary preparation commonly served during festive events and special occasions. One further traditional Mizo meal, known as *Bai*, is prepared by combining boiled seasonal vegetables with *ching al*, a substance derived from ash filtration. However, it is worth noting that cooking soda has largely replaced *ching al* as a substitute ingredient in modern preparations of this dish.

The inclination towards consuming freshly prepared seasonal fruits and vegetables, as well as rice, is a fundamental aspect of Mizo dietary practices (*Kikon, 2021*). However, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant role that fermentation, drying, and smoking techniques play in their culinary traditions. The traditional food processing processes employed by the Mizos include fermentation, drying, and smoking. It aims to provide an account of various food items and their respective preparation methods. Several culinary products mentioned in this context serve as spices, including *Sa-um*, which refers to fermented pig fats, *ching al*, an ash filtrate, *chhawhchhi um* or fermented

sesame, *bekang-um* or fermented soybean, and *anthur-rep*, dried or smoked roselle. Various food items are ingested in their raw form, including *tam-um*, which is fermented mustard, *ai-um*, which consists of fermented crab, *dawltawm*, referring to dried taro leaves, *dawl rep*, denoting dried taro, *behlawi rep*, which pertains to dried or smoked cowpea, *telhawng*, referring to dried voodoo lily, and *sa rep*, which denotes smoked meat.

- iii **Hunting:** The act of hunting was observed to be prevalent in both the early and contemporary Mizo society. The individuals exhibited a strong affinity for the activity of hunting and consistently availed themselves of any opportunity to engage in it - the act of hunting served two distinct functions. Initially, the motivation behind their actions was rooted in religious beliefs. Additionally, they exhibited a preference for consuming meat. In addition to hunting, trapping served as an alternative method for procuring animals. In this society, individuals who have achieved success in hunting are esteemed and held in high regard. Upon the birth of a male child, he was bestowed with blessings to become the *pasaltha*. *Pasaltha*, the accomplished hunter was highly regarded. Consequently, each adolescent male endeavored to achieve proficiency in the art of hunting. Hunting is performed either in the form of shooting animals with guns, or trapping animals with various mechanisms.

Animals like elephant, tiger, bear, serow, monkey, warthog, and birds like pheasant, wild chicken are usually killed with guns. Other wild animals like bear, warthog, squirrel, porcupine, were usually killed with hunting traps. The most common hunting traps for instance were:

- a) *Vawmtlak* (bears trap): The term '*Tlak*' denotes the concept of a fall or drop. *Vawmtlak* is a type of trap commonly used for capturing bears. *Vawmtlak* is nestled in the *jhum*, a traditional shifting cultivation system, wherein the crops are continuously decimated by bears.
- b) *Thangthleng* (birds trap): The term '*thang*' refers to a type of snare, while '*thleng*' denotes a plate. It is a trap designed for the purpose of capturing and

potentially causing the annihilation of bird creatures. Occasionally, smaller species of birds are also captured. The snare consists of a length of cotton rope and a segment of cane, approximately six inches in size, which is intentionally curved to create an inverted U-shape. The two ends of the cane are tightly twisted and bent in a manner that causes them to intersect and interlock with one another. The rope is fastened to a 'U' shaped cane, the lower end of which is secured to a vine or another cane, while the upper end is affixed to a horizontally positioned stick located directly below the desired target, such as a fruit-bearing tree. This stick serves as bait, luring birds with its appealing and appealing nature. The opposite end of the rope is fastened to the uppermost portion of a flexible bamboo stem, and is secured by applying pressure to the bent bamboo, which is gripped by a little piece of bamboo (known as *zangsi*). One end of the *zangsi* rests against the 'U' shaped cane, while the other end is supported by a stick against the 'U' shaped framework. The opposite end of this stick is positioned slightly below the lure and is manipulated in a manner that enables the birds, when perched upon it, to seize the edible produce. The terminal end of the rope is affixed to the stick. Upon the arrival of the hungry birds the stick promptly succumbs to the bird's weight, so triggering the release of the little bamboo fragment. The flexible bamboo rapidly ascends while the noose is afterwards fastened around either one or both of the bird's legs. The placement of this snare is primarily observed during the winter season, coinciding with the maturation of fruits on bushes or trees.

- c) *Beai* (big birds trap): The term '*Beai*' refers to the seed of a black, hard bean that serves as a lure or temptation. The purpose of this particular snare is to capture partridges, wild fowl, black pheasants, and peacock pheasants. In contrast to conventional traps, the absence of any fencing is a distinguishing feature. In the tropical rainforest where the aforementioned avian species commonly reside. Multiple locations are chosen at different *beai* locations. In

order to enhance visibility, the bait in each designated area is made perceptible from afar through the removal of leaves and vegetation. A rigid, elongated bamboo stick measuring approximately 6 inches in length is securely affixed to the ground at the designated location. In close proximity to the apex of the bamboo stick, a perforation is created, through which a little segment of bamboo stick, measuring around 1 inch in length, is horizontally inserted. Adjacent to the designated location, there exists a young cotton rope suspended from a tree. This rope is contorted, with a separate cotton rope affixed to its midpoint. Tethered to this secondary rope is a diminutive piece of bamboo, which has been horizontally inserted at the apex of another bamboo stick. The folded cane securely holds a small piece of bamboo stick, known as *zangsi*, which contains the black seed of a bean. The seed of the bean plant is consistently coated with oil in order to enhance its visibility and appeal to avian species. The remaining portion of the cotton rope employed for the construction of the noose is extended via the utilization of four or five little sticks encircling the folded cane, wherever the black seed is securely embedded. Upon the arrival of the avian creature, it is compelled to partake in the consumption of the ebony seed. Almost instantaneously, as the seed is chewed, the previously coiled cane descends, thereby liberating the small stick known as *zangsi*. Concurrently, the birds pull the rope, resulting in the constriction of the noose around the bird's neck.

- d) *Thangchep* (squirrels trap): The term '*thang*' denotes a type of snare, whereas '*chep*' refers to the action of capturing or grasping something. The trap is comprised of a fibrous bark string, a delicate and slender palm fiber, and a bamboo stick that is skillfully twisted and bent to create a compact triangle framework with a slight arch. This particular snare is primarily designed for the purpose of capturing squirrels, rodents, and sometimes small terrestrial birds. The triangle framework, constructed with bamboo sticks, is positioned on the ground by securing split bamboo pieces on both sides.



Occasionally, the trap is strategically positioned on a bamboo pole in order to capture the animal as it traverses the area with regularity. A young tree is flexed by a strip of bark that is secured by a thin, soft stick known as a *zangsi* against a curved structure made of bamboo. Additionally, it is supported horizontally by another little stick of limited length. The brief stick is affixed to a slender palm fiber that extends along the center, with the opposite end fastened to the foundation of the structure. The noose is exerting pressure at its foundation. When the animal approaches, it attempts to pass through, however, the palm fibre exerts a downward force on the stick, causing the sapling to be released and the noose to constrict around the animal's neck, in relation to the curved bamboo structure.

- e) *Sakuhthang* (porcupines trap): The device serves as a trap designed specifically for capturing porcupines. The porcupine's path is established along a route that crosses the pathway created or utilized by human individuals within the jungle. A young tree with branches diverging from a central trunk is severed and securely affixed to the soil. A flexible young tree located in close proximity to the area is then manipulated by means of a cord made from tree bark, which is fastened to a strand of palm fiber intended to function as a loop. A little and concise wooden implement, referred to as a *zangsi* is attached in close proximity to the juncture of the tree's bark. This *zangsi* is afterward fastened to a nascent tree possessing a forked structure. A slightly lengthier stick is employed to maintain a horizontal orientation, while concurrently supporting the aforementioned *zangsi*. Positioned atop this arrangement are several dried wooden fragments, numbering approximately three to four in total. When the animal approaches, it proceeds to enter the noose. At the same time, the animal positions its feet on the dry wooden components, causing it to exert pressure and subsequently release the device that secures the catch of the noose. As a result, the sapling is activated,

causing the rope to be pulled upwards and constricting the noose around the animal's neck.

- f) *Sakhithang* (deers trap): It is a means of trapping deer, occasionally capturing wild pigs as well. A fence is constructed through the process of selectively cutting down young trees and bamboos inside the natural habitat of animals, thereby delineating their living and roaming areas. Gaps are strategically placed at regular times and convenient locations along the fence to accommodate the animals' habitual movement patterns. In each designated location, a hole measuring 6 inches in width and length, and 8 inches in depth, is excavated within the ground. A juvenile tree is thereafter subjected to bending by means of a climbing plant known as *Vawmhrui*, wherein the extremity of such plant is affixed to a robust, dark-colored palm fiber in the form of a loop. The young tree, which is bent, is supported by attaching a short stick, known as *zangsi*, to another stick that has been securely placed and fastened at the edge of one side of a hole using forked sticks. The *zangsi*, sometimes referred to as the short stick, is positioned in the hole against two fixed sticks, with the assistance of another little stick. Several split bamboo pieces are positioned above the stick in order to conceal the opening. The process involves arranging leaves atop split bamboo, followed by placing a noose on top of the leaves. The noose is then concealed by covering it with earth and dry leaves, with the intention of preventing the animal from detecting the snare. A wooden plank is positioned on each side of the hole, creating a space for the animal to place its foot between the planks at the desired location. When an animal approaches and places its foot in that location, the covering of the whole collapses, causing the young tree to bend and recoil, drawing the noose that subsequently tightens around the animal's leg.

iv **Social Service (Hnatlang):** *Hnatlang* is basically a social service. Mizos lived in a close-knit community; villagers interact with each other in many realms of life. *Hnatlang* involves helping others in need of help, rendering assistance at times where individuals or families need assistance. The term ‘*Hna*’ means any work or task; ‘*tlang*’ was taken from ‘*Khawtlang*’ which can be used to mean village community. Thus, *hnatlang* involves any task done in the form of community or co-operative group activity. *Hnatlang* is still very much prevalent in modern Mizo society and serves an important role in upholding Mizo values and traditions; it was usually performed under the lead of civil societies like Young Mizo Association (YMA) and other local bodies in the community.

Mizos lived in a close-knit community; villagers interact with each other in many realms of life. *Hnatlang* involves helping others in need of help, rendering assistance at times where individuals or families need assistance. *Hnatlang* can be in different forms, where community come together to offer their physical service for the welfare of a particular individual or for the well-being of the community.

Some of the works done under *hnatlang* were:

- a) In times of sorrow (*chhiatni*): Since Mizos lived in a communitarian society, *hnatlang* were very crucial to bring about programmes and events that occur. In times of sorrow like death, community will come together to prepare the house of the deceased to be able to accommodate *Khawhar in zai*, a practice that involves singing as groups in the deceased house to console the family members. Day after the death body was buried; all the abled youths in the village will gather fire woods for the family of the deceased, which was also a form of *hnatlang*.
- b) Building house for the widow (*Hmeithai in sak*): In Mizo society, widows were considered as privileged and people will help them in many possible ways. Building a house was an uneasy task for family in the absence of the

father, therefore, villagers used to provide the building materials as well as physical force to build houses for widow's family. This practice has been voluntary without claims for reward, and thus, was a form of *hnatlang*.

- c) Digging a grave (*Thlan laih*): Unlike many societies where digging a grave for the deceased was done by a specified personnel hired on payment, the Mizo society experiences no such practice. Graves were dug by volunteers from the village, especially bachelors or young men; they also took charge in the cover up of the coffin with earth after it was laid in the grave. No person was discriminated on the ground of his/her position in the society; every deceased individual was treated in the same way on the day of his/her death.
- d) Fighting fire (*Kang thelh*): Mizos practice slash and burn cultivation (or Jhum cultivation), and during the dry season around March and April, they burn down the patches of wood and bushes that were cut down for cultivation, forest fires were common as a result of burning of these woods and bushes. Men from the village reached out as fast as they could to contain the spread of forest fires before further damages.
- e) Searching of missing person (*Mi bo zawn*): When a person was missing and in need of finding, villagers would come out to search the missing person. In Mizo tradition, it was customary to search for seven days until the missing person was found.
- f) Recovering dead bodies (*Tui tla zawn*): In a situation where a person fell and drown in river, men from villages volunteered to recover the dead body. Like searching a dead person, the drowned individual was searched for seven days until the body was found.

## 4.2 Agricultural Practices

In this section, we will discuss the various agricultural practices that are employed in the cultivation of crops. These practices encompass a range of techniques and the Mizo people have engaged in agricultural practices from ancient times. In the early stages, it was not widely recognized that the Mizos engaged in trade or maintained significant connections with neighboring tribes. This implies that individuals are required to maintain their sustenance internally.

Historically, the Mizos subsisted as hunter-gatherers, relying on the forest to procure their essential sustenance, primarily in the form of food. As the local community underwent development and experienced a surge in population, it became evident that the reliance on forestry products alone was insufficient to cater to the demands of the growing populace. Therefore, the Mizos were compelled to devise strategies for the production of food items, leading to the initiation of land cultivation for agricultural purposes. The practice of agriculture has served as the fundamental basis of Mizo culture.

The agricultural practices employed by the Mizos involve the utilization of shifting cultivation, whereby a specific parcel of land is allocated for cultivation for a single year. This particular set of practices is commonly referred to as *Lo neih* (Jhum) in academic discourse. The process commences from the month of *Ramtuk Thla*, namely in February. The term '*Ramtuk*' refers to the process of clearing or deforesting an area, typically followed by the burning of *Vahchap*, which refers to the dried-up trees and plants. After a period of one month, the establishment known as *Vahchap*, referred to as *Lo Hal*, was subjected to a destructive fire incident. Following the destruction of *Vahchap*, also known as *Lo Hal*, the site came to be referred to as *Kang Var*, denoting the remnants of charred trees and vegetation. At that point, *Kang Var* was prepared and accessible to commence the plantation. The agricultural procedure was referred to as *Thlai chi thlak*, denoting the act of introducing the seeds of the vegetable into the ground for cultivation. The initial introduction of vegetables such as beans, bitter gourd,

pumpkin, okra, cucumber, aubergine, and mock tomato took place in the region of *Kang Var*. Subsequently, during the monsoon season, agricultural practices in the Jhum region involved the cultivation of crops such as Rice, Maize, and Ginger. This selection was based on the crops' requirement for ample rainfall in order to thrive and develop.

Mizoram is a region characterized by a significant amount of precipitation during the monsoon season. A wide variety of plants and vegetables have the potential for cultivation. However, the copious precipitation and favorable climatic conditions also created an environment that was conducive to the proliferation of weeds and pests. Consequently, Mizo farmers are required to engage in the practice of *Hlo Thlo*, which entails the utilization of agricultural instruments to remove undesirable plants, on three occasions annually.

Following the completion of all agricultural activities, farmers partake in a celebratory event known as '*Lo zo/Lo zawh*'. The term '*Lo zawh*' denotes the completion of all essential tasks associated with *Hlo thlawh*, allowing for the winter harvesting of vegetables and crops, particularly Paddy.

The *Lo zawh* festival was commemorated through the organization of a lavish banquet in the Jhum, a traditional farming practice, by agriculturalists in the company of their immediate family members and acquaintances. This event often occurred during the early part of September. In the month of October, despite having completed the cultivation of *Hlo thlawh*, the Mizo farmers were unable to proceed with the harvesting of rice due to it unripeness. Consequently, they took advantage of this brief interval to engage in recreational activities and pursue personal interests. This time interval is commonly referred to as *Awllen*.

During the winter season, the paddy crop had reached a stage of maturity that made it suitable for harvesting. In the process of paddy harvesting, farmers employ a specialized tool known as a *Favah*, which resembles a sharp knife-like saw. The paddy crop is harvested by farmers using a tool called a *favah*. Subsequently, the collected

paddy is prepared for husking. In the process of rice husking, farmers construct a structure known as *Fasuar*, comprised of wooden and bamboo logs, which is elevated above the ground. The purpose of this structure is to facilitate the separation of rice grains from the paddy. As the paddy is placed on the *Fasuar*, the grains of rice naturally detach and descend, ultimately being gathered on the ground for collection. In the jhum, a majority of vegetables were readily accessible for harvesting throughout the year. Historically, agriculture has been closely associated with ecological time. The annual cycle was traditionally divided into four seasons in the region, namely *thlasik* (winter), *fur* (rainy), *thal* (dry), and *favang* (autumn). In addition, the ancient civilization also engaged in the practice of monitoring lunar cycles in order to divide the annual calendar into distinct segments.

In the month of January, the *Pawlkut* harvest celebration, commonly referred to as *Pawlkut thla*, was observed. February, also known as *Ramtuk thla*, is the month during which deforestation occurs to facilitate agricultural expansion. March, also known as *Vau thla*, is the month during which the *Vau* flower undergoes its blooming process. April, also known as *Tau thla*, is the month during which raspberry plants undergo the process of blooming and then provide fruit. May, also known as *Tomir thla*, is the month during which the initial growth of seeds occurs. June sometimes referred to as *Lalmanga Nu lawm rawih thla*, in the month of June, Lalmanga's mother, who holds the position of Ngente chief, employed a group of workers. The month of July is commonly referred to as *Vawkhniak Zawn Thla*, during which there is a notable occurrence of pigs' hoof impressions. August is a month characterized by inclement weather conditions, including fog and rainfall, and is alternatively referred to as *Thlazing or Rolura Mimkut thla*. According to prevailing accounts, tigers are reportedly exhibiting an increased propensity to engage in aggressive encounters with humans, while instances of trees inadvertently collapsing upon individuals have resulted in fatalities. In the month of September, which is also called *Thitin thla* in Mizo, it is customary for the family of the deceased to perform the *Thitin* rite, which is believed to facilitate their journey to *Mitthi khua*, the realm of the deceased. In the month of

October, the *Khuangchawi* festival was celebrated. November, also known as *Sahmulphah thla*, is the month during which the shedding of hair occurs in both domesticated and untamed animals. In the month of December, known as *Pawtlak thla*, it is seen that only the residual straw, commonly referred to as ‘*pawl*’ remains in the jhum fields following the completion of the harvest season.

The cultivations can be classified into two distinct categories: the normal fields, which are located in close proximity to the village, and the additional fields, which are often positioned several miles away from the settlement. The purpose of maintaining these extra fields is to guarantee an adequate food supply in the event that the regular fields produce a subpar crop.

Each individual possesses their own dwelling within their cultivated land known as *Thlam*. The structure in question often takes the form of a sturdy, adequately thatched dwelling, serving as the primary residence for the individual during the periods of agricultural planting and harvesting. Additionally, it serves as a refuge to which the individual retreats in the event of an outbreak of disease inside the community. The cultivation of rice typically commences in the months of April and May, with the harvesting process taking place in October. The growth of the crop is contingent upon the amount of precipitation it receives, with excessive rainfall posing a greater risk of harm compared to insufficient rainfall. Upon the commencement of the initial rainfall, individuals promptly proceed to the agricultural fields, exhibiting an exceptional level of enthusiasm as they engage in the act of sowing and planting. The months of March, April, and May are traditionally designated for the initial sowing and planting of the first crops of the year.

Rice and millet are cultivated individually and dispersed by broadcasting techniques. Occasionally, cucumbers, pumpkins, and melons are cultivated alongside millet inside the same agricultural plot.



Sweet potatoes can be cultivated at any point during the rainy season, similar to the cultivation of fibers. Once the seed is sown into the soil, it becomes imperative to protect the fields from potential damage caused by animals and birds. Additionally, prompt action is required to remove any weeds that may emerge alongside the sprouting seedlings, as they pose a threat to the growth and development of the crop by potentially impeding its progress. The crops are harvested as they reach maturity, often occurring from July through the subsequent three months.

One challenge associated with agriculture in hilly regions is the necessity for individuals to engage in labor-intensive activities amidst prolonged periods of heavy rainfall throughout certain months of the year. The primary method of safeguarding oneself against the intense heat of the sun and precipitation is by the utilization of *khumbeu* (a type of hat) for males, and the utilization of worn garments for women.



*Image 4.1: Vahchap (Source: C. Vanlalhraizela)*





*Image 4.2: Kangvar (Source: C. Vanlalhruaizela)*



*Image 4.3: Thlam (Source: Vanlalfela Renthlei)*

### 4.2.1 Agricultural Tools

Performing the cultivation of land has long been regarded as the primary and customary occupation, as well as a cultural activity, among the Mizo people. The practice of shifting the cultivation of jhum is very prevalent and favored among the local population. The practice of traditional jhumming has been observed by the local population for an extensive period of time. Despite the state government's efforts to prohibit this traditional technique, shifting cultivation continues to be conducted due to a lack of viable alternatives. The Mizo agricultural practice involves the selective clearing of forested areas, followed by controlled burning, and the subsequent scattering of seeds inside the resulting ash bed. Hence, intricate tools and machinery are unnecessary, with the exception of a dao, an axe, a hoe, and a sickle. The topic of discussion pertains to agricultural tools.

- i **Chem (Dao):** The object in discussion is a knife featuring a triangular-shaped blade, measuring approximately 3 inches in width at the terminal end and approximately 1 inch in width near the handle. The object in question is subjected to grinding; resulting in a chisel-shaped edge, where the wider end is the only portion that has been sharpened. The tool in question is utilized for the purpose of jungle clearance, while the wide end is employed for the excavation of holes in which the seeds are afterwards deposited. During the season of weeding, the dao exhibits a curvature at its central region. The convenience of the dao is enhanced for efficient weeding purposes.
- ii **Hreipui:** The heads of the axe are composed of iron, measuring around 1 inch at the leading edge, and gradually narrowing towards a pointed end. The handles consist of straightforward segments of bamboo, with the heads securely affixed through a hole created in the sturdy root section. This tool is mostly utilized for the purpose of severing timber and causing the downfall of trees. During earlier periods, the Mizo community employed stone tools known as *Teklung* for the purpose of seed sowing. Numerous stones are discovered and unearthed in

various antiquated and abandoned locations. The aforementioned item is among the widely recognized displays throughout the Mizoram State.

- iii **Chemkawm:** *Chemkawm* is usually welded out of used *Chem*. It is a utilitarian tool consisting of a flattened-iron component accompanied by a holder crafted out of bamboo trunks. The flattened iron is intentionally shaped in a curved manner, enabling it to effectively remove undesired weeds and plants from agricultural fields. *Chemkawm* is typically designed to accommodate those who are right-handed. The removal of undesired weeds during the early stages of plant development is a practical and beneficial practice.
- iv **Tuthlawh:** *Tuthlawh* resembles a hoe. It is composed of a small sharp iron hoe which was spiked on the head of a bamboo trunk used as a holder. The tool in discussion is a compact implement commonly referred to as a hoe. Its primary function is the excavation of small pits or depressions in the ground, among other related tasks. It is usually utilized for digging small pits for sowing of seeds, and for harvesting taros, ginger, and turmeric.
- v **Tuthulh:** *Tuthulh* is a flattened iron with a bamboo trunk attached to it as a holder. The iron part and the bamboo part were straightened which almost resembles a spear. It is exclusively used for making hole on the soil so that rice grains can be implanted for cultivation. It has no other usage than this.
- vi **Favah:** *Favah* means Sickle in Mizo. The tool is used for cutting paddy straws so that rice grains could be collected.
- vii **Emping:** *Emping* is a woven basket made out of bamboo fibers. It is usually carried by women to carry most of the cultivated vegetables to their homes. *Emping* is carried on the back of a woman with a particular rope called *Hnam* coiling around the *Emping*, the other end of the *Hnam* was thus attached to the forehead of a woman to support the weight. Mizo women have *Emping* and *Tuichawi-em* separately to carry loads on their back. However the main difference is that *Emping* was meant to carry even the smallest of grains while



*Tuichawi-em* was meant particularly for carrying bamboo bottles for carrying water.

viii **Paihper te:** It is a small and handy bamboo basket which was meant to carry vegetable seeds for cultivation. Its usage in the modern times has been greatly reduced because of the availability of plastic bags.

ix **Paihper lian:** It is a huge woven basket made out of bamboo fibers. It is usually carried by men to carry most of the cultivated vegetables as well as other items. *Paihper lian* is carried on the back of a man with a particular rope called *Nghawngkawl* coiling around the *Paihper lian*, the other end of the *Nghawngkawl* was thus attached to the forehead of a man to support the weight. *Hnam* and *Nghawngkawl* were almost identical; however the difference is that *Nghawngkawl* have a wooden structure attached to it so that some weight can be distributed to the shoulder.



*Image 4.4: Chem (Source: bambusapiens.com/bamboo-now/)*



*Image 4.5: Hreipui*



*Image 4.6: Tuthlawh*

*(Source: Mizoram State Museum)*



*Image 4.7: Tuthulh*



*Image 4.8: Favah*

*(Source: Mizoram State Museum)*





*Image 4.9: Emping*



*Image 4.10: Paihper te*

*(Source: Mizoram State Museum)*



*Image 4.11: Paihper lian*



*Image 4.12: Nghawngkaw*

*(Source: Mizoram State Museum)*

#### 4.2.2 Belief of Rain and its impact on the agricultural life of the Mizo People

The different names of rain as known by Mizo are elaborated with its impact to the society below:

- i The first rainfall of the year generally during the month of March is known as *chap delh ruah* (*chap*=chopped down trees and bushes, *delh*=to suppress, *ruah*=rain). March is known as *Vau thla* (*vau*=bauhinia variegata, *thla*=month). *Bauhinia variegata* (*vaube*, *vau*) blooms during this month and was named as *Vau thla*. Temperature ranges from 16°C to 30°C and average rainfall is 20 mm during this month. Chief of village or local headman demarcated some areas of land for jhum in a particular year and each household have to identify a plot of land for their jhum within the demarcated area. This is done systematically by draw-of-lots, where number one will first demarcate his/her choice of land that will be followed by number two, three and so on. This is known as *Lo nambar pawh* (draw of lots for jhuming). After identification of the plot of land for jhum they will clear their respective selected area by cutting trees, bamboos, grass, etc, during the month of February (*Ramtuk thla*) and cleared area is known as *Vah chap*.

After clearing a plot of land, first rainfall in a year comes to suppress fallen trees, bamboos, bushes, grasses, etc., on the ground to help burning of the soils to sow seeds. Unless fallen trees were not suppressed comfortably, the soil is not suitable for seeds and is difficult to look after the field due to bushes or grass. This rainfall helps the farmers/cultivators in preparing their plot of land to produce more paddy, grains, vegetables, etc., composing manure and fertility in the areas. Therefore, the first rainfall in a year, *chap delh ruah* plays significant role for the people of Mizo in their agricultural products.

- ii The second rainfall in a year is called *To ruah*, meaning rainfall to help germination (*To* means to germinate, sprout, grow and *ruah* means rainfall). Generally, during the month of March (*Vau thla*), a plot of land for jhum is burned for sowing different kinds of seeds and seedling is known as *thlai chi*



*thlak*. April is known as *Ṭau thla* (*tau*=rubusellipticus, *thla*=month). During this month, Golden Evergreen Raspberry / rubus ellipticus (*hmu tau, tau*) is ripening and this name is being given. Without having any scientific background, the Mizo experienced that rainfall is very essential by this time for the germination of seedling and this rainfall is expected in the month of April (*Ṭau thla*). During this month, Mizoram received an average rainfall of 80 mm and 16°C - 32°C temperature. This rain generally, last for three days with thunderstorm and dusky sky coming from the south western part of the state with thunderstorm and hailstorm occasionally. Traditionally, it is the best time of sowing paddy seeds in jhum cultivation (*Liangkhaia, 1975*).

This rainfall plays significant role in Mizo socio-agricultural system. If there is no normal rainfall, *to ruah* by this time, seeds may be taken away by insects, birds, etc., which may result failure in agricultural products. This rain significantly shows the future of agricultural products from jhum.

- iii The third rainfall in a calendar year is known as *Ruah thimpui*, meaning darkish rain (*ruah*=rain and *thimpui*=darkish, gloomy). It comes during the early part of May generally falls in the forenoon of a day disturbing all days' work. May is known as *Ṭomir thla* (*tomir*=monsoon season, *thla*=month), as monsoon is coming by this month resulting seeds to sprout and germinate in the fields hence it is named as *Ṭomir thla*. The sky appears gloomy, dusky, darkish or shadowy in the western parts of the state and within a minute strong wind with heavy rain blows from north-west to southeast. Mizoram receives an average rainfall of 200 mm and 18°C - 33°C temperature during this month.

It is very important to construct jhum hut (*thlam*) for every cultivator to shelter in their paddy fields. They all tried to construct jhum hut before the coming of this rain, *ruah thimpui* to shelter and protect themselves against heavy rainfall and thunderstorm during this time.

- iv The fourth rain in a calendar year is *siruk la* (*siruk* is Pleiades and *la* means snatch or take away); and is regarded as the last hurricane of the north-west

wind. Pleiades is not visible after this rain and monsoon is coming from the south-west of the state. Generally, it falls during the latter part of May. This rain is followed by monsoon rain which signifies that sowing beyond this rain is not recommended for any kind of seedlings as it cannot grow well as continuous rainfall follows.

- v The fifth rain in a calendar is known as *Nikir ruah* which is scientifically south-west monsoon. According to Mizo traditional knowledge and understanding, the sun moves towards south from the month of *Pawlkut thla* (January) and towards north from the month of *Nikir thla* (June) and reaches north point in *Pawtlak thla* (December). Based on this traditional knowledge rainfall in the month of June is known as *Nikir ruah* (*nikir*=return of the sun and *ruah*=rain). This rain generally falls for seven days continuously and it is very difficult for some families to carry firewood and other domestic goods which may cause problems in their daily life as Mizo are collecting domestic materials on the basis of daily needs due to poverty. Water may become dusky and non-potable to drink and many earthworms appear on the ground. Mizoram receives an average of 520 mm rainfall, and temperature varies from 15°C - 33°C during this month.

A group of local persons arrange to assist each one of them in exchange of similar work in their agricultural works and is known as *lawm*. In Mizo mythology, a lady named as *Lalmanga nu* always used to arrange for her villagers or friends to work in her jhum on 21<sup>st</sup> June in order to get maximum working hours as it is the longest day of the year. Without having scientific knowledge of summer solstice and revolution of the earth, Mizo adopted 21<sup>st</sup> June as the longest day of the year and called it as '*Lalmanga nu lawm rawih ni*'. After this day, the sun moves towards south which resulted in decreasing day time gradually till winter solstice.

This rainfall helps agricultural crops to flourish and it had imperative importance to the farmers. If the crops do not receive desirable amount of

monsoon rainfall by this time, agricultural crops will probably die due to drought, thus resulting in fewer products from the fields.

- vi The sixth rainfall in a calendar year is *ruah mual liam/ruah bîng*. These rains fall during autumn season of September or October. By September, Mizo have one festival called *Mimkût* to give thanks to *khuanu* (god of blessings), hence its name *Mimkût thla* is being given for September. During the month of September, Mizoram receives an average rainfall of 300 mm and 12°C - 30°C temperature. This season has crucial significance in Mizo society as the paddy are flowering and prepare to bear fruits that requires little shower for best results. *Ruah mual liam* is a short sharp shower moving from one to the other within a short time and *ruah bîng* as a local shower that rains in certain areas for a particular minute which give pleasant support to prepare paddy to bear fruits. This rain gives congenial water to the soil to support paddy and other plants to bear better fruits.
- vii In October, weather becomes gradually dry and many vegetables no longer bear leaves and the seventh rain is known as *Mai hrui pawt chat* (*mai hrui*= pumpkin vine, *pawt chat*=to remove). *Mai* (pumpkin), which grows in kitchen garden and jhum, is one of the most favourite vegetables of Mizo. Its leaf is tasty and a good recipe for preparing different food items of Mizo. Most of the vegetables grown in the field gradually dry and do not bear green leaves. After this rain, no heavy rainfall is expected in Mizoram as winter is coming shortly. This rain falls during the latter part of October known as *Khuangchawi thla* (*khuangchawi*=Festival of dance, *thla*=month). October is one of the most pleasant times in the state where there is no much work in the paddy fields, and the farmers waited for the crops to be harvested shortly. The local chiefs organised huge festival known as *Khuangchawi* with big feasts and merrymaking to recognise hard works of the villagers. As such, its name has been given as *Khuangchawi thla*. It is the most pleasant season in Mizoram receiving average rainfall of 120 mm and moderate temperature of 11°C - 30°C during this month.

By understanding the climatic conditions traditionally, they harvested different kinds of vegetables, like pumpkin, maize, melon, etc., from their field as they are no longer procuring green leaves or fruits. Jhum is significantly reserved for paddy and other plants which can bear fruits later.

- viii The eight rainfalls in the state is known as *Ai-ruah* (*ai*=crab and *ruah*=rain) comes in the month of November. November is known as *Sahmulphah thla* (*sahmul*=woolen; *phah*=spread/lay, *thla*=month). Winter season is coming by this month and woollen clothes are being used as bed sheet to keep them warm by night, hence this name was given for November. Crab is a delicious sea food of Mizo and the so called *Ai-ruah* comes from crab. Monsoon is the best season to catch crab in the state. As winter is coming by November, crabs take hibernation which causes difficulty in catching them by any means and its name *Ai-ruah* is being borne. Being the last rain before harvesting, they used to take various steps to harvest paddy from the field. Mizoram receives an average rainfall of 7 mm and temperature 10°C - 25°C during this month.
- ix The last rain of the year known as *Pawl delh ruah* (*pawl*=paddy straw, *delh*=to compress and *ruah*=rain) falls during the last part of December or early part of January. By this time paddy harvesting is over and only paddy straw is left in the field. As its name indicate, rainfall by this time is to compress paddy straw in the deserted field (*Chul*). December is known as *Pawltlak thla* (*pawl*=straw; *tlak*=complete, *thla*=month). By this month, one year work at paddy field is going to be all over and the Mizo people looks for another area for the upcoming year. Its name is given to commemorate winding up of one-year hectic work in a particular field to cultivate paddy, vegetables, etc. Rainfall is approximately 8 mm and temperature varies from 7°C - 25°C during the month of December. Mizo beliefs that rain in the month of January indicate substantial rainfall in the following year and prepare social activities accordingly.

### **4.2.3 The Influence of Agriculture on Traditional Organizational Systems**

Agriculture has a significant role in fostering community cohesiveness by bringing together individuals who have economic and vocational similarities. Jhum cultivation, also known as shifting cultivation, is a significant agricultural practice that encompasses more than just an economic phenomenon, but rather an integral component of human existence. The agricultural practices of the Mizo people are centered on a collaborative agricultural work arrangement, which now need further elucidation. The Mizo community predominantly engages unmarried adults, both male and female, in agricultural labor collaborations. However, it is important to note that the composition of the working group does not necessarily correspond to the socioeconomic status of its members. Reciprocal giving and taking is a form of agricultural labor.

In order to efficiently carry out the jhum chores, young individuals of both genders established partnerships, ensuring that these tasks were conducted concurrently on multiple plots of land, alternating between them on a daily basis. Consequently, it is possible to form a pairing between a male character from plot B and a female character from plot A. afterwards, during the initial day, the pair would prioritize the task of tilling plot A, afterwards transitioning to plot B on the subsequent day, and subsequently reverting back to plot A on the third day, and so forth. This fosters a sense of collaboration among the collective. In contemporary society, engaging in a romantic relationship with a young woman can be likened to the process of courting a potential male worker who possesses the ability to contribute significantly to the agricultural labor force. This is due to the prevailing societal norms and expectations that place a premium on the physical attractiveness of women, resulting in a heightened demand for their employment opportunities.

In past times, work partnerships in agriculture held great value and were highly esteemed by serious individuals, particularly when comparing the attitudes of young people to those of older individuals in terms of collaborative effort. Furthermore, in the case of young individuals who are not burdened by parental responsibilities, engaging in

work partnerships can be seen as a significant factor. Consequently, it can be argued that the primary attraction to agricultural work lies in its emotional value that transcends its role as mere commodities. This emotional value fosters a deep sense of connection and fascination with agricultural activities among the Mizo community. One could posit that agricultural operations facilitated diverse social interactions, including those that took place on agricultural land. The practice of Jhum agriculture is not authorized as a long-term land tenure arrangement. The piece of land undergoes a cyclical period of jhum farming, typically lasting seven to eight years. Due to the recurrent cycles experienced throughout an individual's lifespan, the entirety of the village's land becomes intertwined with agricultural sentimentality. Consequently, one may argue that the cohesion of the communities can be attributed to the framework that encompasses agricultural labor and agricultural land.

### **4.3 Traditional attire**

In the context of pre-colonial *Lusei* attire, it is possible to categorize costumes into several different types: ordinary or everyday dress, festive or occasional dress, and statutory dress, which was reserved for those of high rank such as chiefs and other esteemed individuals. The pre-colonial dress of the Lusei people was intricately woven by the Mizo community themselves. It is imperative to initiate a discussion regarding the tools and equipment employed in the process of weaving.

#### **4.3.1 Tools and Equipment's of Weaving**

Different tools are used in producing yarns for weaving *puan*.

- i Herawt: *Herawt* is a home-made gin consisting of a frame holding two wooden rollers. The end of the rollers is carved into a screw which grooved into opposite way to the others. When the handle is turned, the cotton is drawn between them and removes seeds separating cotton flowers and seeds.

- ii Lasai: *Lasai* is a bamboo stick with a wide base and a narrow top, having one cane string which is first tied to the base and then to the top of the stick. The cotton is teased by this bow about five times to become clean.
- iii Chawnzial: *Chawnzial* is a mat made of a number of thin strips of wood or bamboo used for keeping the raw rolled cotton to be spun. The cotton is placed on a smooth plank and rolled with the stem of a tall grass called ‘*Hmunphiah*’.
- iv Hmui: The spinning wheel (*hmui*) is made from wood and cane; the actual spindle being made of iron. The stand of the wheel is also made of wood.
- v Ladinlek: *Ladinlek* is a piece of wood which is sharpened at both ends like a pencil. Holes are made below each of the sharpened point of the stick and then thin pieces of bamboo are inserted through these holes.
- vi Lazar: It is a bamboo pole supported by two upright posts which is made for drying the hank of the thread. A large stick is placed between the hanks of the thread.
- vii Lakhuih: It is a comb for combining cotton yarn. By this comb the thread is well brushed while still wet.
- viii Suvel: *Suvel* is a revolving tool with four extendable arms around which skein of cotton yarn is put for making the yarn into balls around a small stone. It is made of wood and bamboo having a stand of its own (*Lianhmingthanga, 1998*).

In order to achieve self-sufficiency in clothing, a significant number of Mizo households engage in the cultivation of cotton inside their paddy fields. The process of preparing cotton blossoms for garment production involved the utilization of locally crafted indigenous equipment. Yarns utilized in the weaving process of *puan*, including diverse patterns, are generated using a multitude of techniques.

Prior to being prepared for weaving, cotton flowers were harvested and subsequently sun-dried. The extraction of its seed necessitates the utilization of a traditional apparatus referred to as *Herawt*, a locally crafted contraption consisting of a framework that accommodates two wooden rollers. The terminations of the rollers are fashioned into a helical shape, exhibiting grooves that run in a contrary direction to the

remaining rollers. When the handle is rotated, the cotton fibers are pulled between the components, resulting in the separation of cotton bolls and seeds. Furthermore, the efficient distribution of seedless cotton can be achieved by the utilization of *Lasai*, a bamboo stick characterized by a broad base and a narrow top. This stick is equipped with a single cane thread that is attached from the base to the uppermost part of the stick.

In order to achieve cleanliness, the cotton is subjected to five consecutive teasing motions using this bow. In the third step of the process, cotton is carefully positioned on a polished plank and then rolled using the stem of a tall grass known as '*Hmunphiah*'. This rolling action ensures that the cotton fibers are evenly distributed and tightly wound, resulting in the creation of cotton thread. The thread is then systematically wound onto a spool, known as *Lachawn*, and stored in *Chawnzial*, a mat composed of multiple thin strips of wood or bamboo. This mat serves the purpose of preserving the raw rolled cotton until it is ready to be spun. Furthermore, the extraction of thread from *lachawn* is accomplished by the utilization of a *Hmui* spinning wheel, a device that originates from the indigenous community. The spindle of the spinning wheel, known as '*hmui*' is composed of iron and features a construction that incorporates both wood and cane materials. Wood is additionally utilized in the construction of the support for the wheel.

The scientific application of this process involves the production of thread through the utilization of rolled cotton. In the fifth instance, a thread was fashioned by employing *Ladinlek*, a wooden implement characterized by dual-pointed ends akin to a sharpened pencil, to accommodate a substantial skein of cotton. Beneath each sharpened tip of the stick, holes are bored, through which thin pieces of bamboo are inserted. In the local context, cotton yarn is wound using this method. In the sixth step, a skein of cotton was subjected to a cooking process alongside rice in order to facilitate its binding, followed by suspension in sunlight for the purpose of drying. This particular procedure is commonly referred to as *Lazar*. The structure consists of bamboo poles that are upheld by two vertical pillars and serves the purpose of facilitating the drying process of thread



hanks. In the process of sun-drying cotton thread, a lengthy rod is positioned amidst the strands of thread subsequent to combing cotton yarn with a comb. The process of preparing cotton thread for cloth results in its transformation into a smooth and firm texture. The process involved the utilization of a rudimentary apparatus called *Suvel*, which consisted of a rotating device with four elongated arms. This instrument facilitated the unwinding of cotton yarn, which was subsequently wound around a small stone to create spherical balls. The object is constructed using wood and bamboo materials and is accompanied by a dedicated support structure. Once all of the aforementioned phases have been completed, the cotton blossom is prepared for the process of weaving on a loom (*Lianhmingthanga, 1998*).

The primary apparatus employed for the practice of weaving was predominantly the loom. However, advancements in contemporary technology have led to the development and predominant utilization of frame looms, jacquard looms, and fly shuttles. The weavers within the designated region constructed the frame looms themselves. The price of the frame looms is approximately Rs. 15,000/-. The loom comprises several components, including the treadle, reeds, bamboo strips, and wooden rods.

Wooden devices were devised for the purpose of inserting the weaver's foot. Weavers utilize the extra weft technique as a means to produce raised patterns. The process of cotton reeling, known as '*la duang*' is a necessary step for weavers. Approximately 12 kilograms of cotton is required to produce a single *puan*. This quantity of cotton may often be reeled within a span of 2 to 3 days, facilitated by the utilization of a machine known as a dynamo. The cotton that had been processed through reeling was suspended within a 24-hour period. The process of preparing to weave a single *puan* typically requires duration of approximately two weeks. The weaver assumes a seated position in front of the frame loom, ensuring stability by fastening the back straps and resting one leg on the footrest. The process of weaving is thereafter carried out on the frame loom through the utilization of various actions, such as casting,

plucking, and striking. In the act of weaving, the left hand is responsible for elevating the head bar, while the right hand exerts downward pressure on the bamboo bar. The weft is thereafter transported over the shuttle in a bi-directional manner, from the right side to the left side and vice versa, prior to being subjected to the forceful impact of the sword. The shuttle is subsequently transferred in a right-to-left direction, and the weft is afterwards subjected to another round of pounding. The aforementioned process is iterated till the weaving process reaches its completion.

The process of weaving *puan* typically requires duration of 2 to 3 days, assuming a rudimentary pattern is being employed. If the design or pattern of the *puan* is extensive or complicated, it typically requires approximately one week for the weavers to complete its production. A single *puan* is commonly measured to be between 60 and 65 inches in length. According to an unidentified source, the traditional handloom industry serves as the primary economic activity for the indigenous population of Mizoram (*Loin loom is the main source of revenue for the native of Mizoram, n.d.*).



*Image 4.13: Herawt (Source: Mizoram State Museum)*



*Image 4.14: Hmui*



*Image 4.15: Other weaving equipments*

*(Source: Mizoram State Museum)*

### **4.3.2 Ordinary or Everyday Dress**

The indigenous people of Mizo, namely among the *Lusei* tribe, the pursuit of leisure was a rarity, resulting in the adoption of a simplistic everyday attire. This attire consisted of a singular white homespun sheet, which was worn by all members of the community. Once the early settlers established themselves in a certain location with a reliable agricultural system, they experienced enhancements in their economic structure. This, in turn, facilitated greater time management for weaving and provided easier access to dyes. Consequently, they began to diversify the range of colors, designs, and patterns available in their clothing options.

These garments are frequently donned by individuals of all genders and lack any particular connotation. They were regularly worn for both employment in the jhum fields and domestic settings. The aforementioned garments can be regarded as the earliest manifestation of traditional *Lusei* attire, developed mostly in response to the necessity for clothing composed of materials other than tree bark. The garments primarily serve as professional attire, while simultaneously reflecting advancements in the domain of fashion design.

The different ordinary dresses of the *Lushai* tribes were listed as:

- i. **Hnawhkhal and Hrenpereng:** It is postulated that the initial attire worn by *Lusei* men consisted of a straw garment known as *Hnawkhal*, accompanied by a loin cover referred to as *Hrenpereng*. The initial garments were crafted from the inner bark of the *Vaiza* tree (*Hibiscus Maerophyllus*), a flowering tree species. The bark is carefully removed and then processed into fine fibers by a shredding technique. The shredded barks of trees were assembled and fastened together in a dense cluster, which was then affixed to the waist using a rope. This cluster of shredded barks hung centrally, effectively concealing the individuals' intimate areas. The garment was suspended mostly from one's shoulder and could be worn for any desired duration. The garment in question resembled an extended gown donned by males, with sufficient length to envelop the lower portion of the male physique, occasionally fastened at the waist with a belt crafted from identical fabric.

The *Vaiza's* stiff fibrous substance necessitated treatment. Following the shredding process, the material was occasionally subjected to pounding in a mortar or on a stone using a hard tool, in order to enhance its softness for improved durability. Nevertheless, it is uncertain if either the *Lusei* and *Lai* communities utilized the identical variant simultaneously. However, both straw and cloth were utilized during specific historical times to provide coverage for their loins. Subsequently, cotton textiles became employed for the fabrication of



*Hrenpereng*, while the utilization of tree barks, like *Vaiza*, gradually and permanently fell out of favor.



*Image 4.16: People wearing Hnawhkhals (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*



*Image 4.17: Kids wearing Hrenperengs (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- ii. **Siapsuap:** The clothing known as *Siapsuap* is considered to be the earliest attire worn by *Lusei* women. The aforementioned garment is derived from the outer layer of the *Vaiza* tree and is skillfully assembled to form waist-covering attire; designed to conceal the central region of the human body. This may potentially represent the antithesis of the male *Hrenpereng*. According to N.E. Parry, it can be observed that at this particular period, the skirt worn by *Sabeu* women exhibited a significant amount of volume. However, it is worth noting that women from other tribes opted for bark skirts as their clothing choice. This particular bark skirt has distinct characteristics that are indicative of *Siapsuap* origin. According to Longtha's 1901 report, it was observed that the individuals in question were essentially devoid of clothing. The female individuals adorn themselves with a modest piece of bark material, which is fastened around their waist using a string. This garment is strategically positioned in front to conceal their intimate areas, while leaving their posterior region uncovered. This encompasses the entirety of the attire worn by individuals of both genders. This particular variant may be considered a primitive iteration of *Siapsuap*, as it deviates from the commonly recognized variety characterized by a more extensive straw skirt.

Despite the utilization of cotton cloths, individuals remained unclothed from the waist up. The lack of specificity in the description of the bark skirt leads to the observation that a smaller version of the skirt is now used to cover the upper body, resembling a modern two-piece garment. This adaptation, known as *Siapsuap*, is primarily utilized during cultural festivals, shows, and events to provide coverage for the bosom. There are also indications that, in subsequent periods of weaving, *Siapsuap* garments were crafted using cotton instead of the previously used coarse tree bark. This transition persisted as a vital component of their attire, even into the colonial era. This particular type of skirt was crafted using hand-spun cotton fibers. The cotton strands are intricately woven in a flat pattern along the ridge formed by two parallel cords. The cotton yarns are then

suspended by a lark's head knot. Mostly, this garment was donned by individuals in their childhood and adolescent years.



*Image 4.18: People wearing Siapsuap (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- iii. **Fenphel/ Fenngo:** It is a simple, unadorned skirt that is fastened around the waist. The skirt is made of unbleached cotton, resulting in its natural white hue. It is widely thought that this particular garment was among the earliest articles of clothing produced by Mizo women subsequent to their arrival in *Lentlang*. The term '*fen*' refers to the act of wearing a garment resembling a skirt, either around the waist or as described by Lorrain as 'putting on or wearing' items such as aprons, girdles, petticoats, kilts, skirts, and so forth. The term '*ngo*' refers to a shade or hue that is characterized by its lightness, fairness, and whiteness. On the contrary, the term '*phel*' denotes the act of dividing or severing an object into two equal parts.

*Fenphel* is of a shorter length, with its hemline extending just above or up to the knee. Due to its relatively limited dimensions in terms of length and width, it is unable to overlap to a significant extent. Consequently, a narrow opening is

formed at the juncture of its two ends, typically situated on the outer surface of the left thigh. This distinctive characteristic has led to its designation. In the context of older ladies, this specific piece of clothing served as both a petticoat and an undergarment. The garment was mostly utilized in domestic and occupational settings, typically concealed behind an outer layer of fabric. It is common attire worn on a regular basis.

- iv. **Puanngo:** The fabric was a plain and rough white textile that was worn by both men and women. These entities were referred to as *Puanngo*. The initial variety of *puan* manufactured in *Lentlang* likely consisted of a basic and unrefined coarse cotton fabric. The individuals were unable to create intricate garments with color. The fabric that was manufactured can be described as a basic, dense white textile known as *Puanngo*. The clothing piece is straightforward and designed for practicality, suitable for both daily and general purposes, with a primary focus on professional attire. They faced significant financial constraints that prevented them from distinguishing between formal and informal options.

This *puan* does not incorporate any dyes or themes. The term *ngo*, as previously elucidated, denotes a light, fair, or white hue, specifically alluding to the white shade of the *puan*. The hue of this particular fabric is frequently characterized by a slightly creamy shade, as it effectively accentuates the inherent color of the cotton fibers utilized in its weaving process. However, this particular attire subsequently gained popularity among the lower social classes and became the prevailing choice of clothing for common individuals. During the pre-colonial time, it was a typical practice to wear the *Fenngo* garment in the *hnubih* or *thinbih* style. This involved clutching the *puan* fabric just above the breast, so exposing the shoulder and allowing for increased freedom of movement.

- v. **Puanmawl:** The term '*Puanmawl*' denotes a plain cloth devoid of any motifs or designs; however it may also be available in many colors. The term '*mawl*' is derived from the word 'simple', which is why it is named as such. A *Puanmawl*



refers to a plain-colored *puan* that lacks any motifs or designs integrated into its weaving. Hence, although a *Puanngo* may be referred to as a *Puanmawl*, it is important to note that not all *Puanmawl* may be classified as *Puanngo*.

In contemporary practice, it is customary for the bride to present a variety of *Puanmawl*, each adorned with distinct colors, to the groom's household. These *Puanmawl* are thereafter distributed to the bride's newly acquired relatives. Additionally, it is worth noting that a *Puanmawl* is frequently chosen as the predominant style of attire for individuals attending funerals or commemorating the passing of someone. Symbolic usage of shrouds and as farewell offerings for deceased individuals is observed. Following the completion of burial rites, it is customary for the family of the deceased individual to distribute a selection of *puans* as mementos to their close relatives and loved ones.

- vi. **Puanhlap:** The term '*Puanhlap*' is utilized to refer to any article of apparel. There exists a perspective among certain individuals that it represents a masculine iteration of *Puanngo*, albeit of larger stature. The *puan* garment serves many functions, since it can be worn both casually and for providing warmth in colder climates. It is a widely recognized phenomenon. It bears resemblance to a contemporary bed sheet, serving a dual purpose as both a lightweight blanket for nocturnal use and a shawl for diurnal wear.
- vii. **Hmaram:** The incorporation of both color and pattern was initially observed in *Hmaram*. The term '*Hmar*' refers to a hairstyle characterized by a hair bun positioned at the nape of the neck, while '*am*' denotes a type of skirt. It is a rather diminutive textile, typically measuring approximately 17 to 18 inches or greater in width, which is commonly donned by adolescent females. When positioned at the waist, the garment provides minimal coverage to the wearer's knee region. The garment in question bears resemblance to the conventional tiny skirt worn by the *Lusei* community. The skirt is mostly colored black, with a decorative pattern known as *Kawkpuzikzial* incorporated into its design. The

*Lusei* women, as they gained wealth and expertise in the art of weaving, created new patterns, one of which is the *Kawkpuzikzial* design that they developed in the early stages. Kale is a prevalent leafy vegetable characterized by the curvature of its leaf tip, which forms a rounded loop. The term ‘*zik*’ denotes the apex or tip, whereas ‘*zial*’ signifies the action of rolling or shaping into a circular form, specifically in relation to the curved loop found at the tip of a leaf. Consequently, the leaf’s form was replicated in the design with such aesthetic finesse that it persisted as a recurring element in subsequent iterations of design.



Image 4.19: *Hmaram* (Source: Esther Lalruatpuui)

Additionally, the *Hruih* design was included into the composition of this skirt. The skirt is constructed using a natural white yarn as the warp and indigo-dyed thread as the weft. The naturally colored white yarns were once more employed to incorporate the *Kawkpuzikzial* motif into the fabric. In this design, the blue sections are woven using a weft-faced black weave, while the remaining blue and white areas are woven in a balanced plain weave. These elements are skillfully interwoven into the skirt, with larger and smaller bands alternating in a perpendicular and vertical manner when the garment is worn. In addition to the *Kawkpuzikzial* motif, the *Disul* and *Lenbuangthuam* patterns are also included in the patterning of *Hmaram*. The aforementioned designs have emerged as a prevalent motif in contemporary *Lusei* fashion. Occasionally, particularly during extended periods of use when the dyes lacked sufficient permanence, the indigo

hue of the pattern undergoes a slight alteration, assuming a somewhat grayish appearance. There was no specific event associated with the wearing of *Hmaram*, as it was suitable for everyday use. However, it was the favored choice among young ladies during festive occasions in comparison to *Fenngo*. The current iteration exhibits certain advancements and refinements in terms of both color and design when compared to the prior one, *Fenngo*.

- viii. **Puantlangtial:** The utilization of color initially emerged in *Puantlangdum* or *Puantlangtial*. The present iteration of *Puanngo* has a higher level of development. The *Lusei* women began to produce new designs as they embarked on the exploration of color utilization. Initially, the sole hue that manifested in the attire of the *Lusei* people was black. The utilization of indigo dye, known as *ting*, in conjunction with cotton production, has undoubtedly facilitated their understanding of the process of dyeing. Female individuals who have the means and leisure to do so would incorporate a touch of black dye at the edge of the *Puanngo* or *Puanmawl* textile during the weaving process, in order to introduce a sense of diversity.

The term '*Puantlangdum*' refers to a textile characterized by a black hem, accurately reflecting its physical composition. The lower edge of a *puan*, sometimes referred to as a *tuipal*, denotes the section that comes into contact with moisture or is immersed in water. Subsequently, as other color options became available, the *tuipal* or fringe of the *puan* garment underwent a transformation, including several hues. This variant was alternatively referred to as *Chhimpuantlangtial* or *Puantlangtial*.

- ix. **Ngotekherh:** Initially, this specific *puan* was denoted as *Puan Hruih*. It is a simple white garment featuring two prominent weft-faced lines in black, effectively dividing the *puan* into three equal sections. The process of creating transverse stripes on fabric by employing a specific pulling technique throughout the pattern-making process, resulting in a thicker or denser area where the design is located, is referred to as *Thaihruih*. The *Thaihruih* garment features a hem that

exhibits uniform stitching using black and white (*ngo*) thread, arranged in little lines known as *kherh*. Consequently, this particular kind of stitching gives rise to an alternative designation for the garment, namely *Ngotekherh*. However, it is worth noting that both terms, *puan* and *Ngotekherh*, are used interchangeably in a collective manner.



*Image 4.20: Ngotekherh (Source: Esther Lalruatpuii)*

The *puan* can be classified as attire suitable for everyday wear due to its versatility and popularity. Despite being highly desired, it was commonly worn for many occasions, whether they were part of one's regular routine or not. The occasion and the individual who wore the item were not specified. This article of clothing has the potential to be worn by individuals of various backgrounds and has recently gained widespread popularity, resulting in its ubiquity among the general population. The *puan* possesses a white foundation. The *puan* features two black warp stripes measuring 8-9 centimeters that extend along the outside margins. Additionally, there are other narrower black warp stripes present throughout the remainder of the *puan*.

The *puan* exhibits a constant grid pattern, achieved through the thick black weft-faced stripes that intersect the middle portion, juxtaposed with the faint stripes of black wefts. The presence of a thick weft-faced on both ends of the *puan* serves to partition the *puan* into three equal portions. Furthermore, the utilization of black color as the warp at the periphery of the *puan* resulted in the formation of a black border measuring around six to seven inches. In certain instances, additional lines are formed at the lower edge of the fabric, characterized by a black color that aligns with the black border, resulting in the formation of a stripe and the emergence of a novel pattern in *Mizo puan*. There is a belief that the presence of an odd number of stripes in a border is considered auspicious. The current textile incorporates a regular grid pattern known as *Mangpuantial*, which was absent in the original rendition. In ancient times, the garment was only worn by men; however, it was afterwards adopted by women as well. The *Mangpuantial's* grid pattern has emerged as a consistent backdrop for *Ngotekherh*, as well as a repeating element in other *Puanchei* during the early 20th century. These artistic expressions gained prominence during the colonial era and continued to flourish after achieving independence.

The development of this pattern is thought to be associated with affluent families, who possessed the resources to produce the black dye required for the design and had greater amounts of leisure time to dedicate to artistic pursuits. Currently, the *puan* garment remains highly sought-after, with its ownership considered a cultural expectation for every *Lusei* lady. However, irrespective of its historical usage, the contemporary wearing of this attire predominantly occurs during formal events, cultural programs, and festivals, with no modifications or alterations made to its original design. Elderly women commonly choose to don such attire for religious services on Sundays and other special occasions. Nevertheless, there has been a new emergence of *Ngotekherh* that exhibits green and red hues. Despite not being as popular as the original color, it does introduce a distinct variety in the *Lusei* outfit.

- x. **Tualtakawr/ Tualtahuan:** These words frequently arise throughout the process of putting on *Mizo puan* or traditional attire in its entirety. Although these terms are commonly used to refer to different types of blouses or clothing, it can be quite perplexing when attempting to articulate the distinctions between them. Hence, it is imperative to provide explanations for these terminologies. The term ‘*Tualtah*’ pertains to the specific location where an item is produced.

The term ‘*Tualtah*’ is derived from the combination of the words ‘*Tual*’ which refers to the local context, ‘*tah*’ meaning to weave, and ‘*kawr*’ denoting a blouse. Consequently, ‘*Tualtah*’ encompasses any blouse that is produced locally. As implied by its nomenclature, the term ‘any *puan*’ refers to a locally manufactured product known as *Tualtah Puan*. These terminologies were employed to describe any of the points generated by the individuals themselves. The term ‘*Tualtah*’ may have originated as a means to distinguish clothing and fabrics produced by a particular group from those that were imported. This distinction encompassed various aspects, including the manufacturing process from yarn to final product, as well as considerations of color and design. The imported yarns and garments originating from external sources, such as Burma or other states within India, were commonly known as *Vai La* and *Vai puan*, respectively. The term ‘*Vai*’ is used to signify any non-*Mizo* individual. The aforementioned attire remained an integral aspect of *Lusei* culture, persisting even until the advent of British influence.

#### 4.3.3 Festive or Occasional Dress

The traditional attire donned during festivals and specific occasions included *Puanrin*, *Puanlaisen/Puanchei*, *Kawrchei*, *Puandum*, and *Puanropui*. The act of donning these garments serves as a symbolic representation of the significance attributed to the specific occasion or festival within the cultural and societal context. Conversely, these instances also serve as a significant representation of the cultural significance of the

attire. The aforementioned costumes were traditionally donned during *Khuangchawi*, *Chawngchen*, and several cultural events such as *Chapchar Kut*, *Mim Kut*, and others.

- i. **Puanrin:** The *puanrin* is considered to be among the most ancient patterns seen on a textile, originating from the Mizo community. The base of this cloth is comprised of a black hue, intricately woven in a dense weft-faced structure where the warp threads are tightly interlaced by the weft known as *hruih*. Additionally, there is a recurring white horizontal stripe of around two and a half inches in width. Consequently, it exhibited a substantial degree of thickness. The white band panel is woven in a rib structure, resulting in the formation of three or more vertical lines that divide the *puan* into several equal halves. The stark contrast between the black color of the cloth and the white color created a visually striking effect, enhancing the cloth's aesthetic appeal and imparting a sense of elegance and grandeur. The central band located in the middle is flanked by smaller lines in close proximity. This particular garment was typically utilized during social gatherings and times when individuals desired to enhance their appearance. The fabric in question was a male garment produced by female artisans, measuring approximately 80 inches in length as well as 20 to 23 inches in breadth, or as broad as the loom allowed. The aforementioned *puan* is also donned by the privileged and governing factions of the *Lai* and *Mara* tribes. According to historical accounts, during festive occasions and celebratory events, Chiefs would adorn themselves with a garment known as the *puan*.
- ii. **Puanlaisen/Puanchei:** *Puanlaisen*, also known as *Puanchei*, represents the most esteemed and highly sought-after textile within the *Lusei* community. Both phrases are frequently employed interchangeably to denote the concept of the *puan*. However, it appears that the term '*Puanlaisen*' was utilized prior to the usage of '*Puanchei*'. Until the 1950s, the term '*Puanlaisen*' was commonly used to refer to the *puan*, however the term '*Puanchei*' has now emerged as the designated name for this particular *puan*, possibly due to the inclusion of more ornamental designs.

In order to enhance the clarity and comprehensiveness of our study, it is proposed that the name '*Puanlaisen*' be chosen to denote the *puan* of the pre-colonial period, characterized by a relative absence of significant alterations. In contrast, the word '*Puanchei*' was employed to refer to this particular type of textile throughout the colonial era, as well as to encompass the subsequent iterations of the *Puanchei* that exhibit a greater range of design and color variations.

The phrase '*Puanlaisen*' can be interpreted as a fabric that features a crimson portion located in the middle or center. In the *Lusei* dialect, the term '*lai*' denotes the concept of center, while '*sen*' signifies the color red. The primary color of this *puan*'s prominent surface is white, accompanied by horizontal red threads of approximately 10-12 inches in width. Unlike the modern *Puanchei*, this particular *puan* lacks elaborate designs. The term '*chei*' denotes the act of adorning or embellishing, so '*Puanchei*' can be understood as a textile that has been adorned or embellished.

*Puanlaisen* can be regarded as a more streamlined iteration of *Puanchei*. The item holds significant prominence within the *Lusei* wardrobe; however its origins may be traced back to its first use as a male-oriented blanket. The size of men's dresses was increased. In addition, women also utilized it as shawls, eventually becoming an essential component of a *Lusei* woman's attire. Each *Lusei* woman aspired to acquire a *Puanlaisen*, as it was widely regarded as the most aesthetically pleasing and ornamental among her *puan* patterns. Traditionally, it was customary for women to aspire to create at least one *Puanlaisen* garment for themselves.

This textile technique is a method of weaving in which the weft yarns create a ribbed structure, effectively embedding the warp yarns to create a raised ribbed effect. The aforementioned line intersects the edge at two distinct points on the cloth, creating three equal halves. This garment was worn during all celebratory or significant events, whenever individuals were obligated to adorn



themselves. *Thangchhuahnu* adorns herself with a *puan* and *Kawrchei* ensemble, while wearing a *Vakiria* headdress, during the *Khuangchawi* celebration. A notable instance in which women were particularly required to wear *Puanlaisen* attire was at events in which they were to partake in the Cheraw dance.

In addition to being worn at traditional events, the *Lusei* brides also adorned themselves with it during wedding ceremonies. The significance of a *Puanchei* garment for the *Mizo* community as a whole, and specifically for women, is difficult to fully grasp. Despite the complete assimilation of Christianity following colonial interference, Christian weddings have become an integral component of the social-cultural customs of the *Mizo* people. However, the traditional bridal attire known as *Puanchei* has retained its prominence, particularly among *Duhlian*-speaking brides. Once more, owing to its sophisticated design, the creation of this item was beyond the capabilities of every woman, hence augmenting its overall value. It can be argued that the *Mizo* inherent ability for weaving has undergone evolution over time, resulting in its current status as the most artistic endeavor.

- iii. **Kawrchei:** This garment, known as a blouse, has been worn with *Puanlaisen* in the past and continues to be worn by individuals now, namely *Puanchei*. The garment is primarily worn during festivals and formal events. The uppermost section of the garment exhibits a white hue, while the central portions of both the front and back are adorned with a vertical design featuring *Puanlaisen*. This design spans approximately one and a half inches on every side of the front opening, with a width of approximately two inches in the middle. Additionally, a black border measuring approximately one inch is present at the hem, neckline, and sleeves.

The central portion of the sleeve was adorned with a band with the *Puanlaisen* or *Puanchei* pattern. This band consisted of a red weft with the *lenbuangthuam* pattern positioned in the center, and it was affixed to the center of the sleeve. The garment in question is an enhanced iteration of the traditional

attire known as *Kawrmawl*, which was historically worn by women. In contemporary times, it is seen that the embellishment of *Puanlaisen* or *Puanchei* motifs extends beyond the sleeves to include the fronts of garments. It is worth noting that regional variations exist, although they lack clarity in terms of their distinct characteristics. However, the photographic evidence from the colonial era indicates that this attire was predominantly worn in conjunction with *Puanlaisen* or *Puanchei*, and solely on occasions that necessitated formal dressing.



Image 4.21: *Kawrchei* with *Puanchei* (Source: Sawma Pachau)

- iv. **Pawndum:** In the *Lusei* language, the term ‘*Dum*’ denotes the color black. Consequently, the term ‘*Pawndum*’ can be understood as a literal reference to a cloth of black hue. However, a *Pawndum* is not simply an ordinary black cloth, but rather it is adorned with special colors like as red, white, yellow, and green, which imbue it with a notable aesthetic value. According to historical accounts, it is said to have a more ancient lineage compared to the *Puanlaisen*. This

particular textile closely aligns with the depiction of a dark blue fabric adorned with a limited number of white, yellow, or red stripes.

However, this specific *puan* exhibits a black basis that is adorned with various colors in the weave, employing a technique known as countering weft twining. The traditional outfit possesses significant cultural worth and has managed to retain its cultural relevance to a considerable degree up until the present time. The name of *Puandum* varied depending on its intended purpose. The act of gifting an item as a token of love and affection is commonly referred to as *Zawlpuan*. The act of presenting *Pawndum* to another individual symbolizes friendship within the early Mizo community.

The significance of this *puan* lies in its need for a bride to carry it upon entering her husband's residence. Females engage in the practice of crafting intricate patterns through the interlacing of threads, commonly referred to as weaving *Pawndum*. However, it is observed that these creations are often stored in the lowermost region of their storage container, known as the *thul*. In the case of marriage, it was customary for a woman to incorporate a *Pawndum* within their trousseau, intending to utilize it as a shroud in the unfortunate circumstance of the husband's demise inside the wife's existence. In the event of the husband's demise, it is customary for a Mizo woman to perform the act of draping her spouse's body in *Pawndum*.

The *Pawndum* attire is also utilized during the performance of the *Khuallam* dance. The *Khuallam* dance is a customary artistic expression of the *Lusei* community, typically showcased during the *Khuangchawi* ritual. *Khuangchawi* is a ceremonial practice used to commemorate the esteemed designation of *Thangchhuah*. Consequently, individuals hailing from neighboring villages are extended invitations to partake in this ceremonial event, whereupon they would proceed to enter the designated arena adorned in traditional *Pawndum* attire, engaging in a synchronized dance performance. According to a folktale, it is recounted that at the arrival of guests from a

neighboring village to the gathering, an individual exclaimed, ‘*E, mikhual a rawn lam e*’, which translates to ‘observe, guests are engaging in a dance’. Consequently, the term ‘*khuallam*’ was derived from this occurrence.



*Image 4.22: Pawndum (Source: Esther Lalruatpuii)*

- v. **Puanropui:** This particular garment is a contemporary creation mostly intended for feminine individuals. The term ‘*Ropui*’ in the *Lusei* language can be translated to convey the concepts of grandeur, magnificence, glory, majesty, and similar attributes. While the majority of *Lusei* traditional apparel was historically worn by men, there is a lack of evidence supporting the notion that this particular garment, known as *puan*, was exclusively worn by males. Although this particular *puan* is widely acknowledged and incorporated into the *Lusei* traditional trousseau, its historical origins appear to be quite recent.

The color of this *puan* and the background color to be utilized do not have strict criteria. The motifs utilized in this particular textile also exhibit variation across different locations and among individual weavers. While the zigzag motif is frequently observed in many instances of *Puanropui*, it is not usually consistently present.

The emergence of this *puan* can be attributed to the socio-political context prevailing in Mizoram throughout the early 1960s and subsequent years. During the Mizo national movement, due to frequent imposition of curfews and persistent tensions, individuals refrained from venturing outside their residences. This situation also adversely impacted individuals residing in rural areas, as they were unable to engage in their regular occupational activities. In such given conditions, women would engage in the activity of weaving for the entirety of the day, diligently collecting remnants of threads from their prior weaving endeavors, with a sense of purposelessness as they sought to occupy their time. However, this phenomenon resulted in the emergence of novel artistic forms and sparked the innovation of fresh patterns that incorporated familiar motifs. Additionally, it catalyzed the evolution of new motifs and designs within the realm of weaving. The design of this fabric is currently undergoing development; nonetheless, all *Puanropui* textiles exhibit a very detailed design that aligns with its namesake. In other words, the creation of *Puanropui* involves the weaving of complex and intricate patterns, regardless of the specific motifs employed, in order to get the desired outcome. This garment holds a significant position among the *Lusei* community as well as the broader Mizo population, being highly esteemed and widely favored, second only to the traditional attire known as *Puanchei*.

#### **4.3.4 Statutory Dress**

In a more expansive sense, ceremonial and statutory attire refers to formal contexts. Consequently, this classification encompasses garments that are predominantly worn by individuals who possess specific privileges. In contrast to certain tribal tribes, it can be observed that certain *Lusei* costumes exhibited a much less intricate level of detail. However, there are variations in the colors and construction methods employed in their respective outfits. Considerable attention is devoted to the intricate details and patterns of the artwork. Therefore, when an individual dons such garments, it serves to

either enhance the wearer's social standing or establish their position within society. Therefore, these garments inherently induce a psychological impact on the individual donning them, enhancing their self-assurance and reinforcing their social standing.

The aforementioned garments are only worn by specific segments of the population, who possess the requisite social status or have met specific conditions established by the Mizo society in order to don them. The costumes serve as symbols of the wearer's significance, as conveyed through the attire. Additionally, it discerns the noteworthy characteristic of the culture. The attire mandated by law mostly encompassed *Thangchhuah Puan*, *Mangpuan*, *Puantial*, and *Tawlhloh Puan*.

- i. **Thangchhuahpuan:** The aforementioned attire can be classified as a ceremonial garment, denoting a distinguished social standing for the individual donning it. Alternatively, it may refer to a fabric that is exclusively worn by individuals who meet specific criteria. The cloth in question is a dark-colored fabric, either black or dark blue, featuring a series of horizontal stripes. Within the central portion of the fabric, red, yellow, and white threads are intricately woven together. These threads form a complex pattern that includes challenging patterns such as *Selutan*, *Mitmurual*, *Semit*, *Halkha*, and various others. The purpose of these narrow stripes was to extend longitudinally, uniformly covering the entire surface with threads of the same width and color. The distinctiveness of this particular puan lies in the intricate weaving technique employed on the delicate white stripes. The intricate embroidery on these *puan* garments was of such high quality that the production of *Thangchhuah Puan* required the expertise and skill of very experienced weavers.

A discrepancy is observed in the design. While certain *Thangchhuah Puan* textiles are only composed of horizontal lines featuring designs positioned in the center of these lines, others incorporate a grid pattern as the background. The garment in question typically possesses larger dimensions compared to other widely worn clothing items, as it is designed to envelop the wearer's entire body

and extend to their full height. This characteristic is not only practical in terms of coverage, but also serves as a symbol of reverence for its esteemed status. The item holds considerable social significance, as it is exclusively worn by a married couple who have successfully organized the prestigious *Thangchhuah* feast, which is highly regarded for its quality. The act of performing the feast immediately bestowed upon the feast provider a position of great value and desirability within Mizo society.

The aforementioned technique is characterized by a significant cost and is rooted in the old Mizo faith, offering a prescribed method to enhance one's afterlife existence. The ritual encompassed a significant array of religious ceremonies, which entailed the offering of *Mithun*, as well as other animals, as sacrifices. Moreover, the demonstration of courage is exemplified through the requirement of eliminating a specified quantity of diverse animal species, followed by the provision of a sequence of communal banquets to the entirety of the community. Hence, individuals who have successfully accomplished this notable deed are referred to as *Thangchhuahpa* (for males) and *Thangchhuahnu* (for females). *Thangchhuahpa* is the sole individual who possesses the privilege of adorning the esteemed *Thangchhuah Puantial*, in conjunction with a headband specifically crafted for males known as *Thangchhuah Diar*, which bears a design identical to that of the *puan*. The garment was intended to be worn during a ceremonial event to demonstrate their notable social standing. Additionally, they were required to organize a communal banquet for the entire community, referred to as '*Khuangchawi*'. They would be held in high regard and regarded as sources of inspiration.

The practice of using the cloth to enshroud the deceased *Thangchhuah* host was motivated by the belief that it would serve as a safeguard against malevolent spirits that inhabit and surveil the netherworld, so facilitating a relatively smoother transition into the realm of *Pialral*.

All individuals, apart from a select few, are believed to experience an existence in a less opulent setting after death. In contemporary society, the *puan* serves as a means of demonstrating courtesy for visitors and as a symbolic gesture of recognition for noteworthy accomplishments. Furthermore, the design has undergone a transformation, resulting in a more streamlined and compact iteration that caters to the preferences of women who have adopted its use.

- ii. **Mangpuan:** The garment is a dress of special nature, known to have been worn by *Thangchhuahpa*. According to historical accounts, the garment was also worn by the chief. However, it is worth noting that a significant number of chiefs did, in fact, achieve the *Thangchhuah* status. This assertion holds potential validity as the term ‘*mang*’ typically connotes an individual who possesses a higher social standing than the average populace. Due to its tonal nature, the Lusei language employs the pronunciation of ‘*mang*’ in a lower tone to signify the color black or darkened. Moreover, the wearers of this *puan*, who were a select group, found a dusty and discolored dress to be unsuitable. This attire was frequently worn by individuals who displayed courage and prowess in battle. The individual responsible for the *puan* effectively demonstrated the social standing of the individual wearing it, and conversely, the *puan* itself reflected the status of the wearer. Undoubtedly, those who were deemed deserving were granted the privilege of wearing it.

The design of this particular *puan* has a somewhat simpler aesthetic in contrast to the *Thangchhuah Puan*. The design of *Thangchhuahpa*’s turban is identical to that of *Mangpuan*’s. The *puan* was crafted using black or white yarn, with intersecting horizontal and vertical lines forming a grid-like pattern over the entirety of the fabric at consistent intervals. A grid design of the *puan* served as a foundational element for subsequent designs, ultimately becoming a reoccurring background motif in the evolved versions of other notable Mizo textiles, like *Puanchei* and *Ngotekherh*. The current iteration of the *Thangchhuah Kawr*,



characterized by its red, yellow, and white grid pattern, has gained significant popularity among males in contemporary times, owing to its distinct design.

The *puan* holds significant cultural significance as it is exclusively worn by Chiefs, their spouses, the braves, and individuals who have attained the esteemed *Thangchhuah* status.

The traditional garment known as *Mangpuan* was only reserved for very exceptional and significant events, such as the ceremonial installation of a memorial stone commemorating a distinguished individual or during periods of mourning following their demise. The act of suspending this fabric as a banner signifies the passing of an individual of notable eminence.

- iii. **Puan Tial:** In the Mizo language, the term '*tial*' is used to denote the quality of being vibrant and patterned, often characterized by a multitude of colors or a checkered design. The connotation of the word '*tial*' can vary significantly depending on its pronunciation. When pronounced with a higher pitch, it indicates a fabric that is easily dyed or woven into intricate patterns. However, when the term '*tia*' is articulated in a lower pitch, it denotes the hue or pattern of tartan fabric.

This phenomenon was observed with relative frequency within the Chins community. The patterned textile in question bears resemblance to the Lai *puan* known as *Maimaw nak*, as well as the *Thakao/Tlatho/Phiphia Poh* textiles traditionally worn by the Mara community.

The term '*Vaipuantial*' is occasionally used to refer to this particular design, likely due to its resemblance to the *Vai* style. Despite its lack of popularity among the *Lusei*, they also utilized it. The garment in question gained significant popularity and was commonly worn in the Chin Hills region, coinciding with the temporal context of the aforementioned garments. The subsequent chapter provides a comprehensive explanation of the possibility of it being an import. However, it is sufficient to mention that a small number of

tartans have been observed among the *Lushais*, albeit these have been obtained via Manipur or Cachar.

- iv. **Tawlhlohpuan:** The cloth exhibits a motif reminiscent of an interlaced chain, extending vertically over the entire length of the *puan*. According to historical accounts, this particular design is believed to have undergone a process of evolution during the period when the Mizo community resided in the region encompassed by the Run River in Myanmar and the *Tiau* River. The predominant hue observed in the composition is black, serving as the foundational element, while deep red, white, and yellow are employed to create the overall pattern. *Tawlhlohpuan* is a term that conveys the qualities of bravery and valor. The term ‘*tawlhlo*’ in the Mizo language primarily denotes the act of maintaining a stationary position or abstaining from any form of backward movement. This behavior is characteristic of an individual who possesses the qualities of a warrior and would willingly adopt such a mindset. The *puan* was traditionally worn in a manner that involved bringing all four corners of the garment to the front. Specifically, two corners were draped over the shoulders, while the remaining two corners were pulled from under the arms. These corners were then fastened together, creating a shield-like covering for the back. The practice of wearing a *puan* in this manner is commonly referred to as *Kawrtawnghak*.

The initial configuration of this *puan* consists of a fabric of around two meters or 60-80 inches in length and 42 inches or more in breadth. The stripes consist of entangled threads arranged in a vertical line, exhibiting a chain-like pattern. These stripes are predominantly black, red, and white, occasionally incorporating yellow. The rib structure of the woven fabric is utilized to create a visually embossed effect by the incorporation of stripes. The fabric is adorned with narrow, interconnected stripes that span horizontally and are grouped together in segments measuring around four to five inches. These stripes effectively divide the entire garment into three or five equal sections. The color

designs have undergone alterations over time, resulting in the loss of their original importance and design details. However, in contemporary times, the *Puan* has been modified to be worn by women. Despite being highly regarded as a major garment among the *Lusei* community, opportunities to wear the *Puan* attire are scarce. In many contexts, these items serve as a gesture of hospitality towards esteemed guests and individuals deserving of social recognition. Additionally, they are often presented as mementos at certain events, bestowed upon dignitaries, visitors to the state, or as personal gifts.

#### 4.3.5 Ways of Wearing *Puan*

All of the garments mentioned were worn by individuals of both genders, with the exception of *Hmaram* and *pawnfen*, which were skirts specifically designed for young girls. Nevertheless, there existed distinct garments that were exclusively reserved for particular individuals, serving as symbols of their accomplishments and social standing. These garments were not accessible to women or any other individuals, so differentiating the wearer and granting them a higher social rank. The *Lusei* people adhered to several ways/styles of wearing *puan*.

- i. **Puansin/ bat:** In response to the sensation of cold, individuals would don additional layers of fabric, such as blankets or shawls, over their *puan* garments. Subsequently, with the introduction of blouses, the customary practice emerged of draping one end of the shawl over a single shoulder, originating from the back. Subsequently, the opposite end would be maneuvered beneath the arm towards the anterior region, and subsequently projected over the shoulder. The act of draping a piece of fabric over one's shoulders in the form of a shawl is commonly referred to as either '*puansin*' or '*bat*'.

The act of wearing a *sin* is analogous to donning a covering, whereas the act of wearing a *bat* is comparable to adorning a stole or scarf over the shoulder or draping it across it. The aforementioned trends pertaining to men and women have persisted even subsequent to the introduction of upper garments, aligning

with the prevailing fashion and introducing diversity and various options to the attire of the *Lusei* community during both the pre-colonial and colonial eras.

- ii. **Puanven/ bih:** In traditional attire, men typically wear the *puan*, a garment worn around the waist that extends below the knee, often reaching the shin. It is customary for men to be bare-chested above the waist for a significant portion of their time. The manner in which men adorned themselves with fabric was commonly referred to as *puanven* or *puanveng*. During periods of cold weather, individuals would employ an additional layer of fabric to insulate their bodies and maintain thermal comfort. The practice of wearing *puan* at the waist, along with blouses, eventually became adopted by women. However, it maintained the term '*bih*' derived from the original term '*hnubih*' and therefore came to be known as *puanbih*. The noteworthy aspect of wearing a *puan* lies in the distinct vocabulary associated with it, namely the terms '*bih*' and '*veng*' which, despite their technical similarity, refer to different variations of the same garment. The occurrence may have been a result of random chance or, alternatively, a deliberate effort to establish gender differentiation. However, it may be inferred that the act of wearing *puan* around the waist, irrespective of one's gender, is referred to as *puanveng*, while wearing it over the chest area above the breast is known as *puanbih*. The connotation of the expression appears to be mostly influenced by the location of its placement and the method of securing it, rather than the individual who dons it.
- iii. **Fenthuah/ Fen:** The *fenthuah* is a larger garment that is worn over another skirt. The term '*Thuah*' in the Mizo language refers to the act of doubling or providing a liner. The term '*fenthuah*' mostly refers to the external layer of a skirt, as opposed to its inside layer. It is typically worn either over another skirt or in combination with multiple skirts. The term '*fen*' is employed to denote the act of donning skirts. The manner in which a skirt is worn is referred to as '*fen*' however this phrase does not encompass the wearing of a complete *puan*. It can

be posited that not only little girls, but also adult ladies have, at some juncture, donned the mini skirt.

- iv. **Hnutebih/ Hnubih/ Thinbih:** As the *Puan* increased in size, the initial practice involved wearing it on the breast. The garment was encircled beneath the arms, with one end overlaying the other on the frontal side, providing coverage for the chest area. The outer extremity would be securely folded inside, aligning with the opposite side of the torso and covering the chest area. The prevalent method of donning a *puan*, known as *hnutebih*, *hnubih*, or *thinbih*, was universally adopted by individuals. This particular style provides greater bodily coverage in comparison to *Siapsuap*. Due to its composition of cotton, the material was seen significantly more desirable. During traditional ceremonies, individuals have the option to drape an additional piece of fabric, known as a *puan*, over either their right or left shoulder, without the need for an undergarment. This practice continues until a complete blouse is formed. In the past, it was customary for young girls to don a separate garment known as a *puan* to cover the upper region of their bodies. Despite the introduction of blouses, women continued to engage in the practice of wearing material in a manner that allowed one hand to remain free.

In the context of *Lusei* dress, there is evident evidence of the evolutionary progression of motifs and patterns, the utilization of raw materials for garments, and the growing incorporation of colors as they traversed different regions and interacted with diverse tribes and communities. These interactions facilitated the assimilation and adaptation of external influences, thereby enhancing their cultural heritage and establishing novel sartorial customs.

*Lusei* dresses, particularly those adorned with several colors and decorative designs, predominantly serve as markers of social rank and are only worn by specific segments of the population. Despite the absence of rigorous regulations governing their production and utilization, the commoners in pre-colonial *Lusei* culture had limited

access to these resources, hence suggesting the presence of economic inequality based on resource availability.

#### **4.4 Festivals**

Festivals have historically emerged as a manifestation of the cultural and religious practices of early societies. Festivals, also known as cultural celebrations, are events that are organized to commemorate and honor various cultural practices. Festivals possess significant cultural and social importance as they serve to unify communities, pay tribute to traditions, and preserve regional heritage. Festivals as well play a vital role in the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. They play a role in enabling the transfer of practices from one generation to another, while also enhancing the sense of unity within a community and encouraging the sharing of cultural values.

The Mizo community celebrates three distinct festivals, namely Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, and Pawl Kut. Chapchar Kut can be regarded as the prominent holiday celebrated by the populace. The precise origins of these holidays among the Mizo remain uncertain; however, existing sources suggest that they were already being celebrated between the years 1400 and 1700 A.D.

##### **4.4.1 Chapchar Kut**

*Chapchar Kut* can be regarded as the prominent cultural celebration observed by the Mizo community. To this day, it has been commemorated annually. According to historical accounts, the origin of *Chapchar Kut* can be traced back to the period between 1450 and 1500 A.D. The event is believed to have begun from a scenario where hunters returned from a hunting expedition without any catch. In order to alleviate their disappointment, the Village Chief spontaneously suggested a feast. He presented a pig as his contribution and requested his fellow hunters to bring a fowl apiece. A lavish banquet was organized, featuring an abundance of meat and a traditional rice-based alcoholic beverage known as *Zu*. The initial regret experienced by the individuals transformed into a state of delight and merriment. Young males and females

enthusiastically embraced one another and engaged in a collective circular dance. Throughout this celebratory occasion, there was a notable presence of singing and the rhythmic sound of hands clapping. The entire community experienced collective enjoyment, thereby transforming a state of defeat into a state of victory, thus giving rise to the cultural festival known as *Chapchar Kut*. The event has been commemorated annually since that significant period. The emergence of Chai Lam coincided with the inception of *Chapchar Kut* festival. The *Kut* festival, an annual event, was traditionally observed at the conclusion of March or the commencement of April. During this time, the local community engaged in the practice of clearing forest areas for jhum cultivation, which allowed them respite from arduous labor and toil. The festival in question garnered the highest level of popularity and had the longest duration. Typically, the duration of the *Chapchar Kut* festival spanned from three to seven days.



*Image 4.23: Chapchar Kut Festival celebration (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

During the initial day of the *Chapchar Kut* festival, individuals with the financial means engaged in the act of slaughtering a pig in preparation for the celebratory feast. Throughout the duration of the day, the elder members and male individuals of the community engaged in the consumption of rice beer, commonly referred to as *Zu*, by employing a tube for the purpose of imbibing the beverage. On the initial day, the female members, including young ladies and young men, would also partake in the consumption of rice beer, albeit to a lesser extent. During the evening hours, the female members of the community, accompanied by the children, would gather at the entrance of the hamlet. At this location, a stone platform had been constructed as a commemorative structure dedicated to the deceased individuals. At that location, individuals would partake in a meal consisting of rice, beef, and cooked eggs. The children would seize a quantity of remaining boiled eggs and engage in a playful pursuit, endeavoring to fill their companion's oral cavity with said eggs. The act of forcefully inserting eggs into one another's mouths, commonly referred to as *Chhawngnawh*, characterizes this particular event.

The participation in singing and dancing activities throughout the night was obligatory for both adolescent females and males. Individuals who did not sustain wakefulness for the entire night were prohibited from engaging in further singing and dancing activities on subsequent nights. The children would provide rice beer to individuals engaged in the traditional *Chai Lam* dance and song. The adolescent females would adorn themselves in their most elegant garments, accompanied by the addition of *Vakiria* and jewelry. In addition, the adolescent males would don their most fashionable attire. During the event, it was prohibited for spouses to engage in quarrels. In the societal context under consideration, it was prohibited for wives to seek refuge at their parental residence, while any form of behavior that incited anger was strictly forbidden. The festival was intended to be collectively enjoyed by all individuals. *Chapchar Kut* holds significant cultural and emotional significance for the Mizo community, representing a joyous and celebratory event in their lives.



#### 4.4.2 Mim Kut

The event known as *Mim Kut* was traditionally observed between the late August to early September period. The event was perceived as a commemorative celebration dedicated to deceased individuals. The village head, in consultation with the elders, established a designated date for the commemoration. The event took place once the maize crops had reached full maturity.

The *Mim Kut* celebration has its roots in the narrative of *Ngama* and *Tlingi*, from which it was derived. In the distant past, *Ngama* and *Tlingi* entered into a romantic relationship and subsequently formalized their commitment through the institution of marriage. Regrettably, *Tlingi* has deceased, and *Ngama* experienced profound grief in response to *Tlingi's* demise. He engaged in extended periods of mourning and weeping on a daily basis. On a certain occasion, *Ngama* succumbed to his emotions and perished, subsequently transitioning to a realm inhabited by deceased individuals, colloquially referred to as the “deadman’s village”. It was within this context that *Ngama* encountered *Tlingi*. *Ngama* inquired about the cause, to which *Tlingi* attributed her emaciated appearance to the severe scarcity of sustenance within the realm of the deceased. *Tlingi* then instructed *Ngama* to return to their residence and procure vegetables from their jhum, thereafter delivering them to her. Upon regaining consciousness, *Ngama* promptly proceeded to his agricultural fields and gathered a diverse assortment of veggies. As he stood in front of his residence, he experienced a deep yearning for his beloved spouse, *Tlingi*. He commenced shedding tears and experienced a loss of visual acuity. Upon opening the bamboo sliding door and crossing the threshold into his dwelling, the individual in question inadvertently stumbled, causing the contents of his basket, namely a collection of vegetables, to dislodge and subsequently settle on the bamboo tubes positioned adjacent to the wall. It is worth noting that these bamboo tubes were utilized by the Mizo community for the storage and retrieval of water, serving both potable and culinary purposes. *Ngama* emitted a heartfelt cry and proclaimed, “*Tlingi*, please indulge yourself in consuming as much as you

desire!” *Ngama* succumbed to his emotions and perished, afterwards finding himself once again in the realm of the deceased. Upon encountering *Tlingi*, he observed her robust state of well-being. Inquiring about the cause, *Tlingi* disclosed that her consumption of the veggies provided by *Ngama* had resulted in her physical plumpness.

*Ngama* recovered consciousness and reentered the realm of existence. On an annual basis, *Ngama* consistently presented his cherished spouse, *Tlingi*, with a selection of veggies, commencing from that particular day. *Ngama* would place the vegetables in close proximity to the bamboo tubes as a form of offering. Observing his peculiar behavior, his neighbors inquired about it. Upon receiving news of their beloved ones’ deprivation in the community inhabited by deceased individuals, further relatives likewise extended provisions on an annual basis. The practice of *Mitthi thlai chhiah*, which involves making offerings to the spirit, and the celebration of *Mim Kut* have emerged and are annually observed.

Prior to the commencement of the *Mim Kut* celebration, the process of rice beer fermentation, known as *Zu*, was traditionally carried out within each household. In addition, they transport a diverse range of veggies from their jhums to their residence in anticipation. During the event, individuals refrained from attending their workplaces and instead remained in their residences. Throughout the day, both men and women consumed rice beer. The people presented their vegetables as offerings to their deceased relatives. They engaged in the process of grinding rice into a fine powder, which was afterwards encased in a leaf and transformed into *Chhangpai*, a type of dumpling. These culinary creations were then presented as offerings to their deceased family members.

It was postulated that, during the *Mim Kut* festival, the ethereal essence of the deceased would return to their abode in order to partake in the consumption of various vegetable-based dishes and dumplings. The holiday evoked heightened feelings of longing for deceased relatives, particularly among individuals who had experienced recent bereavement. The people would then express their profound emotions of sadness, grief, and longing through the medium of singing songs of lamentation dedicated to the

deceased. The festival known as *Mim Kut* often referred to as '*Tahna Kut*' due to its association with mourning and longing, was observed by the deaf community.

The observation of *Mim Kut* was limited to a single day. On the subsequent day, they would engage in the observation of another day of rest. On the third day, the Mizo people would proceed to prepare and consume the vegetables that had been presented as an offering to the deceased. It was believed by the people that the spirits of deceased individuals would return to a realm designated for the deceased, so rendering the act of providing sustenance to these spirits unnecessary.

#### **4.4.3 Pawl Kut**

The *Pawl Kut* celebration was traditionally observed at the completion of the paddy harvesting season, typically occurring in late December. During this period, it was common for households to possess a substantial quantity of paddy, grains, and root crops. The *Pawl Kut* festival was primarily regarded as an event primarily designated for the participation of youngsters.

Between the years 1520 and 1550 A.D, the Mizo people experienced a severe famine known as the '*Thingpui Tam*' that persisted for duration of three years. This period coincided with the settlement of our ancestors in the present-day Chin State. During the fourth year, the agricultural yield of cereals and crops was notably prosperous, resulting in a substantial supply. The village leader proposed that despite enduring three years of famine, the community possesses sufficient sustenance to satiate their hunger. To commemorate this event, it is suggested that each household partake in the ritualistic slaughter of a chicken, followed by a communal feast when the meat is consumed collectively on the same evening. The idea put out by the chief was unanimously agreed upon by all the elders. In order to disseminate information to the entire village populace, the *tlangau* (village crier) vocalized the announcement in public thoroughfares. Consequently, the villagers collectively made arrangements and thereafter engaged in the consumption of a meal featuring meat. In the subsequent year,

around the identical juncture, they once again partook in a meal featuring meat. In response to a need for greater variety, pork was additionally incorporated to address the dissatisfaction expressed by certain individuals who found chicken alone to be insufficient. Consequently, this banquet evolved into an established practice and cultural norm within the Mizo community, leading to the annual observance and celebration of *Pawl Kut*.

As the celebration approached, each family, in a manner reminiscent of previous festivals, made preparations by producing rice beer (*Zu*) ahead of time. In order to procure meat for the event, the courageous male inhabitants of the community ventured into the surrounding wilderness to engage in the act of hunting. In the pursuit of capturing jungle fowl, some individuals employ the use of *Sahdal* and *Be-ai* noose traps, strategically placed within the jungle and equipped with enticing bait. Mothers preserved eggs in anticipation of this event. Each household was resolute in their decision to consume meat during the holiday. In the event that individuals refrained from hunting large game or capturing avian species, they would resort to slaughtering chickens as a substitute during the festival. A significant number of individuals slaughtered pigs in order to prepare for the communal feast.

In anticipation of the upcoming feast, the esteemed and privileged *Luseis* would ceremoniously slaughter their pigs two days prior. Subsequently, the remaining clans would emulate this practice on the subsequent day, as a means of offering the sacrificial animals to the spiritual realm. It is impossible for someone to single-handedly slay a 'Vawkpa Sutnghak', a swine specifically designated for sacrificial purposes. The local clergyman, known as *Sadawt*, proceeded to the residences designated for the upcoming rituals. The people would provide him with rice beer, known as *Zu*, and he would proceed to recite an incantation. Subsequently, the pig was slaughtered solely subsequent to the priest's recitation of his own incantation. Following the completion of the pig slaughter and subsequent offering to the spiritual entity, the anticipated day of the festival materialized, marking the commencement of the *Pawl Kut* festival.

During the occasion, the youngsters adorned themselves in their finest attire, including the donning of necklaces. People who do not possess the attire would seek to obtain it through borrowing from others. Similar to the practices observed at the *Chapchar Kut* festival, individuals would congregate at the village entrance, where a commemorative platform constructed from stones was erected. At that location, individuals would partake in a meal consisting of rice, beef, and cooked eggs. The children would engage in a playful activity known as *Chawnghnawh*, wherein they would seize a handful of surplus boiled eggs and pursue one another, endeavoring to fill their friends' mouths with those eggs. During the festival, the male participants engaged in the consumption of rice beer (known as *Zu*) during the entirety of the day, while the young women and men indulged in other activities, experiencing a vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere.

The duration of the *Pawl Kut* festival is contingent upon the quantity of rice beer (*Zu*) possessed by the participants. If there was an adequate supply of paddy to produce the customary quantity of rice beer (*Zu*), the event had duration of only one day. Occasionally, the event would extend its duration to encompass an entire week.

#### **4.4.4 Dances**

It is imperative to consider that when analyzing the many festivals of the Mizo community, it is essential to include a discussion of the accompanying traditional dances. The Mizo festivals are considered incomplete in the absence of this aspect. The Mizo tribe has a diverse range of traditional dances. The stylistic characteristics of dances might vary throughout different villages.

- i. **Cheraw:** The *Cheraw* dance is a customary performance characterized by the utilization of a set of horizontally positioned bamboo. Determining the precise temporal origins or commencement of its existence was a challenge. It can be posited that our predecessors initiated the practice of this dance during their residence in the eastern vicinity of the *Tiau* River. The Mizo

community historically engaged in the practice of performing a dance ritual as a means of commemorating the bountiful harvest of precisely 100 paddies. It has been alleged that this dance was even executed within the confines of a mortuary.

In the past, children engaged in the practice of *Cheraw* as a means of amusement while participating in *Pawnto* games under the moonlit sky. Occasionally, adolescent males and females would partake in joint performances alongside the younger individuals. The Mizo folk dance has gained increasing popularity throughout time, emerging as the foremost cultural expression of the community. The *Cheraw* dance is characterized by its demanding nature, requiring performers to exercise caution while displaying high levels of energy and liveliness. The intricate motions and fluid movements exhibited in this dance are widely admired by those from other cultural backgrounds, who consider it to be the most captivating and intriguing among the other Mizo dances.



*Image 4.24: Cheraw dance (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- ii. **Chai Lam:** The *Chai Lam* was exclusively executed by ancient people solely in the context of the *Chapchar Kut* celebration. The exact origins of the *Chai Lam* dance performed by our ancestors remain uncertain. However, evidence suggests that this dance tradition was already established during their residence in the regions of *Run* and *Tiau* River. The *Chai* dance incorporates a repertoire of tunes that are derived exclusively from traditional Mizo musical traditions. Furthermore, additional verses were incorporated into the preexisting melodies. All the songs sung during the *Chai Lam* event were composed exclusively by renowned *Mizo* poets. The musical compositions continue to be attributed to their respective creators, with notable figures including *Pi Hmuaki Zai*, *Neihlaia Zai*, *Lera Zai*, *Mangkhaia Zai*, *Lalvunga Zai*, *Zopui Zai*, *Darlumg Zai*, *Sirvate Zai*, and *Aikhiangi Zai*.

Typically, the dance is executed with individuals of both genders arranged in an alternating fashion, wherein men round the shoulders of women, while women encircle the waists of men from behind, thereby forming a circular arrangement. Within the confines of the circular formation, there exists a percussionist, accompanied by an additional individual who engages in the act of simultaneously striking a *mithun* horn. The percussionist strikes the drums, initiating the commencement of the musical compositions. The one who strikes the *mithun* horn initiates the vocalization. The percussionist initiates the rhythmic pattern on the drum, and with the fourth beat, the vocalists commence their singing. The dancers commenced their performance by assuming an upright position and engaging in vocalization, accompanied by synchronized movements characterized by a gentle oscillation towards both the right and left sides. When the appointed leader of the dancers made the decision to commence the activity, he would utter the phrase “come, let us initiate the act of stepping and dancing,” therefore initiating the performance of the *Chai lam* dance. The dance consists of a

total of four sequential steps. There exist various iterations and diverse modes of performance among distinct villages.



*Image 4.25: Chai Lam (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- iii. **Tlanglam:** In 1894, with the advent of Christianity in Mizoram, a significant number of individuals embraced the faith, resulting in the marginalization of Mizo customs, culture, and traditions by certain segments of the population. Approximately thirteen or fourteen years later, the emergence of ‘*Puma Zai*’ took place. The event resulted in a significant regression for the Mizo community, eliciting a profound sense of jubilation among its members. The *Puma Zai* comprises two lines for each variation. With the steady demise of *Puma Zai*, a new entity known as ‘*Tlanglam Zai*’ emerged. The structure of a poem comprises three lines. The dance that was executed during the *Tlanglam Zai* event was referred to as ‘*Tlanglam*’.

The dance is executed in response to the initiation of the *Tlanglam Zai* by the drummer. In this scenario, individuals of a youthful age and both genders are positioned in opposition to one another, with their hands elevated, engaging in a rhythmic swaying motion while simultaneously taking steps.



The *Tlanglam* dance rapidly disseminated throughout Mizoram at its peak period of popularity, akin to the rapid spread of a forest fire.



*Image 4.26: Tlanglam (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- iv. **Chheihlam:** The *Tlanglam* dance was performed by the Mizo people during the rise in popularity of *Puma Zai* in approximately 1908. *Chheihlam* represents a distinct subdivision within the broader domain of the Mizo *Tlanglam* dance. Following its initial popularity in Mizoram, the *Tlanglam* dance underwent modifications in its tune, mode, way, and style, ultimately giving rise to the *chheih* song and *chheih* dance. During the performance of the *Tlanglam Zai*, the dancer would engage in the repetition of the vocalization “*Chheih, chheih, chheih*”. Consequently, the *Tlanglam Zai* gradually transformed into the *Chheih Zai*, and the *Tlanglam* Dance came to be known as *Chheihlam*.

The *Chheihlam* dance does not adhere to a predetermined set of steps. The performance is contingent upon the dancer’s initiative and creative aptitude. Typically, the *Chheih* song comprises three lines inside a stanza. The vocalist employs a form of hyperbole in the second line of the verse, while the dancer’s motion is similarly emphasized on the second line.



*Image 4.27: Chheih Lam (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- v. **Sarlamkai/ Solakia:** The dance in question is a remarkable cultural expression that has its roots in the *Pawi* and *Mara* people residing in the southern region of Mizoram. The dance commonly referred to as ‘*Sarlamkai*’ is alternatively known among the *Lushais* as ‘*Rallu Lam*’. During ancient times, when several tribes engaged in frequent conflicts, it was customary for the victorious tribe to partake in a rite that involved displaying and mocking the decapitated skull of their defeated adversary. The purpose of this ritual is to establish a perpetual servitude of the defeated spirit to the conqueror, even in the event of the conqueror’s demise.

The duration of the mocking ceremony often spans a period of five days. The initial two days of the event are dedicated to festivities, characterized by joviality, musical performances, indulgence in alcoholic beverages, and the consumption of a non-vegetarian banquet. On the third day of the event, a pig is ceremoniously sacrificed, and the triumphant individual proceeds to anoint their entire body with the blood of the animal. This blood is only cleansed from their person either on the evening of the fourth day or the morning of the fifth day. During this five-day duration, the victor is prohibited from engaging in any sexual activity with women.

If such an action is taken, it is thought that the defeated spirit becomes enraged and inflicts a lasting impairment onto the victor. Individuals who facilitate the organization of such a ceremonial event are held in high esteem and receive great respect from the populace, as well as from the monarch and other senior members of society. Consequently, each adult endeavors to the best of their abilities to embody such heroic qualities. The valor and fortitude exhibited by these heroic individuals serves as a significant source of solace for the populace in times of external assault. The ‘*Sarlamkai*’ dance is traditionally performed during this ceremonial event. The aforementioned performance is a ceremonial dance executed by warriors to commemorate a triumph achieved in a military conflict. In the realm of musical expression, it is customary for beats to be produced through the utilization of gongs, cymbals, or drums, but the act of singing is not typically employed for this purpose. During the performance, male and female participants assume alternating positions and engage in circular movements. Typically, those within this group don vibrant attire, with the leader adorning a warrior’s garb.



*Image 4.28: Sarlamkai (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*





*Image 4.29: Solakia (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- vi. **Chawnglaizawn:** The fold dance is a widely recognized cultural practice within the Mizo community, namely among the *Pawi* subgroup. This particular dance is executed during two distinct events.
- a) The act is carried out by a male spouse as a means of grieving the loss of his female partner. The husband would engage in a continual performance of this dance till he becomes fatigued. The individual's acquaintances and family members would provide solace and engage in celebratory dancing in his stead. This indicates that they express condolences to those who are grieving.
  - b) The traditional dance known as '*Chawnglaizawn*' is commonly performed during festivals and serves as a means of celebrating the achievements of accomplished hunters who have returned with trophies. During such instances, the dance is carried out collectively by a significant number of individuals. Male and female individuals arranged in orderly formations engage in rhythmic movements in response to the percussive sounds produced by drums. Shawls are employed to facilitate arm movements, hence

enhancing the visual aesthetics of the dance performance. This dance exclusively employs percussion instruments in the form of drums.



*Image 4.30: Chawnglaizawn (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

- vii. **Khuallam:** The term ‘Khuallam’ can be interpreted as the ‘Dance of the Guests’ in a literary context. The dance is typically executed inside the ceremonial context known as ‘Khuangchawi’. In order to acquire a prominent position within society and secure a seat in paradise or *Pialral*, individuals must strive to achieve the esteemed designation of ‘Thangchhuah’. There exist two distinct methods for achieving this honor.



*Image 4.31: Khuallam (Source: Sawma Pachuau)*

Firstly, the attainment of the title ‘*Thangchhuah*’ can be achieved through the demonstration of exceptional prowess in warfare or hunting, involving the successful elimination of a substantial number of animals, including but not limited to barking deer, wild boar, bear, wild gayal, viper, and hawk. Furthermore, the acquisition of the title of *Thangchhuah* can also be accomplished by the demonstration of exceptional deeds and dances. *Thangchhuah*, therefore, could only be achieved by individuals who possess either courage or wealth. The rituals conducted under the alternative approach are commonly referred to as *Khuangchawi*.

Furthermore, participants hailing from neighboring villages are welcomed to the *Khuangchawi* ceremony, where they proceed to enter the arena while engaging in the traditional dance known as *Khuallam*. The *Pawndum*, a traditional hand-woven textile of the Mizo people, is draped over the shoulders during a dance performance characterized by rhythmic swaying movements. The flag of *Pawndum* consists of a pattern of black, red, yellow, and green stripes. *Pawndum* is an essential accessory that is considered important for every female upon her marriage. The shroud is employed for the purpose of enveloping the deceased individual’s remains subsequent to the demise of her spouse. Similar to other traditional folk dances of the Mizos, this particular dance is accompanied by a collection of gongs referred to as *Darbu*, while no vocal melodies are performed. The practice is typically conducted on a huge scale.

In the early Mizo civilization, festivals served as the primary means of enjoyment and relaxation. Given the absence of alternative kinds of entertainment, individuals devoted their efforts to maximizing their satisfaction during these festive occasions. This demonstrates that *Kut* or festivals have played a significant role in fostering social cohesion within the society. Festivals serve as a unifying force, bringing together individuals from many backgrounds to engage in communal singing, revelry, and socializing.

Dance served as a prominent form of recreation within the Mizo community. It constituted an integral aspect of the individuals’ existence. In the context of a tightly-

knit community, a multitude of dances were collectively performed. There existed no one dance form that could be performed by an individual performer. Therefore, the essence of the Mizos is reflected through a diverse range of traditional dances.

#### **4.5 Religious Beliefs**

The development of the traditional Mizo belief systems can be attributed to the societal demands and goals. The aforementioned beliefs were well-suited for individuals residing within a community that existed within a confined environment amidst densely populated tropical forests. These forests not only housed a diverse range of untamed fauna, but also reptiles, avian species, and insects. Moreover, the community members constantly faced the potential threat of attacks by adversaries or encounters with wild animals. Furthermore, akin to the manner in which the agricultural requirements inherently governed the societal dynamics of the Mizo community, it also exerted an influence on their systems of religion and customary behaviors. Hence, the Mizo communities, who have historically faced numerous challenges such as difficult living conditions and prevalent diseases, have developed a fascinating set of belief systems and eschatological perspectives.

The belief system of the Mizo people, commonly referred to as ‘animistic’ has been extensively studied and categorized by Major McCall, who describes it as a comprehensive animist belief system. This classification aligns with the historical categorization of Southeast Asian tribal and indigenous communities as ‘animists’. Animism, as a belief system, entails the acknowledgment of spirits, a strong connection with the natural world, and serves as evidence of the evolutionary progression of primordial beliefs towards more complex faiths such as Christianity.

The indigenous name utilized by the Mizo community to refer to religion is ‘*Sakhua*’. During the initial stages of Mizo civilization, the early inhabitants held steadfast beliefs in their ancestral religious practices. Nevertheless, a number of early authors categorized the Mizo faith as an animistic religious system. The individuals in

question maintained the perspective that a multitude of imperceptible malevolent entities inhabited the entirety of the Earth, and that solely via the act of human sacrifices could these entities be appeased. The individuals harbored an inherent apprehension towards malevolent spirits that instilled a sense of entrapment, as they held the belief that locations such as expansive trees, caverns, bodies of water, rocky terrains, mountains, and similar environments served as abodes for diverse spiritual entities. Consequently, they experienced a perpetual state of anxiety.

Consequently, they frequently offered sacrifices to malevolent spirits in an attempt to expel their benevolent celestial being. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the ancient Mizos did not hold reverence towards these harmful spirits or demons. The individuals in question were motivated to pacify the afflicted parties, since they were believed to bear responsibility for the ailments and injuries experienced by the latter. According to Grace R. Lewis in his book 'Lushai Hills', the religious practices of the Lushai people revolve around the objective of appeasing a malevolent spirit. The sorcerer's authority lies in determining the specific type of creature that must be sacrificed in order to fulfill the demands of this malevolent spirit, which is responsible for causing misfortune and illness.

The prehistoric social structure of the Mizos was predominantly influenced by their religious beliefs. However, due to the absence of written records and the reliance solely on oral tradition and conventions, correctly delineating the origins of their religious practices becomes a challenging endeavor. The origins of their religion are veiled in enigma. As a consequence, individuals are compelled to depend on customs, folk songs, and similar cultural artifacts in order to trace the origins of their religious beliefs. The earliest origins of the early Mizo religion may be traced back to the period of their colonization between Run and Tiau, which occurred approximately around 1300-1700 A.D. It is plausible that individuals in question would have engaged in the veneration of alternative divine entities, whether anthropomorphic or inanimate in nature. However, their recollection of these prior religious convictions appears to be



elusive, presuming that such views were indeed present. According to Rev. Liangkhaia, the Mizo elders possess knowledge pertaining to their historical habitation atop the Run Tlang, or Mountain.

The ancient Mizos subscribed to the belief in a singular ‘Supreme Being’ known as *Pathian* (God) throughout prehistoric times. They attributed the creation of the cosmos to this deity, considering it to be a benevolent entity. However, their understanding of *Pathian* did not involve a significant focus on human affairs. The deity was bestowed with the appellation ‘*Chung Pathian*’, meaning ‘God of Above’ due to the belief in his celestial abode. Being inherently loving, this divine entity did not demand any form of offerings or sacrifices to bestow peace or salvation onto humanity. In instances of favorable circumstances, individuals would express their gratitude by uttering the phrase ‘*Pathian a tha*’, denoting the English equivalent of ‘God is good’. Conversely, when faced with feelings of anxiety, they would seek solace in the expression ‘*Pathian in zah a ngai ang chu*’, signifying their hope for divine mercy. In times of adversity, they would vocally lament by exclaiming ‘*Pathian a thin ur*’, conveying the notion of divine anger. A harmonious marital union is denoted by the term ‘*Pathian samsuih*’ which can be translated as ‘God’s appointed partners’ symbolizing the joy experienced within the matrimonial bond. To clarify, the Mizos of former times did not possess a discernible comprehension of the nature of God comparable to that of contemporary Christians. Consequently, their perception of God diverged from that of a contemporary Christian.

The ancient Mizos also subscribed to the belief in a significant multitude of subordinate spiritual entities that were associated with *Pathian’s* lineage and resided with *Pathian* in the celestial realm. The individuals in question were identified as *Vanhrika*, *Lasi*, *Khuavang*, *Vanchung Nula*, *Pu Vana*, and *Khuanu*. In order to elicit various benefits from these supernatural entities, individuals offered sacrifices to appease them. The benign spirits, believed to inhabit celestial realms or subterranean domains, were bestowed with diverse appellations during their engagements with

humans and entrusted with a range of responsibilities aimed at benefiting humanity. For example, *Pu Vana* was held in high esteem as the deity responsible for the manipulation of thunder and lightning in the realm of nature. *Vanchung Nula* was held in high esteem as a divine being associated with precipitation and aquatic elements, akin to *Khuanu*, who was perceived as a benevolent spirit consistently promoting the welfare of humanity, analogous to a maternal figure. *Vanhrika* was held in high esteem as the divine embodiment of knowledge and scientific pursuits. *Lasi* exhibited concern over the untamed fauna, whereas *Khuavang* was perceived as a kind and majestic entity responsible for the genesis of mankind. The benevolent nature of these spirits was attributed to their continual execution of tasks on behalf of mankind. According to their belief, the perception of those spirits was limited to a state of trance rather than being observable with unaided vision. *Lasi* was the sole visible entity, both during periods of wakefulness and while in a trance state. Due to a lack of knowledge regarding the precise locations of these benevolent spirits, the early Mizos engaged in the veneration of various objects such as trees, rocks, mountains, rivers, and similar entities. The spectral entities resided in the locations perceived by individuals.

The early Mizos also subscribed to the belief that a multitude of wicked spirits, referred to as *Huais*, were responsible for the afflictions, grief, and misfortunes experienced by humans. The *Huais* were further subdivided into the *Ramhuai* and *Tuihuai*. The individuals who resided on land were referred to as *Ramhuai*, whilst those who inhabited areas in close proximity to bodies of water were identified as *Tuihuai*.

The *Ramhuai* people were historically divided into two distinct factions: the Good *Ramhuai* and the Bad *Ramhuai*.

There is a significant abundance of Good *Ramhuais*, such as *Maimi*, *Khuavang*, *Pheichham*, *Lasi*, and others. They do not cause harm to anyone. In contrast to this, they bear resemblance to an individual's companion. The *Ramhuais* are purported to provide several advantageous effects to individuals.

The Bad *Ramhuai* Phenomenon: In addition to the positive instances, there exists a considerable number of negative *Ramhuais*, such as *Tau*, *Tulum*, *Khawhring*, *Khawmu*, *Phung*, *Chawm*, *Hmuithla*, *Tlanghuai*, and others. It was postulated that afflictions and adversities were attributed to malevolent entities known as *Ramhuais*. The individuals exhibited profound fear towards the malevolent spirits and exerted significant endeavors to appease and gratify them, with the aim of preventing any potential provocation. The individuals had the belief that irrespective of the manner in which they caused offence, misfortunes and illnesses would hit them inadvertently and without their conscious awareness. As a result, they employed all accessible methods in order to obtain their endorsement and contentment. Consequently, the agrarian Mizos exhibited apprehension in traversing some areas characterized by rugged topography. The aforementioned areas were regarded as the abodes of malevolent spirits, thereby leading individuals to steer clear of mountains, caverns, rocks, subterranean passageways, and select colossal trees.

**Tuihuai:** The ancient Mizos held a collective belief in the plausibility of malevolent forces, commonly referred to as *tuihuais*. The individuals in question lacked any form of identification. The attribution of troubles or illnesses occurring in or around water to the displeasure of a *Tuihuai* emerged only when individuals encountered such difficulties. Consequently, the Mizos abstained from visiting a *Dil* (lake) that was reputed to be inhabited by a significant number of *Tuihuais*, situated in the vicinity of the southern boundaries of the Lushai Hills and the Arakan Hill tracts.

Consequently, the ancient Mizos maintained the belief in the coexistence of benevolent and malicious spirits. The individuals possessed a strong conviction that their spiritual entities possessed the ability to assume various forms, as they perceived themselves as malevolent spirits that were impervious to harm or destruction. Although these malevolent spirits are significantly less powerful than the divine entity, they nonetheless pose a considerable threat to human beings. Consequently, it is imperative to consistently appease them in order to avert unfavorable circumstances and suffering.

#### 4.5.1 Mizo Indigenous Rituals and Practices

The term '*inthawi*' can be understood as the act of making sacrificial offerings with the intention of appeasing and propitiating supernatural entities. These offerings are made in the context of many purposes, such as the treatment of ailments, the prediction of unfavorable omens, and the engagement with the supernatural realm through negotiation, challenge, and capitulation. The sole authority responsible for this matter lies with the *bawlpu*. The two groups of priests, namely *sadawt* and *bawlpu*, will each possess unique ceremonial responsibilities that are delineated by the principles of *inthawi* and *sakhua*.

These individuals are considered to be a scarce category as they are affiliated with an exclusive cohort of males and often fulfill diverse roles within different communities as required. The sacrifices were primarily undertaken within the framework of human existence and their connection to the cosmos. The general public perceived and comprehended these sacrifices as interventions required to address the intrusive and potentially fatal actions of entities that disrupted their life. However, the concept of *sakhua* presents a contrasting perspective. The term '*Sa*' refers to the ultimate origin of all things, the bestowal of vitality and prosperity, the architect, and the preeminent progenitor of humanity. According to the Durkheimian concept of *mana*, religion originates from a transcendent source and possesses boundless influence over all aspects of existence. The individuals often known as *khua* encompass a diverse range of roles, including protectors, followers, executors, and responders. During the ceremony known as *inthawi*, the *bawlpu* engages in various activities such as addressing, chanting, and offering *bia*, which is a form of appeasement, to spiritual entities and phantasmal beings. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as addressing or communicating with someone. The forebears were affiliated with a diverse array of supernatural entities, encompassing *ramhuai*, denoting sylvan spirits, and *phung*, referring to spirits that traversed the thoroughfares of the nearby village and the familial dwelling.

Both *ramhuai* and *phung* represent malevolent entities capable of causing harm to humanity through the performance of rituals aimed at appeasement, pacification, and reconciliation. These rituals serve as a means to recognize, honor, and affirm the existence of these spirits. The diverse manifestations of *ramhuai* and *phung*, in their varied forms, shapes, and personifications, are associated with the onset of ailments, physical afflictions, and a range of diseases, mortality, the display of alarming attributes, the generation of eerie sounds, and the occurrence of tactile sensations without any discernible external indications. Conversely, it was believed that certain spirits have benevolent qualities, which they might manifest at their discretion. These spirits were thought to bestow good fortune, refrain from causing damage to people, and possess overall advantageous characteristics. The *phung* is commonly believed to exhibit a higher propensity for assuming the form of a feminine spirit rather than a masculine spirit. The *bawlpw* possesses a high level of potency due to its strong belief. The priest's presence was both revered and feared, as people's apprehension of the *phung* and *ramhuai* stems from a combination of a desire to evade attracting the *huai* in any manifestation and the inescapable nature of its entrance. The individual in question was extended an honorary position by the clergyman who possessed the requisite expertise, practical knowledge, and aptitude for managing paranormal phenomena.

The indigenous Mizo people hold certain beliefs on the *Huai*, also known as Cacodemons. The spectral entity referred to as a *ramhuai* or *huai* was believed to inhabit the ram or woods. The wayward spirit was known to inhabit many locations at its discretion. Consequently, if it chose to dwell within water or another vessel (referred to as '*tui*'), it was believed to exert control and possess the respective '*tui huai*' or '*anything huai*' in that particular instance. When the entity stayed in the mountain, it was exclusively referred to as *tlang lal*, denoting its role as the champion, controller, and king of the *tlang* or mountain territories. When the aforementioned *tlang lal* experienced heightened emotional distress, the immediate consequence would manifest in the form of atmospheric disturbances characterized by tempestuous weather conditions and copious precipitation within the surrounding geographical area. Numerous individuals

harbored apprehensions regarding the prospect of causing displeasure to this particular individual. The *vamurs* residing in the *tlang*, which is known as the purported habitat of the *tlang lal*, were left unharmed by individuals. Similarly, the bulbs of onion growing on the cliffs of the *tlang* were not disturbed, as the *huai* served as their protector. It was believed that anyone who attempted to steal from the *tlang* would face potential consequences such as disease or even death, as the *huai* had the capability to inflict such punishments in a state of anger. In order to appease it, a chant was commonly recited. Any trees that was bigger than usual or more profound and terrifying than typical cave they came across greatly perplexed and disturbed the inhabitants since it was claimed that *huai* inhabited in mountains, cliffs, caves, trees, etc.

During this period, rituals were indeed performed. Under such conditions, a ritualistic act involving the sacrifice of a live chicken has been employed as a means to appease and pacify the *huai*, hence mitigating the likelihood of their aggressive behavior towards the individuals involved. According to historical accounts, this particular offering was reputed to have garnered the favor of the *huai*, a deity renowned for bestowing good fortune. The Mizo ancestors had the belief that the *huai*, in a manner similar to its selection of an entity for possession, may potentially show favoritism towards a particular individual. The manifestation of a distinctive talent or possession, known as *zawl*, would be observed within the individual's dream. Similar to the belief that the *huai* resided in specific areas, it was also believed to engage in nomadic behavior, so altering its environment and inflicting harm upon its previous dwelling. This resulted in the occurrence of ground slippage, cave collapses, detachment of branches, and other related phenomena.

**Tau:** The prevailing belief was that this phenomenon exclusively manifested during nocturnal periods. During nocturnal ambulation, they would traverse vast distances while bearing luminous flames. When discussing the feminine gender of the word '*huai*', it was also referred to as '*taunu*'. The act of performing animal sacrifices was

believed to have a calming effect on individuals due to the perceived association between the sacrifices and the alleviation of stomachaches.

**Chawm:** An alleged female *huai*, purportedly possessing significant stature and prominent pendulous mammary glands, was observed leisurely traversing waterways and tributaries throughout her descent. In instances where she was unable to acquire the desirable possessions of those she envied, she would often deliberately transmit fever to them, as a means of expressing her discontent and covetousness. Animal sacrifices were performed with the intention of appeasing her.

In the realm of folklore and mythology, there exists a captivating creature known as the *In-thum-kar/phungkur*. This remarkable being is described as a colossal *huai*, possessing an impressive stature that is said to enable it to traverse great distances with strides so vast that they could effortlessly span the expanse of three residential dwellings in a single bound. Due to its significant elevation, encountering this precipice instilled fear among individuals. Although the *phungkur* remained unseen, its auditory presence was notable, particularly due to the distinct sound it emitted when bending or *kur*, hence its designation as *phungkur*.

**Maimi:** It refers to an unconscious phenomenon characterized by the assumption of power over the physical body by an external entity known as a *phung*. When an individual experiences a condition of *zial* or mesmerization, they encounter physical immobility while maintaining consciousness of their environment. They possess the capacity to perceive and comprehend all on-going events, and may also experience sensations of ticklishness, particularly in their extremities. It is said that the act of wiggling one's toes may potentially lead to the disruption of the *huai*, hence perhaps breaking the spell if one is attempting to do so. The aforementioned form of mesmerization remains prevalent, and it is not uncommon for an individual to express the phrase '*Maimi in min zial a!*' on the subsequent morning.

**Tulum:** The inhabitants exhibited a significant level of fear towards that particular phenomenon. In both animal and human cadavers, the phenomenon known as the *huai* would occur, creating the illusion that the individual in question retained signs of life. Frequently, the entity actively participated in talks with individuals, so causing them to be deceived over its existence. The deceased individual interred with the *tulum* artifact was widely regarded as possessing great influence, reputed for their ferocity, and deriving pleasure from instilling fear in others.

According to folklore, the creature known as *Pheichham* was purportedly characterized by possessing a singular limb, resembling the dimensions of an infant's foot, and engaging in a mode of locomotion involving hopping movements. When a *pheichham* was observed, it was perceived as advantageous to approach and capture it. Subsequently, the *huai* would proceed to question about the intentions of its captor, to which it was informed that the request would be promptly fulfilled.

According to historical accounts, it has been documented that this particular *huai* possessed the ability to capture living beings. The predator provided sustenance to its victim in the form of earthworms and caterpillars, which they consumed with contentment due to their captivation by the prospect of palatable nourishment. Individuals who have had many removals often report a sense of apathy and a perception of being directed due to their inability to perceive the underlying motivations. Instances have occurred where an individual has successfully returned unharmed, while others have been found deceased.

**Khawhring:** As per the folklore, this spiritual being possesses an individual, typically of the female gender, leading to intense and agonizing affliction. Subsequently, the person is denoted as possessing the attributes of *khawhring* or *khawhring nei*. The individual commonly referred to as the name-uttering lady, who is consistently of the female gender and typically falls under the category of a youthful, unmarried adult, is attributed with the role of *khawhring nei* and is deemed accountable for inflicting intense anguish. A young woman who possesses *khawhring* remains unaware of this condition, which



places her at a significant disadvantage due to its historical association with a highly unfavorable affliction. Due to persistent feelings of humiliation, family members would frequently depart from a small settlement during nocturnal hours.

According to folklore, *Lasi* is a renowned figure known for her benevolent nature and association with magical abilities. She is believed to possess a strong affinity with animals, serving as their caretaker and protector. *Lasi* would often exhibit a strong attraction and longing towards adult human males and adolescent boys who engaged in hunting activities within densely forested areas. When an individual attracted the attention of a female, she would provide him the privilege of acquiring her favor, commonly known as *zawl*. Consequently, he would exhibit exceptional proficiency in the pursuit and elimination of untamed fauna. An individual who possessed the capacity to engage in the recurrent act of animal slaughter was commonly known as *lasi zawl*.

**Daibawl:** A ceremonial practice, characterized by vocal expressions, that was conducted within a forested area or a designated location known as *ram lamah*. According to historical accounts, this ritual was reportedly the most commonly practiced due to its widespread prevalence and its intended purpose of alleviating *khawsik*, a condition characterized by fever often accompanied by delirium. The prevailing belief attributed the causes of *khawsik* (fever) to the presence of both *tui huai*, the spirit of the water, and *ram huai*, the spirit of the forest. Consequently, the process of propitiation and treatment involved the simultaneous practice of expulsion, commonly referred to as ‘calling out’, to rid the afflicted individual of these spirits. The ceremonial objects or paraphernalia utilized during the sacrificial ritual encompasses:

- i. A total of six artifacts that have been produced as replicas of a bamboo-carved loom.
- ii. There are two *lenglep*. Long sticks of *nguntang* length are interconnected by being crossed over each other and then tied together. The stick is adorned with a lattice pattern formed by interweaving red, white, and black cotton thread, resulting in the formation of diamond-shaped flags. These two elongated pieces

are subsequently put into the barrel of the loom-like objects during the *inthawi* process.

- iii. A total of five *theibial*. Cylindrical bamboo segments are extracted from bamboo stalks for the purpose of containing *zu* or rice beer/wine. The intended location for this object is within the soil.
- iv. There are five *rawcheh*. There are five bamboo pieces that exhibit fraying in the middle area and have been chopped at the top, where the cotton wool will be afterwards placed. The pointed shape of the bottom facilitates the insertion of these objects into the earth.
- v. One potential alternative to consider is the concept of *Maicham* (Altar). A flat and shallow woven basket that is intended to be positioned in an inverted manner, serving the purpose of an altar.
- vi. Five *Sial* or gayal animals crafted from clay.
- vii. Three clay-made brass gongs.
- viii. A pair of fish, comprising one male and one female, crafted from clay.
- ix. Spring water. During the rite, a small aperture will be formed, whereupon the *bawlpu* will deposit spring water onto a leaf and afterwards position it within the aperture to serve as a reservoir for the water, thereby functioning as a source of water. The fish pair will be situated within this designated area.

The *inthawi* process commences within the residence of the afflicted individual prior to the execution of the ritual at the *bawlmun*. The individuals participating in this ceremonial practice encompass the immediate relatives of the ailing individual, as well as the *bawlpu* or religious leader. The necessary animals for the *tui huai* are one male chicken and one female chicken for the *ramhuai*. The individual vigorously swings the rooster in their grasp, proceeding to forcefully blow air into an unoccupied receptacle on three separate occasions. They then cordially address the companion with a resounding and well-articulated exclamation of ‘*Chibai!*’ The individual initiates a ritualistic utterance in which he enumerates all the specific objects he intends to utilize in order to facilitate the removal of the *khawsik* (fever).

The purpose of the *bawlpu* is to inform the individuals who have ensnared and confined the afflicted individual under their enchantment that, via the assistance of *pathian* or deity, they are anticipated to vacate the host's body. The expectation and desire is for the *Tui Huai* and *Ram Huai* to acknowledge and embrace the offerings. After the completion of the spell, the *bawlpu* forcefully propels the rooster out of the exit doorway. Equipped with rice and the other tools for the *bawl* and *inthawi* rituals, the individuals collectively proceed towards the *bawlhmun*. Upon vacating the premises, the remaining individuals are required to diligently sweep the floor in its entirety, directing the debris towards the exit. Upon arrival at the *bawlhmun*, the *bawlpu* proceeds to organize all the requisite items. Precise positioning of these objects is necessary, a task that requires the expertise and execution capabilities possessed alone by a *bawlpu*.

Adjacent to the *maicham* or altar, the *bawlpu* proceeds to excavate a cavity in the ground, afterwards depositing spring water within a leaf and submerging the pair of fish within said aqueous medium. In addition, the fish pair and spring water are introduced into the cavity as a means of signifying a reservoir. In this ritualistic act, the individual proceeds to manipulate a ceremonial object known as the *bawlpu*. The *bawlpu* is utilized to swing a crowing cock, a symbolic gesture that holds significance within the context of the ritual. Following this action, the individual proceeds to blow into an empty container three times, a practice that serves a specific purpose within the ritual. Subsequently, the individual commences an incantation, invoking the *tui huai* and the *ram huai*, two entities believed to possess the ability to respond to the individual's pleas. He provides reassurance on the high quality of the things in front of them, as well as their inherent positive attributes. The individual makes a formal request and issues a directive for the discharge of the ailing individual by the *huai*. Upon severing the rooster's jugular vein, the practitioner proceeds to distribute the resultant blood upon the various implements arranged in the ceremonial space. Additionally, a reserved portion of meat designated for the ceremony is carefully positioned upon the sacred platform.

This particular cut of beef possesses a sacred nature, representing a sacrosanct manifestation intended for the spiritual realm, commonly referred to as *serh*. The remaining portion of the meat is prepared and cooked within the *bawlhmun*, and thereafter consumed immediately. The remaining portion is brought back to one's residence, subsequent to being officially deemed devoid of any cultural or societal restrictions or impurities by the *bawlpw*. The family gathers spring water from a natural water source and transports it to their residence. The individuals are prohibited from entering the residence unless the occupants of the house perform a ritual of sprinkling water over them as a means of purification.

Subsequently, the water derived from the altar is employed for the purpose of administering therapeutic massages to individuals afflicted with illness. Therefore, the *inthawi* procedure concludes. The *bawlpw* engages in the practice of utilizing the reproductive organs of deceased avian specimens for the purpose of divination.

**Hring:** The purpose of this ritual is to mitigate the effects of a curse, alleviate symptoms of sickness, and strengthen weakened muscles. A canine is offered as a sacrifice for the sake of propitiation. The utilization of a young seedling from the *khiang* tree is limited to serving as a *ngul* or pole for suspending a specific portion of the sacrificial animal. In this scenario, a priest engages in the recitation of incantations directed towards the *huai* or *hring*.

The purpose of these incantations is to summon and invoke the presence of all *hring* entities belonging to various clans. The priest aims to elicit a response from these *hring* entities, inviting them to bear witness to and participate in the genuine act of appeasement being offered. Subsequently, the individual proceeds to sever the sacrificial creature, specifically a canine specimen in this particular instance. Utilizing the blood that is released from this act, the individual proceeds to consecrate the elbow, the posterior region of the leg behind the knee, commonly referred to as the *kaihza*, the area encompassing the liver, and the forehead.

In the event that the individual suffering from illness exhibits notable debility, a little quantity of heated blood is administered for consumption. The sacrificial pole known as *ui ngul*, commonly associated with dogs, is traditionally erected outside the residence. This pole is typically made from the *khiang* tree and is accompanied by the presence of *kham*, a shrub characterized by its long dark leaves, as well as the *lem* plant. The *bawlpu* ritualistically applies heated water to the *sa serh*, a portion of flesh designated for the *inthawi* sacrifice, before suspending it on the *ui ngul*. The remaining portion of the sacrificial meat is eaten.

To have a deeper comprehension of the importance attributed to benign spirits and the act of making sacrifices to obtain favorable favors, it is imperative to critically examine the notion of *sakhua*. As previously indicated, *sakhua* was employed or effectively utilized. The concept of *Sa* can be understood as the originator from which all things in existence derive their existence, while *khua* can be seen as the executor or bestower of life.

Both *sa* and *khua* are seen as distinct deities who are united in their function as a singular god. Indeed, it is possible to evaluate the state of a deity possessing dual characteristics. Individuals would exhibit bias, engage in communication, make inquiries, or manipulate, employ, and harness the use of *Sa* with a pig and *khua* with a gayal. Various clans possessed distinct *sakhua*, although several tribes did take over the *sakhua* of another tribe for diverse motives.

The existing analysis of the traditional belief system suggests that it is a sophisticated and detailed system of beliefs. It is characterized by the presence of rituals that are firmly entrenched in the recognition of a cosmic connection between the human and spirit realms. This statement highlights the misconception that the traditional belief system of the Mizo people was deemed too unsophisticated to be classified as a religion. It may be asserted that the ancestors possessed a religious belief system characterized by intricate ceremonies, encompassing both sacred and profane elements. This system was

intricately intertwined with the daily fabric of life and the operational dynamics of the village. Both artifacts and oral folk tales serve as sources that document these beliefs.

The cosmological understanding of Mizo beliefs and values, as conveyed through rituals, myths, and tales, demonstrates the intricate nature of the religion practiced by Mizo ancestors. These ideas and practices continue to be deeply ingrained within the oral tradition.

#### **4.6 Preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe through librarianship**

For this objective questionnaire was prepared which was exclusively responded by individuals practicing librarianships. The questionnaire was responded by 50 Library professionals. The focus of the study was to identify the preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe through Librarianship.

Majority of the respondents were Librarians, while others constitute Assistant Librarian, Semi- Professional Assistant, Sub-Divisional Librarian and Library Assistant. And, most of the respondents were associated with Academic Library (85%), Public Library (10%) and Special Library (5%).

Table No. 4.6.1: Number of respondents with their designation

Sl. No.	Designation	Responses	%
1.	Librarian	20	40 %
2.	Assistant Librarian	5	10 %
3.	Professional Assistant	5	10 %
4.	Semi- Professional Assistant	5	10 %
5.	Sub-Divisional Librarian	2	4 %
6.	Library Assistant	13	26 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

*(Source: Survey Data)*

#### 4.6.1 Familiarity with Indigenous Knowledge (IK)

The research data underwent analyzed as shown below.

Table No. 4.6.2: Familiarity with Indigenous Knowledge

Sl. No.	Familiarity	Responses
1.	Yes	49 (98%)
2.	No	1 (2%)
Total		50(100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

It was revealed that out of 50 respondents, 98% were familiar with the concept of IK, while 2% was not familiar with the concept.

#### 4.6.2 Role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK

The research data was subjected to analysis, as demonstrated in the following way.

Table No. 4.6.3: Role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK

Sl. No.	Role of Library	Responses
1.	Acquiring and classifying indigenous resources	10(20%)
2.	Developing specialized collections on indigenous knowledge	33 (66%)
3.	Collaborating with indigenous communities to safeguard their knowledge	4 (8%)
4.	Making it available to a wider audience	3 (6%)
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

Respondents exerted their view on the role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK, 66% of the respondents held that ‘developing specialized collections on indigenous knowledge’ was the primary role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK. 20% held the view that ‘acquiring and classifying indigenous resources’ was the role of Library ‘Collaborating with indigenous communities to safeguard their knowledge’ was another view by 8% of respondents on the role of

Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK; finally, 6% of respondents held that it was crucial to make available to wider audience for Libraries in order to maintain and safeguard IK.

### 4.6.3 Action for Library in preservation of IK

The analytical representation of the research data was as followed.

Table No. 4.6.4: Action for Library in preservation of IK

Sl. No.	Action for Library	Responses
1.	Acquiring indigenous materials through purchase or donation	20 (40%)
2.	Digitizing indigenous materials for wider accessibility	10 (20%)
3.	Organizing cultural events or exhibitions highlighting indigenous culture	5 (10%)
4.	Conducting oral history projects with indigenous community members	15 (30%)
Total		50 (100%)

*(Source: Survey Data)*

All respondents agreed that Library plays a vital role in preservation of IK, and Library also had to take action for its preservation. However, various views on the action for preservation of IK varied. 40% of respondents held that ‘Acquiring indigenous materials through purchase or donation’ was what Library ought to do. Another 30% respondents held that Libraries may ‘conduct oral history projects with indigenous community members’ to preserve IK. ‘Digitizing indigenous materials for wider accessibility’ was another view put forward by 20% of the respondents; and 10% of the respondents argue that Library must ‘organize cultural events or exhibitions highlighting indigenous culture’.

### 4.6.4 Challenges for Library in preservation of IK

Certain challenges for Library in preserving IK were outlined and the responses were analyzed as:



Table No. 4.6.5: Challenges for Library in preserving IK

Sl. No.	Challenges	Responses
1.	Issues of resource management	10 (20%)
2.	Limited funding and resources	30 (60%)
3.	Cultural sensitivities and ethical considerations	5 (10%)
4.	Intellectual property law-related legal concerns	3 (6%)
5.	Lack of materials	2 (4%)
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

The study revealed that limited funding and resources was the biggest challenge for Libraries in their attempt to preserve IK which was opted by 30% of the respondents and 20% of the respondents said the challenges in attempting to preserve IK was issues of resource management. Cultural sensitivities and ethical considerations, intellectual property law-related legal concerns, and lack of materials were another factor that posed a challenge for Libraries in their preservation of IK which were opted by 10%, 6% and 4% of the respondents respectively.

#### 4.6.5 Strategies to overcome Challenges for Library in preservation of IK

The responses of the concerned questions were analyzed and presented in the table.

Table No. 4.6.6: Strategies to overcome Challenges for Library in preservation of IK

Sl. No.	Strategies	Responses
1.	Actively collaborating with indigenous communities and knowledge holders	10 (20%)
2.	Developing culturally sensitive protocols and guidelines for handling indigenous knowledge	5 (10%)
3.	Creating specialized collections or sections dedicated to indigenous knowledge within the library	25 (50%)
4.	Investing in technology and digital platforms for wider accessibility of indigenous materials	10 (20%)
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

Different strategies to overcome challenges for Libraries in preservation of IK were proposed. 50% of the respondents held that ‘creating specialized collections or sections dedicated to indigenous knowledge within the library’ was a necessity for strategy in order to overcome those challenges and 20% of the respondents held that ‘actively collaborating with indigenous communities and knowledge holders’ was instrumental as a strategy. Another 20% of the respondents argued that ‘investing in technology and digital platforms for wider accessibility of indigenous materials’ was a key stone for overcoming the challenges for Library in preservation of IK. ‘Developing culturally sensitive protocols and guidelines for handling indigenous knowledge’ was another suitable strategy as alleged by 10% of questionnaire respondents.

#### **4.7 Examination the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge among the Mizos**

For this objective, another questionnaire was prepared to examine the level of awareness of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) among Mizos. Questionnaire respondents vary as – government employees, civil society leaders, school teachers, engineers, journalists, photographers and so on. Thus, a total of 50 respondents were involved in the data collection of this study.

Table No. 4.7.1: Number of respondents with their designation

Sl. No.	Designation	No. of respondents	%
1.	Sr. Core Faculty (PA), SIRD	1	2 %
2.	Sr. Core Faculty (RD), SIRD	1	2 %
3.	President, MUP, Aizawl	1	2 %
4.	Translator, TRI, Art & Culture Dept. GoM	1	2 %
5.	Researcher, TRI, Art & Culture Dept. GoM	1	2 %
6.	Museum Guide, Mizoram State Museum, Art & Culture Dept. GoM	1	2 %
7.	Photographer, Mizoram State Museum, Art & Culture Dept. GoM	1	2 %
8.	Office Bearer, Mizoram Primary Teachers’ Association, General Headquarters	4	8 %

9.	Office Bearer, MHIP General Headquarters, Aizawl	3	6 %
10	Office Bearer, MHIP, Lunglei	3	6 %
11.	Office Bearer, Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), General Headquarters, Aizawl	5	10 %
12.	Office Bearer, Mizoram Student's Union, General Headquarters, Aizawl	5	10 %
13.	Higher Lecturer, Mizoram	3	6 %
14.	High School Teacher, Mizoram	3	6 %
15.	Office Bearer, YMA Sub- Headquarters, Lunglei	5	10 %
16.	Office Bearer, Central YMA, Aizawl	5	10 %
17.	Junior Engineer (Electrical)	1	2 %
18.	Journalist	2	4 %
19.	Conservationist	1	2 %
20.	Photographer (Mizoram Photographer's Society)	3	6 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

(Source: Survey Data)

#### 4.7.1 Level of Awareness of Indigenous Knowledge by the people

The analytical representation of the research data was as followed.

Table No. 4.7.2: Awareness level of Indigenous Knowledge

Sl. No	Awareness	Responses
1.	Yes	33 (66 %)
2.	No	-
3.	Maybe	17 (34%)
		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

First, respondents were enquired on their knowledge on the concept of Indigenous Knowledge. Over 66% were aware of it, while the rest, i.e., 34% responded with 'maybe' meaning they were unsure about the concept.

#### 4.7.2 Best understanding of IK (Personal opinion)

The research data was represented analytically as follows.

Table No. 4.7.3: Best understanding of IK (Personal opinion)

Sl. No.	Best understanding of IK (Personal opinion)	Responses
1.	Traditional knowledge systems passed down through generations	33 (66%)
2.	Scientific knowledge taught in schools	3 (6%)
3.	Popular culture and mainstream knowledge	3 (6%)
4.	Personal opinions and beliefs	11 (22%)
Total		50 (100%)

*(Source: Survey Data)*

Out of these responses, 66% understand IK as ‘traditional knowledge systems passed down through generations’, while 6% understand it as ‘scientific knowledge taught in schools’, another 6% regarded it as ‘popular culture and mainstream knowledge’. Another 22% alleged that IK is all about personal opinions and beliefs. Thus, it was certain that more than half of respondents held the view that IK was concerned with those traditional knowledge and practices systems that existed all the way from earlier generations to another.

#### 4.7.3 Importance of enhancing awareness of IK

The research data was presented in an analytical manner as depicted below.

Table No. 4.7.4: Importance of enhancing awareness of IK

Sl. No.	Importance	Responses
1.	To preserve cultural diversity and heritage	40 (80%)
2.	To replace modern scientific knowledge	5 (10%)
3.	To promote globalization and uniformity	5 (10%)
Total		50 (100%)

*(Source: Survey Data)*

Respondents were asked why enhancing awareness on IK was important. Over 80% responded that enhancing awareness on IK was crucial to preserve the cultural diversity and heritage. Another 10% held that enhancing awareness on IK was important

to replace modern scientific knowledge, while another 10% had the view that enhancing awareness on IK was for promoting globalization and uniformity.

#### 4.7.4 Contribution of IK to Sustainable Development

The research data was presented in an analytical manner, as illustrated below.

Table No. 4.7.5: Contribution of IK to Sustainable Development

Sl. No.	Contributions	Responses
1.	Providing alternative solutions to environmental challenges	43(86%)
2.	Disregarding modern scientific advancements	4 (8%)
3.	Maintaining status quo	-
4.	Limiting technological progress	3 (6%)
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

The enquiry deals with the contribution of IK to Sustainable Development. Over 86% of responses alleged that IK contributed in ‘providing alternative solutions to environmental challenges’ to Sustainable Development. On the other hand 8% argued that IK disregard modern scientific advancement, while the other 6% argued that IK limited technological progress.

#### 4.7.5 Support of Individual in enhancement of awareness of IK

The research data was presented in an analytical manner, as depicted in the following ways.

Table No. 4.7.6: Support of Individual in enhancement of awareness of IK

Sl. No.	Support	Responses
1.	Ignoring and dismissing indigenous practices	-
2.	Engaging in cultural appropriation	3 (6%)
3.	Respecting and learning from indigenous cultures	46 (92%)
4.	Imposing one’s own belief and values on indigenous communities	1 (2%)
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

Respondents held their view on the role of individual in enhancing awareness on IK. Most of the respondents, i.e., 92% held that individuals must respect and learn from indigenous cultures to enhance the awareness of IK, 6% of respondents held that engaging in cultural appropriation was essential to enhance awareness on IK. Another 2% of the respondents also viewed that imposing one's own belief and values on indigenous communities was a key for enhancing the awareness of IK.

#### 4.7.6 Role of technology in preserving and promoting IK

The research data was presented in an analytical manner, as demonstrated by the subsequent ways.

Table No. 4.7.7: Role of technology in preserving and promoting IK

Sl. No.	Role of Technology	Responses
1.	Erasing indigenous cultures and knowledge	-
2.	Facilitating the documentation and sharing of indigenous knowledge	47(94%)
3.	Replacing traditional practices with modern alternatives	3 (6%)
4.	Discouraging the use of indigenous languages	-
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

An enquiry was held on the role of technology in preserving and promoting IK. 94% of the respondents were in favor of the argument that technology rendered in facilitating the documentation and sharing of indigenous knowledge. The rest, i.e., 6% argued that technology had replaced traditional practices with modern alternatives.

#### 4.7.7 Potential benefits from enhancing awareness of IK

The research data underwent analysis as follows.

Table No. 4.7.8: Potential benefits from enhancing awareness of IK

Sl. No.	Benefits	Responses
1.	Preserving cultural heritage and fostering mutual respect	48 (96%)
2.	Suppressing indigenous cultures and traditions	-
3.	Limiting access to modern scientific advancements	1 (2%)

4	Promoting a one-size-fits-all approach to knowledge	1 (2%)
Total		50(100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

Respondents exerted their view on the potential benefits of enhancing IK awareness. Over 96% alleged that ‘preserving cultural heritage and fostering mutual respect’ was the outcome of enhancing awareness on IK. The other 2% held that enhancing the awareness on IK limited access to modern scientific advancements; again another 2% of the respondents held that promotion of a one-size-fits-all approach to knowledge was the potential benefit from enhancing awareness of IK.

#### 4.7.8 Reliable sources for enhancing awareness of IK to people

The research data was subjected to analysis in the following manner.

Table No. 4.7.9: Reliable sources for enhancing awareness of IK to people

Sl. No.	Reliable Sources	Responses
1.	Indigenous Knowledge holders	22 (44%)
2.	Indigenous Cultural Centers and Museums	3 (6%)
3.	Online Platforms and Websites	3 (6%)
4.	Documentation and Films	14 (28%)
5.	Indigenous Literature and Oral tradition	3 (6%)
6.	Social Media and Online Communities	5 (10%)
Total		50 (100%)

(Source: Survey Data)

Respondents expressed their view on the available reliable sources for enhancing awareness of IK to people. 44 % of respondents held that indigenous knowledge holders were the key sources; 28% argued that documentation and films provided well-established sources for awareness on IK and another 10% of the respondents were of the view that social media and online communities provide a platform for gaining reliable sources for enhancing awareness of IK to people.

6% of the respondents held that indigenous cultural centers and museums provide suitable and reliable sources for knowledge on IK; another 6% were of the opinion that online platforms and websites were providing suitable sources on IK; again,

another 6% of the respondents held that indigenous literatures and oral traditions were a key figure in providing reliable sources on IK.

#### 4.8 Findings

The objective of the study was to investigate the practices of indigenous knowledge within the Mizo tribe, explore how librarianship may contribute to the preservation and management of this knowledge and how the Mizo people would be more aware about the concept of indigenous knowledge. The important findings of the study are given below:

1. **Cultural History:** The cultural history of Mizos can be found in different forms such as **oral sources** which encompasses a wide range of non-conventional sources, including folklore, folk music, beliefs, ceremonies, hymns, rituals, and other related elements; **archaeological sources** that may consist of historical items, including pottery, tools, weaponry, ornamentation, and various forms of material culture; **foreign accounts** that comprised of a wide range of materials, such as historical records, travelogues, missionary narratives, anthropological inquiries, and academic studies conducted by individuals or groups outside the Mizo community; **existing literatures** such as books, magazines, government records and articles on research perspectives related to Mizo culture can be found from writings of Christian missionaries, Mizo writers and various Indian authors; **archival records** which comprises of British individuals' exploratory missions and documentations on their observations on the customs and practices of the indigenous populations.

Cultural history has contributed a significant body of knowledge and experiential insights that have played a crucial role in facilitating the attainment of sustainable development. Several indigenous civilizations have established durable practices in environmental management, resource utilization, and social organization during the course of millennia. By drawing insights from cultural



history, individuals might cultivate creative and inventive approaches to fulfill their needs sustainably for the environment.

2. **Customary Law:** Mizos have customary law which is a collection of historical norms, traditions, and laws that have grown up over time in a Mizo society. It frequently draws on ingrained cultural norms and ideas that have been handed down through centuries. The scope of Mizo customary law extended to a variety of topics like social relations, entitlement to property, marriage, inheritance, and conflict resolution. The Mizo Customary Law, also known as **The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act of 2014** (Act No. 9 of 2014), was enacted to establish a legal framework controlling marriage, divorce, property inheritance, and other relevant issues within the Mizo community.

Customary law has the potential to facilitate the achievement of sustainable development objectives by effectively governing the sustainable management of social relations, entitlement to property, marriage, inheritance, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, it facilitates the advancement of social justice by guaranteeing equitable access to every domains of life for all individuals within a society. Moreover, the utilization of customary law has the potential to enhance the resilience and cohesion of local communities through the establishment of a structured system that facilitates collaboration and the resolution of disputes.

3. **Death:** Mizos classified death into five primary categories, which are – *Hlamzuih*, that referred to an infant death occurring within the first three months of life; *Raicheh*, that referred to the tragic incident of a woman's death occurring during childbirth; *Awmlai*, death resulting from natural death such as old age, various sicknesses affecting the metabolism and death; *Sarhi*, that refers to instances of accidental death that are deemed unnatural in accordance with cultural norms; *Zachhamlak*, a term that arises out of a believe that a daily mortality rate of one hundred individuals was necessary and in the event when

the numerical value does not reach one hundred, an abrupt and anomalous fatality would occur.

4. **Cultural Life:** Mizos lived a life of unique lifestyle where almost every day basic supplies were gathered around their environment, without the need for trade and commerce with the tribes neighboring them. They established their own village, a local structure, a way of living, and most importantly cultural life of their own. Some of the cultural life of Mizos could be manifested under different heads such as – **Patriarchy**, Mizo society was patriarchal in which the father in the house decide and directed the family affairs, and inheritance of property was also capitalized on male basis; **Food habits/cuisine**, which was significantly shaped by the historical customs of agriculture and hunting-gathering in the region. Rice is considered the primary dietary staple in Mizo cuisine, commonly accompanied by an assortment of meat, fish, and vegetable preparations; **Hunting**, the act of hunting was observed to be prevalent in both the early and contemporary Mizo society. Animals like elephant, tiger, bear, serow, monkey, warthog, and birds like pheasant, wild chicken are usually killed with guns. Other wild animals like bear, warthog, squirrel, porcupine, were usually killed with hunting traps; **Social Service (Hnatlang)**, as Mizos lived in a close-knit community, villagers interact with each other in many realms of life. Hnatlang is a social service that involves helping others in need of help, rendering assistance at times where individuals or families need assistance.

Mizo have established a growing movement to integrate sustainable development principles into their cultural life. Although Mizo society was patriarchal in nature, there is a growing awareness among contemporary Mizos that gender equality shall be achieved, this can be reflected in the everyday life of Mizos that showed that women were empowered and had the same opportunities and social status as men, which is also in parallel with Sustainable Development Goals number 5 – Gender Equality.

Hunting have been prohibited in order reduce its environmental impact, a common phrase “*Ram vah nan silai aiah camera*” meaning ‘usage of camera instead of guns for hunting’ was popularized to raise awareness for reduction of hunting culture. In social service, i.e., *hnatlang*, local communities have been working to facilitate cleanliness on their natural environment; and steps have also been taken by communities to obtain clean water for domestic usage especially in rural areas. This has been in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals number 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation.

5. **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the basis of economy among Mizos, the agricultural practices employed by the Mizos involve the utilization of shifting cultivation, whereby a specific parcel of land is allocated for cultivation for a single year. This particular set of practices is commonly referred to as *Lo neih* (Jhum) in academic discourse. Crops such as rice, maize, and ginger constitute the main cultivation; while beans, bitter gourd, pumpkin, okra, cucumber, aubergine, and mock tomato were also planted along the main cultivation.

The traditional practice of farming – *lo neih*, that involves shifting of cultivation land after one year to another has been heavily criticized on the ground that it degraded natural environment, decrease forest cover and also contributed to global warming. Keeping this in view, the State government also initiated many programs and policies focusing on ‘land use policies’ to put an end to shifting cultivation. With this, sustainability of forest cover could be achieved and was also in compatible with Sustainable Development Goals number 13 – Climate Action.

6. **Traditional Attires:** Mizos have several different types of attire, such as, ordinary or everyday dress, festive or occasional dress, and statutory dress, which was reserved for those of high rank such as chiefs and other esteemed individuals. The pre-colonial dress of the Lusei people was intricately woven by the Mizo community themselves.

- i Ordinary or everyday dress consisted of a singular white homespun sheet, which was worn by all members of the community.
- ii Festive and specific occasional dress included *Puanrin*, *Puanlaisen/Puanchei*, *Kawrchei*, *Pawndum*, and *Puanropui*. The act of donning these garments serves as a symbolic representation of the significance attributed to the specific occasion or festival within the cultural and societal context.
- iii Ceremonial and statutory attire refers to formal dresses worn on ceremonies and constitutes different attires such as *Thangchhuah Puan*, *Mangpuan*, *Puantial*, and *Tawlhloh Puan*.

The Mizo community has a rich heritage of practicing sustainable lifestyles. They exhibit a profound respect for the natural world and display sensible utilization of its resources. This distinctive feature is seen in their traditional clothing, which is crafted using organic materials. Mizo traditional attire can contribute to sustainable development through the promotion of sustainable materials, thereby mitigating the environmental impact associated with the textile industry. The utilization of Mizo traditional dress can contribute to the economic development of the region by generating employment opportunities and boosting the local economy, as the production of Mizo traditional attire predominantly involves a manual weaving technique which is in relation to Sustainable Development Goals number 12 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.

7. **Festivals:** The Mizo community celebrates three distinct festivals, namely Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, and Pawl Kut. *Chapchar Kut* can be regarded as the prominent cultural celebration observed by the Mizo community and it has been commemorated annually. *Mim Kut* was traditionally observed between the late August to early September period. The event was perceived as a commemorative celebration dedicated to deceased individuals. The event took place once the maize crops had reached full maturity. The *Pawl Kut* celebration was

traditionally observed at the completion of the paddy harvesting season, typically occurring in late December. During this period, it was common for households to possess a substantial quantity of paddy, grains, and root crops. The *Pawl Kut* festival was primarily regarded as an event primarily designated for the participation of youngsters.

Mizo festivals constitute a significant occasion that showcases Mizo cultural practices and heritages. During festivals, people gathered on the occasion wearing traditional dresses, and programs were also structured in such a way to best manifest the cultural activities. This helped in preserving, promoting and protection of indigenous knowledge and practices.

8. **Dances:** Mizo tribe has a diverse range of traditional dances, Mizo festivals are considered incomplete in the absence of this aspect. Various kinds of dances were – *Cheraw*, *Tlang Lam*, *Chai Lam*, *Chheih Lam*, *Sarlamkai/Solakia*, *Chawnglaizawn*, *Khual Lam*.

Dances are also an important requisite of every cultural program. Mizos are proud of their distinct dancing styles that involved the use of *Khuang* and *Darbu* (Mizo musical instruments) that were unique, and they have multiple dances for different occasions. These dances play an important part in protecting and preserving Mizo traditional knowledge.

9. **Religious Beliefs:** Before the advent of Christianity, Mizos have developed a fascinating set of belief systems and eschatological perspectives which can be termed as ‘animism’. Mizos held the belief that locations such as expansive trees, caverns, bodies of water, rocky terrains, mountains, and similar environments served as abodes for diverse spiritual entities.

10. **Mizo Indigenous Rituals and Practices:** The term ‘*Inthawi*’ can be understood as the act of making sacrificial offerings with the intention of appeasing and propitiating supernatural entities. These offerings are made in the context of many purposes, such as the treatment of ailments, the prediction of unfavorable omens, and the engagement with the supernatural realm through negotiation,

challenge, and capitulation. The sole authority responsible for this matter lies with the *bawlpu*. The two groups of priests, namely *sadawt and bawlpu*, will each possess unique ceremonial responsibilities that are delineated by the principles of *inthawi* and *sakhua*.

**11. Preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe through librarianship:** For this, questionnaire was responded by 50 individuals practicing Librarianships. Their views were taken into account to understand the preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizos.

- i. Respondents exerted their view on the role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK, majority (66%) of the respondents held that ‘developing specialized collections on indigenous knowledge’ was the primary role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK.
- ii. All respondents agreed that Library plays a vital role in preservation of IK, and Library also had to take action for its preservation. However, various views on the action for preservation of IK varied. Majority (40%) of respondents held that ‘Acquiring indigenous materials through purchase or donation’ was what Library ought to do.
- iii. The study revealed that limited funding and resources was the biggest challenge for Libraries in their attempt to preserve IK which was opted by 30% of the respondents and 20% of the respondents said the challenges in attempting to preserve IK was issues of resource management.
- iv. Different strategies to overcome challenges for Libraries in preservation of IK were proposed. 50% of the respondents held that ‘creating specialized collections or sections dedicated to indigenous knowledge within the library’ were a necessity for strategy in order to overcome those challenges.

**12. Examination of the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge among the Mizos:** For this objective, a total of 50 respondents were involved in the data

collection. Questionnaire respondents vary as – government employees, civil society leaders, school teachers, engineers, journalists, photographers and so on.

- i. Over 66% were aware of the concept of Indigenous Knowledge, while the rest, i.e., 34% responded with ‘maybe’ meaning they were unsure about the concept.
- ii. 66% of respondents understand IK as ‘traditional knowledge systems passed down through generations’.
- iii. 80% responded that enhancing awareness on IK was crucial to preserve the cultural diversity and heritage.
- iv. Over 86% of responses alleged that IK contributed in ‘providing alternative solutions to environmental challenges’ to Sustainable Development.
- v. 92% of respondents held that individuals must respect and learn from indigenous cultures to enhance the awareness of IK.
- vi. 94% of the respondents were in favor of the argument that technology rendered in facilitating the documentation and sharing of indigenous knowledge.
- vii. Over 96% alleged that ‘preserving cultural heritage and fostering mutual respect’ was the outcome of enhancing awareness on IK.
- viii. Respondents expressed their view on the available reliable sources for enhancing awareness of IK to people, and 44 % of respondents held that indigenous knowledge holders were the key sources.

## **Conclusion**

The role of libraries in the conservation of indigenous knowledge is a very important and relevant topic in the current era of globalization and modernization. The Mizo indigenous knowledge in particular, is the knowledge that is unique to Mizo culture or society, and that has been developed over generations through interaction with

the natural and social environment, it has many distinct features from other Indian cultures.

Mizo indigenous knowledge is often threatened by the loss of languages, traditions, and practices, as well as by the dominance of Western scientific knowledge and values, because Mizos are a small group of culture which population crosses roughly 1.1 million. Libraries, as institutions that collect, organize, preserve, and disseminate information, can play a vital role in safeguarding and promoting Mizo indigenous knowledge for the benefit of present and future generations of Mizos.

The Mizo tribe represents an indigenous community residing in the north-eastern region of India, possessing a diverse cultural background and a significant historical legacy. This group has accumulated a substantial repository of traditional knowledge over time. The information presented is derived from extensive observation and engagement with the natural world over the course of several centuries. It spans a diverse array of subjects, such as agriculture, forestry, health care, and the management of natural resources.

The achievement of sustainable development pertaining to the traditional knowledge of the Mizo tribe can be facilitated through many techniques. Documentation and preservation are crucial aspects in safeguarding the traditional knowledge of the Mizo tribe, as it is imperative to prevent its potential loss. This can be achieved by employing methodologies such as oral histories, conducting interviews with elderly individuals, and conducting archive research.

Education and awareness play a crucial role in preserving the indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe. It is imperative that this knowledge is imparted to the next generation, both inside the community and through formal education in schools. This will facilitate the transmission of this information to subsequent generations and its utilization in informing sustainable development endeavours.



Collaboration is essential for the integration of the traditional knowledge of the Mizo tribe into formal development initiatives and their execution. This can be achieved through the establishment of partnerships with governmental entities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and various other relevant parties.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

#### 5.1 Conclusion

Indigenous Knowledge provides the basis for grass root decisions making. Its value is limited not only to agricultural practices, environment and biodiversity. It has an immense value in protection of culture and preservation of one's ethnicity. In many scenarios, Indigenous Knowledge promotes environmental sustainability. Additionally, it serves as a significant means of local sustenance and contributes to the assurance of food security within the region. The production has been undertaken utilizing indigenous resources, technologies, and cultural elements. Furthermore, it exhibits equity in relation to the accessibility of resources, decision-making processes, and overall management.

The existing sustainable development agenda comprises a multitude of concerns that have a direct impact on the lives of indigenous peoples. Indigenous communities have encountered and continue to confront a range of difficulties, including but not limited to education, poverty, access to justice, and climate change. The expertise and practical understanding, which are firmly grounded in the historical connection between indigenous communities and the natural environment, have demonstrated their effectiveness in tackling some obstacles. Nevertheless, these capabilities alone are insufficient. With a combination of environmental threats and development initiatives, failure to promptly implement appropriate measures will result in adverse implications for the survival of these populations and the preservation of their knowledge systems. The loss of knowledge has already contributed to the heightened vulnerability and risk faced by indigenous groups. Hence, it is imperative for the global and domestic community to acknowledge indigenous communities and their expertise as key partners in addressing the issues of climate change, sustainable development, and the preservation of global biodiversity.

This research covers various indigenous practices and knowledge which were endemic to Mizo community over different eras. These indigenous practices cannot, however, be only resorted to historical discourse as many practices still retain their valid relevancy in contemporary Mizo society. As the process of globalization swayed contemporary societies into a homogenous society, these indigenous practices have become the last bastion for what defines, as well as differentiate particular cultures from others.

The transformative shifts in occupational patterns and living standards had profound implications for social dynamics and the exchange of ideas. The old society of the Mizo people saw all changes as being inherently natural and divinely sanctioned. Following the introduction of the Gospel in Mizoram in 1894, a multitude of transformations has occurred. Furthermore, following the attainment of full statehood in 1987, Mizoram has experienced resurgence in the appreciation of the tribal community-based way of life as a potential alternative framework for societal development, giving rise to a distinct theological perspective. The Mizo cultural identity has grown significantly influenced by the integration of Christianity, to the extent that it has emerged as a fundamental pillar in the Mizos' self-perception. Christianity has significantly influenced the Mizo social standards and cultural values. It has affected the cultural sphere and value structure of the Mizos, resulting in a profound societal transformation. The emergence of a distinctive identity resulting from the collision between modernity and traditional Mizo culture was significantly influenced by Christian teachings. The cultural life of individuals has been significantly impacted by a multitude of variables that have led to rapid societal changes. The cultural traditions and practices of indigenous cultures are rapidly diminishing within contemporary civilization. Individuals often encounter challenges when attempting to adapt to evolving circumstances. The transition of civilization from a primitive to a modern way of life has a profound impact not only on individuals but also on the overall collective existence of the community.

Thus, the Mizo communities now have been able to sustainably use and manage natural resources, protect the environment, and enhance their resilience due to their diverse forms of knowledge. This knowledge is deeply rooted in their relationships with the environment and their unified cultural identity. The ability of these communities to observe, adapt, and mitigate has been essential in encountering new and complex circumstances that have had significant impacts on their way of life and territories.

The utilization of indigenous knowledge systems has the potential to play a substantial role in guiding and facilitating sustainable development. The implicit nature of Indigenous knowledge, combined with its oral transmission, renders it vulnerable to the threat of extinction. The current generation appears to have a diminished interest in preserving this knowledge system. If the older generation fails to pass on their wisdom, it will be permanently gone. The possibility of a loss of indigenous knowledge is dependent upon its adequate documentation, analysis, and dissemination.

Library and information professionals play a crucial role in the field of managing knowledge and information as a result of their extensive training and possession of necessary abilities. Library professionals are actively involved in the processes of procuring, categorizing, and distributing the knowledge generated by human beings. They demonstrate a high level of proficiency in managing a wide range of knowledge resources, encompassing both traditional manuscripts and digital formats. Although the methods employed by libraries to fulfill their duties have undergone significant transformations throughout the years, their fundamental objective remains consistent: the pursuit of knowledge through exploration, dissemination, and sustainability. Library and Information professionals have the ability to support Indigenous knowledge-bearer societies and cultures by engaging in the documentation, preservation, and management of their traditional wisdom systems.

## 5.2 Suggestions

Based on the outcomes of the study, it is recommended that certain relevant suggestions be taken into consideration.

1. Proper awareness should be given to the people especially in rural areas. They should be aware of the importance of keeping everything in records least they forget, such as the traditions and practices of Mizo.
2. Traditional knowledge is becoming vulnerable to forces of globalization; hence, indigenous identity, culture, heritage, language and livelihood must be protected.
3. It is imperative for the global community, both at the national and international levels, to acknowledge the significance of indigenous peoples and their knowledge as key collaborators in dealing with the issues of climate change, sustainable development, and the preservation of global biodiversity.
4. It is strongly recommended that academicians, policymakers, and planners to allocate increased attention to traditional knowledge that is currently at risk of extinction.
5. In order to move away from the traditional way of imparting knowledge to the continuing development of digital technology, it is necessary that we acquire information from local experts at the village level, who possess valuable indigenous wisdom.
6. Libraries, in partnership with local traditional knowledge holders, should undertake the task of gathering and preserving various aspects of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) within their collections. These resources should be made accessible to users in both tangible and digital formats.
7. Sufficient funding should be made available and given to library in enhancing their collection on indigenous knowledge.
8. Proper training and more improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools should be made available for library professionals for archiving the available documents in indigenous knowledge in library.

### 5.3 Suggestions for further studies

This research covers very vast and various indigenous practices and knowledges of Mizo tribe and has thoroughly explored almost all dimensions of its cultural life. However, there was certain areas worth of carrying out an in-depth and more insight study on each of these subject matter, such as,

1. **Agriculture and food systems:** Mizos have a wealth of knowledge about sustainable farming practices, crop varieties, and food preservation methods in their region. Studies could be conducted to document this knowledge and to assess its potential for contributing to food security and climate resilience.
2. **Traditional medicine:** When the medical world excelled in developing technologies and new innovations to better healthcare and medicines, yet traditional knowledge of Mizos also offered a great variety of traditional medicines to various illnesses, thus offering an alternative or possibly better organic medicines. Known generally as *Ramhmul damdawi*, this traditional knowledge on medicines served many purposes to contain epidemics and diseases.
3. **Role of indigenous women:** As far as preservation of indigenous knowledge of Mizos is concerned, special focus on the role of women in the transmission and preservation of the subject matter is also crucial. Women have been actively involved in many indigenous practices in the social, economic and religious practices. Thus, special focus on women on these areas would be of great value to obtain insightful knowledge.
4. **Education and social development:** As Mizos were communitarian in their way of societal administration, thus education on traditional education, manners, social values and knowledge were transmitted greatly through social platforms and institutions like *Zawlbuk*. Through active participation in society, one learned the environment around them and this has shaped their outlook.

## **APPENDICES**

### **(Appendix - I)**

#### **Questionnaire for Library Professionals**

Dear Sir/ Madam

I would be extremely grateful if you could take a moment to respond to my questions about managing and preserving indigenous knowledge in libraries. The responses will be used for research purposes only.

Research Scholar:

Esther Lalruatpuii

DLIS, MZU

Supervisor:

Prof. R. K. Ngurtinkhuma

DLIS, MZU

#### **Questions**

Purpose: To preserve and manage the indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe in library

1. Name of the Library/ Institution:
2. Designation:
3. Type of Library
  - a) Public Library
  - b) Academic Library
  - c) Special Library
4. Are you familiar with the concept Indigenous Knowledge?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
5. Have you had any training or education devoted exclusively to managing indigenous knowledge?
  - a) Yes, to some extent
  - b) No, I haven't received any specific training
6. Does your library have specific policies or guidelines regarding the management and preservation of indigenous knowledge?
  - a) Yes

- b) No
7. What is a library's primary role when it comes to maintaining and safeguarding indigenous knowledge?
    - a) Acquiring and classifying indigenous resources
    - b) Developing specialised collections on indigenous knowledge
    - c) Collaborating with indigenous communities to safeguard their knowledge
    - d) Making it available to a wider audience
  8. Which of the aforementioned actions may a library take to help the preservation of indigenous knowledge?
    - a) Acquiring indigenous materials through purchase or donation
    - b) Digitizing indigenous materials for wider accessibility
    - c) Organizing cultural events or exhibitions highlighting indigenous culture
    - d) Conducting oral history projects with indigenous community members
  9. What do you think are the challenges that can be associated with the management and preservation of indigenous knowledge in a library?
    - a) Issues of resource management
    - b) Limited funding and resources
    - c) Cultural sensitivities and ethical considerations
    - d) Intellectual property law-related legal concerns
    - e) Other (please specify):
  10. Which of the following strategies can be effectively used in overcoming the challenges associated with the management and preservation of indigenous knowledge in libraries?
    - a) Actively collaborating with indigenous communities and knowledge holders
    - b) Developing culturally sensitive protocols and guidelines for handling indigenous knowledge
    - c) Creating specialized collections or sections dedicated to indigenous knowledge within the library



d) Investing in technology and digital platforms for wider accessibility of indigenous materials

e) Other (please specify):

11. What additional support or resources do you think libraries need to enhance in managing and preserving indigenous knowledge?

Ans:

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12. Suggestions (if any):

**(Appendix - II)**

**Questionnaire on Examination of the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge  
among the Mizos**

I would be extremely grateful if you could take a moment to respond to my questions about enhancing the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge. The responses will be used for research purposes only.

Research Scholar:  
Esther Lalruatpuii  
DLIS, MZU

Supervisor:  
Prof. R. K. Ngurtinkhuma  
DLIS, MZU

**Questions**

Purpose: To enhance the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge to the people

1. Gender:      a) Male      b) Female      c) Other
2. Age Group:
  - a) 25-30 years
  - b) 31-35 years
  - c) 36 years or above
3. Occupation/ Position
4. Are you aware about the concept of Indigenous Knowledge?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
5. Which of the following best describes indigenous knowledge?
  - a) Traditional knowledge systems passed down through generations
  - b) Scientific knowledge taught in schools
  - c) Popular culture and mainstream knowledge
  - d) Personal opinions and beliefs
6. Why is it important to enhance awareness of indigenous knowledge?

- a) To preserve cultural diversity and heritage
  - b) To replace modern scientific knowledge
  - c) To promote globalization and uniformity
7. How can indigenous knowledge contribute to sustainable development?
- a) By providing alternative solutions to environmental challenges
  - b) By disregarding modern scientific advancements
  - c) By maintaining the status quo
  - d) By limiting technological progress
8. How can individuals support the enhancement of awareness of indigenous knowledge?
- a) By ignoring and dismissing indigenous practices
  - b) By engaging in cultural appropriation
  - c) By respecting and learning from indigenous cultures
  - d) By imposing their own beliefs and values on indigenous communities
9. What role can technology play in preserving and promoting indigenous knowledge?
- a) By erasing indigenous cultures and knowledge
  - b) By facilitating the documentation and sharing of indigenous knowledge
  - c) By replacing traditional practices with modern alternatives
  - d) By discouraging the use of indigenous languages
10. What potential benefits can come from enhancing awareness of indigenous knowledge?
- a) Preserving cultural heritage and fostering mutual respect
  - b) Suppressing indigenous cultures and traditions
  - c) Limiting access to modern scientific advancements
  - d) Promoting a one-size-fits-all approach to knowledge
11. What do you think are the most reliable sources in enhancing awareness of indigenous knowledge to people?
- a) Indigenous Knowledge Holders
  - b) Indigenous Cultural Centres and Museums

- c) Online Platforms and Websites
  - d) Documentaries and Films
  - e) Indigenous Literature and Oral tradition
  - f) Social Media and Online Communities
  - g) Other (if any):
12. Suggestions (if any)

(Appendix - III)

**The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014**



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**NOTIFICATION**

No. H. 12018/233/2013-LJD, the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2014. The following Act is hereby re-published for general information.

The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014

(Act No. 9 of 2014)

{Received the assent of the Governor of Mizoram on the 28th November, 2014}.

**Zahmingthanga Ralte,**  
Deputy Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram.

Act. No. 9 of 2014

**THE MIZO MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND  
INHERITANCE OF PROPERTY ACT, 2014**

An Act to provide for the law relating to Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property among the Mizo and connected matter therewith.

It is enacted by the Mizoram Legislative Assembly in the Sixty-Fifth year of the Republic of India as follows, namely :-

**CHAPTER - I  
PRELIMINARY**

1. **Short title, extent and commencement :**
  - (1) This Act may be called the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014.
  - (2) It extends to the whole of Mizoram except the three Autonomous Districts in Mizoram constituted under the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
  - (3) It shall come into force from the date the Government may by Notification in the Official Gazette appoint.

2. **Application of the Act** : This Act applies to any person who belongs to any Mizo tribe. It also applies to marriages where male members of the parties belongs to any Mizo tribe.
3. **Definitions** : In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires :-
- (a) **'Acquired property'** means any property other than inherited property acquired by any person or by the family by any means;
  - (b) **'Ancestral property'** means a coparcenary property. The property belonging to three male parental ancestors in the unbroken line of ascent viz. the father, grandfather and great grandfather, it is not inclusive of maternal ancestral who are also an ancestor of a person. Therefore, property inherited from maternal grandfather is not an ancestral property;
  - (c) **'Couple'** means and applies to husband and wife who are married under this Act and any other law for the time being in force;
  - (d) **'Court'** means any Civil Court having original jurisdiction over the area;
  - (e) **'Decree'** means and applies the formal expression of an adjudication which, so far as regards the court expressing it, conclusively determines the rights of the parties with regards to all or any of the matters in controversy in the suit and may be final in so far as the Act is concerned;
  - (f) **'Desertion'** means abandonment against the will of the person charging it;
  - (g) **'Divorce'** means for the purpose of this Act the various means of dissolution of marriage or separation amongst the Mizo by means of the Mizo custom namely: *'Mak'*, *'Sumchhuah'*, *'Kawngka Sula Mak'*, *'Uire'*, *'Atna avanga in hen'*, *'Nupui Fanau chhuahsan'*, *'Sumlaitan'*;
  - (h) **'Falak'** means a child whose father is not identified;
  - (i) **'Head of family'** means a person who manage, rule and control all the movable and immovable properties of the family;
  - (j) **'Licenced Officer'** means any person authorised/permitted by any religious denomination to solemnize marriage under this Act;
  - (k) **'Lawichal'** means a male person appointed by the bride's family to safely escort the bride and her party as she leaves for the house of the bridegroom and to present her to the bridegroom;
  - (l) **'Lawi'** means the bride entering the home of the bridegroom after leaving her home;
  - (m) **'Mizo'** means and applies to individuals who are Mizo by birth; by adoption of minor child and persons who have been accepted as Mizo by the Society and Community at large;
  - (n) **'Major'** means for the purpose of marriage, a person who, if a male, has completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has completed eighteen years of age;
  - (o) **'Man'** means marriage price paid by the bridegroom and received by the head of the bride's family. However, marriage price not paid by mutual agreement of the parties does not invalidate the marriage if solemnized under this Act;
  - (p) **'Man pui'** means the main marriage price and *'hutphah'* is a security money paid alongwith the main marriage price but returned to the bridegroom's family through *palai*;
  - (q) **'Man ang'** means the marriage price the head of family gives in certain amounts mainly to near relatives as their shares of the marriage price;
  - (r) **"Marriage"** means a union of a man and a woman who are both major as husband and wife upon the happening of the following sequence of events :
    - (i) a male suitor conveys a proposal for marriage of a woman through *palai* to the head of the family of the woman he wants to marry;
    - (ii) if the woman's family accepts the proposal after obtaining the consent of the woman, quantum of *man* is fixed by the head of bride's family and the date and venue for payment of marriage price and of solemnization of marriage are fixed;
    - (iii) the man pays the marriage price through *palai*;
    - (iv) on the day marriage is solemnized and at the appointed time, the bride under escort by *lawichal* leaves her home and family to live with the bridegroom;

- (v) the Licenced Officer chosen by the parties to administer solemnization of marriage is informed of the intended marriage and is duly solemnized;
- (vi) when the marriage has been done in accordance with the customary rites and procedures as mentioned above or as per marriage solemnised by the Licenced Officer, the marriages becomes complete and binding;
- (s) '*Palai*' means a person or persons, not less than two in number, appointed by the bridegroom's family as negotiators to negotiate and settle the marriage;
- (t) '*Property*' means any property movable or immovable;
- (u) '*Personal property*' means any property registered in the personal name of a person and any other property purchased or gifted or inherited and so owned and possessed by a person;
- (v) '*Re-marriage*' means a marriage of a person who becomes single after his/her previous marriage;
- (w) '*Sawn*' means illegitimate child and '*sawn man*' means money that is <sup>^</sup> 40/- paid to the woman with whom a man has a child without getting married;
- (x) '*Woman's personal property*' means any property purchased or gifted or inherited and owned by a woman as her personal property inclusive of any property ownership of which is registered in her name and brought by her to the house of her husband at the time of marriage.

## CHAPTER - II MARRIAGE

4. **Marriage price :** The marriage price consists of *man pui* which is not less than <sup>^</sup> 420/-.
5. **Settlement of marriage price :** The marriage price paid through *palai* shall be recorded in writing as per Schedule I in two copies and are signed by the head of the bride's family and by the *palai*. One copy is for the bride's family and the other copy for the bridegroom. The main marriage price when received is distributed as *man 'ang* by the head of the family to different persons mostly near relatives, in the manner shown in Schedule II.
6. **Notice of intended marriage :** Notice of intended marriage is to be given to the Licenced Officer by the parties desire to solemnize the marriage. Upon receipt of such information, the Licenced Officer shall fix the date and place for solemnization in consultation with the concerned parties. He will cause notice of the intended marriage to be affixed in some conspicuous place or make announcement as per the rule, mode or practice of the religious denomination of which he is a Licenced Officer.
7. **Solemnization of marriage :**
  - (1) The marriage may be solemnized by the Licenced Officer who will include any ordained Minister/Reverend/Pastor/Authorised Elder (Upa)/Commissioned Officer/Priest (Tirkoh)/Ordained Priest of Religion according to the rules, rites, ceremonies and custom of the Religion of which he is holding such office.
  - (2) The marriage must be solemnized in the presence of at least two witnesses besides the Licenced Officer who administers solemnization and that the best man and the bridesmaid will be competent witnesses.
8. **Voidable Marriage :** A man and a woman living together on *inru* or *tlandun* or *fan* or *luhkhung* is not a valid marriage unless regularised under this Act.  
**Explanation:**
  - (i) '*inru*' means a man taking a woman to live with him as his wife;
  - (ii) '*tlandun*' means elopement of a man and a woman;
  - (iii) '*fan*' means a man leaving his house and living with a woman in the woman's house as husband and wife;



- (iv) '*luhkhung*' means a woman leaving her house and living with a man in the man's house as husband and wife;
9. **Degrees of prohibited relationship** : A man cannot enter into a marriage with any of the persons the rules or practice of the religious denomination of which he is a member prohibits and a woman cannot enter into a marriage with any of the persons the rules or practice of the religious denomination of which she is a member prohibits.
10. **Void marriages**: The living together as husband and wife of (a) two persons of the same sex (b) a person with another person having a spouse living and (c) either or both are under age are void *ab-initio*.
11. **Marriage Certificate** :
- (1) A certificate of marriage is to be issued by the Licenced Officer who administers solemnization and the certificate so issued will be the conclusive proof of marriage.
  - (2) In the certificate so issued, the words '*See section 7 of the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014*' or *In accordance with the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014*' must be inserted as a mark of judicial authentication.
  - (3) In case of others, a certificate issued after settlement of Marriage Price vide Schedule I and duly registered under the Mizoram Compulsory Registration of Marriages Act, 2007 shall be a conclusive proof of Marriage.
12. **Registration of marriage** : Every marriage solemnized under this Act shall be registered under the Mizoram Compulsory Registration of Marriage Act, 2007 or any other law for the time being in force.

### CHAPTER - III DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

13. **Grounds for dissolution of marriage** :
- (1) Any marriage before or after the commencement of this Act, may, on petition presented to the court either by the husband or the wife, be dissolved and a divorce decree be granted on the following grounds :
    - (i) the respondent has committed adultery; or
    - (ii) due to irreconcilable incompatibility; or
    - (iii) the respondent has treated the petitioner with such cruelty as to cause a reasonable apprehension in the mind of the petitioner that it would be harmful or injurious for the petitioner to live with the respondent; or
    - (iv) the respondent has been incurably of unsound mind for a continuous period of not less than three years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition; or
    - (v) the respondent has, for a period of not less than three years immediately preceding the representation of the petition, been suffering from a virulent and incurable form of leprosy or any disease in a communicable form which endangers the life of the spouse;
    - (vi) the respondent has not been heard of as being alive for a period of seven years or more by those persons who would have naturally have heard of the respondent if the respondent had been alive; or
    - (vii) the wife refuse to go on '*Lawi*';
    - (viii) the respondent has wilfully refused to consummate the marriage and the marriage has thereof not been consummated; or
    - (ix) the respondent has deserted the petitioner for at least two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition; or
    - (x) by mutual consent;



(2) A wife or husband may also present a petition for the dissolution of their marriage on the ground that the spouse has, since the solemnization of the marriage been found guilty of rape, sodomy or bestiality.

14. **Judicial separation :**

- (1) Either party to a marriage, whether solemnized before or after the commencement of this Act, may present a petition praying for a decree for judicial separation on any of the grounds specified in sub-section(1) of section 13.
- (2) Where a decree for judicial separation has been passed, the court may, on the application by petition of either party and on being satisfied of the truth of the statements made in such petition, rescind the decree if it considers it just and reasonable to do so.
- (3) A proceeding for judicial separation shall not exceed a period of six months and after the expiry of six months, the Court shall pronounce dissolution of marriage within a period of sixty days.

15. **Power of the court to pronounce decree for dissolving marriage.**

In case the court is satisfied on the evidence that the case of the petitioner has been proved, and does not find that the petitioner has been in any manner accessory to, or conniving at the going through of the said form of marriage, or has condoned the adultery complained of, the court shall pronounce a decree, and grant a Certificate of Divorce as in Schedule III declaring such marriage to be dissolved.

#### CHAPTER - IV WELFARE MATTERS

16. **Permanent Alimony and maintenance :**

- (1) The Court exercising jurisdiction under this Act, may at the time of passing any decree or at any time subsequent thereto, on application made to it for the purpose by either the wife, the husband, the minor male child or the unmarried daughter unable to maintain themselves as the case may be, order that the respondent shall pay to the applicant for her or his maintenance and support such gross sum or such monthly or periodical sum for a term not exceeding the life of the applicant as, having regard to the respondent's own income and other property, if any, the income and other property of the applicant, the conduct of the parties and other circumstances of the case, as it may seem to the court to be just and any such payment may be secured, if necessary, by a charge on the immovable property of the respondent.
- (2) If the court is satisfied that there is a change in the circumstances of either party at any time after it has made an order under sub section (1), or the party in whose favour an order has been made has re-married, or becomes unchaste, it may, at the instance of either party, vary, modify or rescind any such order in such manner as the court may deem just.

17. **Duty of the court to consider the welfare of the children :**

In any proceeding under this Act, the court may, from time to time, pass such interim orders and make such provisions in the decree as it may deem fit and proper with respect to the custody, maintenance, education and welfare of minor children, consistent with their wishes wherever possible, and upon application by the petition may also from time to time revoke, suspend or vary any such orders and provisions previously made, and may, if it thinks fit, direct proceeding to be taken for placing such children under the protection of the Court.

Guardianship of the child shall also be decided by the Court as per the existing law in force keeping in mind the best interest of the child.

Provided that a child below the age of three years shall be in the custody of the mother unless the mother is found unfit by the Court for reasons to be recorded in writing as the custodian of the child.

18. **Liberty of parties to marry again :**

Where a decree for dissolution or nullity of marriage has been passed and either the time for appeal has expired without an appeal having been presented to any court including the Supreme Court or, an appeal has been presented but has been dismissed and the decree or dismissal has become final, it shall be lawful for either party to the marriage to marry again, or when a person become single after the death of his/her spouse.

#### CHAPTER - V JURISDICTION

19. **Court to which petition should be made :**

Every petition under this Act shall be presented to the court within the local limits of whose original jurisdiction -

- (i) the marriage was solemnized; or
- (ii) the respondent, at the time of the presentation of the petition resides; or
- (iii) the parties to the marriage last resided together;

20. **Reconciliatory matters :**

Before proceeding to grant any relief under this Act, it shall be the duty of the court in the first instance, in every case where it is possible so to do consistently with the nature and circumstances of the case, to make every endeavour to bring about reconciliation between the parties.

21. **Adjournment of proceedings :**

For the purpose of aiding the court in bringing about such reconciliation, the court may, if the parties so desire or the court thinks fit it just and proper so to do, adjourn the proceedings for a reasonable period not exceeding two months and refer the matter to any person named by the parties in this behalf or to any person nominated by the court if the parties fail to name any person, with directions to report to the court whether reconciliation can be and has been effected and the court shall in disposing of the proceeding have due regard to this report.

22. **Supply of copy of decree :**

In every case where a marriage is dissolved by a decree of divorce, the court passing the decrees shall give a copy thereof free of costs to each of the parties.

#### CHAPTER - VI DIVISION OF PROPERTY ON DIVORCE

23. **Ownership right of head of family over properties:**

All movable and immovable properties inherited and acquired, which is not registered in the name of any member of the family living under the same roof are deemed to be the property of the head of the family.

24. **Right of head of family to dispose property :** The head of the family may dispose any of his/ her properties except service/pensionary benefits by way of sale, barter, gift, charity or endowment. However, a woman's personal property shall not be disposed without her consent.

25. **Right of a woman leaving her husband on *sumchhuah* :** If a woman leaves her husband on *sumchhuah*, she will have no right over the acquired property except her personal property.

Provided that if she was compelled to leave her husband on *sumchhuah* by her husband's domestic violence or cruelty, or her husband is wantonly sexually unfaithful or insanity of her husband, or depriving her of conjugal right except on health ground, she can not be deprived of her right over the acquired property.

Explanation : '*sumchhuah*' means a married woman leaving her husband by returning marriage price.

26. **Right of a woman leaving her husband on *māk*:**

(1) If the husband divorces his wife on *māk* except on ground of adultery or deprivation of her husband of his conjugal right, she will have share over the acquired property of any kind. The personal property of the woman shall not be disturbed.

(2) If a man divorces his wife on ground of adultery or deprivation of his conjugal right except on health ground, she will have a share over the acquired property not exceeding 25 % alongwith her personal property.

Explanation : '*mā*/'*māk*' means a wife divorced by her husband.

27. **Share of acquired property :**

(1) A woman leaving her husband on *māk* or *kawngka sula māk* shall have a share of the acquired property and shall be given a share not exceeding fifty percent of the acquired property.

(2) Married couple who have separated on mutual consent will share acquired property as mutually agreed or deemed just and proper.

(3) A couple who have separated under clause (iv) or (v) of sub-section (1) of section 13 of the Act shall share the acquired property equally.

(4) A person who has deserted the family under clause (ix) of sub-section (1) of section 13 of the Act shall have no share over the acquired property.

Explanation : *Kawngka sula māk* means when a man find a girl, he prefers to his wife and divorces his wife on the same day or after some period of time marriage the girl, the divorce is known as *kawngka sula māk*. The literal meaning of *Kawngka sula māk* is to marry another wife in which the old wife goes out of the door and the new wife comes in.

28. **Gift of property to a son/daughter leaving family on *indang*.** If a son or daughter leaves his/her family on *indang* as per the desire of the head of the family, the head of the family may give any of his/her property other than such son's or daughter's personal property.

Explanation : '*indang*' means a son or daughter leaving his/her father's house for independent and separate establishment or family which is accepted by the head of family.

## CHAPTER - VII WILL

29. (1) A person of sound mind who has attained majority under the law in force, while he/she is fully possessed of his/her clear conscience capable of exercising his/her free will may execute a will in writing in the presence of at least two witnesses as to how all or some or part of his/her property which he/she can alienate during his/her life time be disposed after his/her death.
- (2) If the testator executes more than one will for the same property, the latter or last one will prevail over the other or others.
- (3) The making of a will caused by coercion, threat, intimidation or undue influence or fraud is void.
- (4) The witnesses to the will must have attained majority under the law in force and they must be of sound mind.
- (5) The testator and the witnesses must put their signatures to the will in the presence of all of them. If the testator cannot write, then the testator must put his thumb impression.



- (6) If in case the testator or any witness cannot write, he/she must put his/her thumb impression.
  - (7) The legatee will be the executor of the will. If the legatee is a minor, his/her father/mother whoever is alive will be the executor. If his/her parents had both died, his/her legal guardian will be the executor.
  - (8) The Probate of a Will must be made within 5 years from death of the Testator.
30. **Jurisdiction of the court :**
- (1) The civil court having original jurisdiction over the area where the legatee resides shall have the power.
  - (2) to grant probate of the original will produced before him by the executor regardless of the place where the property situates.
  - (3) to grant heirship certificate in respect of any property as per Schedule IV
  - (4) to adjudicate upon any dispute arising out of and within the scope of this Act.

#### CHAPTER - VIII INHERITANCE OF FATHER'S (HEAD OF THE FAMILY) PROPERTY

- In the absence of a 'Will', the following provision shall apply :
31. (1) On the death of the head of the family, the wife will automatically become the head of the family if she remains a chaste widow and looks after the welfare of her minor children. If the children have become majors, she needs to obtain no objection from the children to recognize her as the head of the family.
- (2) The property left by the deceased father will be inherited by the sons who are not '*Indang*' and the surviving wife of the Head of the Family equally. However, the youngest son will get one extra share provided he looks after members of the family who are not '*Indang*'.
- Provided further that unmarried daughter who has been looking after her parents and siblings being the main bread earner will also get a share of the property equivalent to the right of the mother/sons.
- (3) If any of the son 'A' of the Head of the Family dies before the Head of the Family, then on the death of the Head of the Family, the Head of the Family's properties will be divided between the surviving sons of the Head of the Family who are not '*Indang*' and the surviving wife and the share that would have gone to A would go to A's sons.
- Provided that the youngest son will get one extra share. Provided further that 'A' was not '*Indang*' or that the children of 'A' were not '*Indang*' at the time of the death of the Head of the Family.
- (4) If the Head of the Family has no son, then the property will be divided equally between the surviving wife of the Head of the Family and the unmarried daughters who are living with the surviving wife.
- (5) In the event of all the sons being '*Indang*' at the time of the death of the Head of the Family, and there being unmarried daughters, then the property will be shared between the wife, unmarried daughters and the surviving sons.
- Provided that the youngest son shall get one extra share. The sons and daughters of the Head of the Family from a previous marriage who are living with the Head of the Family shall have the same right and interest as the sons and daughters of the later marriage.
- (6) In the event of there being no sons or unmarried daughters then the property will go to the wife of the Head of the Family.
- (7) In the event of there being no sons, unmarried daughters or wife, then the property will go to the married daughters in equal share.
- (8) In the event of there being no sons or daughters and the wife from the surviving marriage having expired prior to the death of the Head of the Family, then the share of the properties to

- be inherited by the children from his previous marriage will be governed as per sub-section (1) to (6). However his wife from his previous marriages will not be entitled to any shares of the property and her alleged share will go to the youngest son to the previous marriage.
- (9) In the event of there being no sons, unmarried daughters, wife, married daughters, then the youngest illegitimate son will inherit the property. In the event of there being no illegitimate son, then the youngest illegitimate daughter will inherit. In the event of there being no illegitimate daughters, the brothers and sisters of the Head of the Family will inherit the property and the youngest brother will get one extra share.
  - (10) The personal property left by unmarried son who died while he was in his father's house and having no issue will be inherited by his surviving father. If the father had died, his surviving mother will inherit. If both the father and the mother had died, the surviving youngest brother will inherit. If there is no surviving brother, the youngest surviving sister will inherit. If he had a surviving *sawn* son or daughter, the son will inherit. If he had a surviving daughter but no son, the surviving daughter will inherit, provided that *sawn man* was paid.
  - (11) The personal property left by unmarried daughter who died while she was in her father's house and having no issue will be inherited by her surviving father. If the father had died, her surviving mother will inherit. If both the father and the mother had died, the surviving youngest brother will inherit. If there is no surviving brother, the youngest surviving sister will inherit. If she had left surviving *sawn* son or daughter, the son will inherit. If she had a surviving daughter but no son, the surviving daughter will inherit. Provided that *sawn man* is not paid.
  - (12) If there is '*Falak*' in the family, he/she will have a right to have a share of the mother's property.
32. **Inheritance of a woman's personal property :**
- (1) If a woman predeceased her husband, her personal property will devolve to her surviving husband.
  - (2) If she has no surviving husband, then her property will be divided as if the property of the Head of the Family is divided as in Section 31. However, the youngest son will have one extra share.
33. **Inheritance for support till death :** The one who supports the owner of specified property till his/her death as desired by the owner of that property is entitled to first preference to inheritance of that property irrespective of the order of preference given in Section 31 and 32.
34. **Right of son on *indang* and of married daughter :** The son who has left his father's house on *indang* and the married daughter will have no share of the property left by their father or mother except as provided in sections 31 and 32.  
**Explanation :** For the purpose of inheritance, the son even if married or unmarried daughter living in another village, town or city or in a foreign country for employment, service or profession is not *indang*.
35. **Right of a divorced daughter :** A divorced daughter who has returned to her father's or mother's house will be treated as unmarried daughter for the purpose of inheritance.
36. **Obligation of legal heir :** A person who inherits property cannot disown himself or herself of the liabilities left by the person whose property he/she inherits.
37. **Date of operation of inheritance :** The right to inherit will operate only after the death of the person who owns property.
38. **Right of a predeceased wife to possess house property :** Even though the legal heirs might have taken their shares of the property left by the deceased father, the surviving wife cannot be deprived of her right to live in and to enjoy the house property of her deceased husband and its appurtenant including the benefits thereof provided however that she remains a chaste widow.

39. **Application of other Laws not barred :** Save as otherwise provided, the provisions of this Act shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other law for the time being in force.
40. **Repeal and Savings :**
- (i) The Mizo District (Inheritance of Property) Act, 1956 is hereby repealed provided that all acts done thereunder shall be deemed to have been done under this Act.
  - (ii) Nothing contained in this Act shall affect the validity of any marriage between the Mizo, which is otherwise valid, before the commencement of this Act.
  - (iii) Nothing contained in this Act shall affect any proceeding under any law for the time being in force for declaring any marriage to be null and void or for annulling or dissolving any marriage or for judicial separation pending at the commencement of this Act, and any such proceeding may be continued and determined as if this Act had not been passed.
41. **Power to remove difficulties :** The State Government may by notification publish in the Official Gazette remove difficulties in implementation of the provisions of this Act.

Provided that no such notification shall be issued after the expiry of two years from the commencement of this Act.

**Schedule I  
(Sec. 5 of the Act)  
SETTLEMENT OF MARRIAGE PRICE**

Name of bridegroom :

Mr \_\_\_\_\_ s/o \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe/Community \_\_\_\_\_  
 Village \_\_\_\_\_ PO & PS \_\_\_\_\_  
 District \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Name of bride :

Miss \_\_\_\_\_ d/o \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
 Religion \_\_\_\_\_ Tribe/Community \_\_\_\_\_  
 Village \_\_\_\_\_ PO & PS \_\_\_\_\_  
 District \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Main marriage price given : ^ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Rupees \_\_\_\_\_)

-hutpah ^ 20/- (Rupees twenty).-hutpah is returned through palai.

Date & Time of settlement : \_\_\_\_\_

Place : \_\_\_\_\_

City/Town/Street : \_\_\_\_\_

This document is duly executed on this \_\_\_\_\_th day of \_\_\_\_\_ 20\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_am/  
 pm in the house of \_\_\_\_\_, and in witness whereof we put our signatures below :

(Mr/Mrs \_\_\_\_\_)  
 Marriage price receiver

Names of Palai / Witness :

1. (Mr/Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ )                      2. (Mr/Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ )



Schedule II  
(Sec. 5 of the Act)  
MAN - ANG  
(SUBSIDIARY MARRIAGE PRICE)

1.	Sum hmahrui	:	normally	^ 60/-
2.	Sumfang	:	normally	^ 50/-
3.	Pusum	:	normally	^ 40/-
4.	Palal	:	normally	^ 30/-
5.	Niar	:	normally	^ 20/-
6.	Naupakpuan	:	normally	^ 20/-
7.	Nu man	:	normally	^ 20/-

Explanations :

1. *Sum hmahrui* : A share taken by the father/receiver of marriage price or given to his/her brother or son who has separate establishment.
2. *Sumfang* : A share given by the father/receiver of marriage price to his/her brother or to his/her son who has separate establishment.
3. *Pusum* : A share given to the maternal grandfather of the bride i.e. mother's father. If he is not alive, bride's mother's brother will get.
4. *Palal* : A share given to a person the bride has chosen to be her new found father of the locality where she get married and who in turn looks after her as his daughter.
5. *Niar* : A share given to the sister of the bride's father. In the absence of such aunt, a relative woman who can take such a place or relationship may get the share.
6. *Naupakpuan* : A share given to the elder sister of the bride as a reward for her taking care of and for being a sister of the bride when she was a baby. In the absence of such a sister, another woman who can take such a place or relationship may get the share.
7. The father of the bride or receiver of the marriage price may not necessarily share *sum hmahrui* and *sumfang* to any body.
8. *Nu man* is paid to the mother, who gave birth to the bride. It arises only when the father and mother of the bride are not married or divorced.

Secretary,  
Law & Judicial Deptt.,  
Govt. of Mizoram.

SCHEDULE III  
(Sec. 14 of the Act)

NAME OF COURT

DIVORCE CERTIFICATE NO. \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that Smt. \_\_\_\_\_ d/o \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of father) or (name of mother) of \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of village) and Shri \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of ex-husband) s/o \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ who were married on \_\_\_\_\_ were divorce from each other by way of \_\_\_\_\_ under \_\_\_\_\_ with effect from \_\_\_\_\_ due to \_\_\_\_\_. Hence their marriage stands dissolved.

Name and Signature of  
Issuing Authority with Seal

SCHEDULE IV  
(Sec. 30 of the Act)  
HEIRSHIP CERTIFICATE

IN THE COURT OF \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT

HEIRSHIP CERTIFICATE APPLN. NO. \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_ UNDER  
SECTION \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE MIZO MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND INHERITANCE  
OF PROPERTY ACT, 2014

To,

R/O \_\_\_\_\_

Whereas on the death of your \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ you applied for a Heirship Certificate under the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014 in respect of the following properties namely :-

Sl. No.	Description of the Property
1.	
2.	
3.	

This certificate is accordingly granted to you \_\_\_\_\_ s/o,d/o, w/o \_\_\_\_\_ r/o \_\_\_\_\_ and declare you as the legal heir of the deceased \_\_\_\_\_ in respect of the above mentioned properties.

Memo No. \_\_\_\_\_ : Dated \_\_\_\_\_ the, \_\_\_\_\_

JUDGE

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## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

### Journal Publications

1. Esther Lalruatpuii, H. Miriami, & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2020). Library and Indigenous Knowledge of Mizo Traditional Weaving (with special reference to Puan having Geographical Identification tag). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)*.
2. Samuel Lalruatfela, Fiona Lalmalsawmi, Esther Lalruatpuii, Prof. K. V. Reddy, H. Lalzuithangi, & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2022). Convergence of Local Governance Administration (Village Council) with Self-Help Group (SHG) under Mizoram State Rural Livelihood Mission. . *Contemporary Social Scientist. A National Refereed Journal*, 91–101.
3. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2023). Mizo Traditional Knowledge of Rain and its impact on the Socio-Agricultural System of the Society. *Mizo Studies: A Quarterly Refereed Journal*, XII (3), 512–529.
4. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2023). Indigenous Knowledge in Doctoral Dissertations available at Shodhganga under Social Science and Arts & Humanities of Central Universities of India during 2002-2021: An evaluative study. *RBU Journal of Library & Information Science*, 25, 19-27.
5. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. Usage and Preservation of Mizo Traditional Medicine by the people of Chungtlang Village, Mamit District, Mizoram. *Journal of Medical Library Association*. (Accepted)

### Book Chapters

1. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2021). Indigenous Knowledge of Musical Instruments of Mizo Tribe. In Das & Binod Behari (Eds.), *Proceedings of International Virtual Conference on Library & Information Services (IVCLIS 2021)* (pp. 41–45). Dr. Sankar Gangopadhyay.

2. Esther Lalruatpuii, Ruth Lalthlamuanpuii, & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2022). Preservation of Mizo Indigenous Festivals in LIS Perspectives: A Brief Note. In M. Krishnamurthy (Ed.), *Emerging Digital Platforms: Shaping Digital Transforms and National Data Exchange*. Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore.
3. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. (2023). Preservation and Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge based on the Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture in National Education Policy 2020. In Pravakar Rath, Amit Kumar, & Manendra Kumar Singh (Eds.), *National Education Policy 2020: A Forward-Looking Vision for LIS Education and Services* (pp. 263–268). Today and Tomorrow’s Printers and Publishers.

#### **Papers presented in International and National Conference/ Seminar**

1. Esther Lalruatpuii. *Dissemination of Indigenous Knowledge through Social Media*. Presented in the National Seminar on “Social Media and Librarianship: Connecting the Communities” organized by the Department of Library & Information Science, Mizoram University during 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2020.
2. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. *Indigenous Knowledge of Musical Instruments of Mizo Tribe*. Presented in Two Days International Virtual Conference on Library and Information Services (IVCLIS 2021) – “Library and Information Services: Past, Present and Future”, jointly organized by Library Departments of Brainware University & Brainware Group of Institutions Sabita Devi Education Trust, during February 09-10, 2021.
3. Esther Lalruatpuii & Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma. *Preservation and Promotion of Indigenous Knowledge based on the Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture in National Education Policy 2020*. Presented in the National Seminar on “National Education Policy 2020: A Forward-Looking Vision for LIS Education and Services” organized by the Department of Library & Information Science, Mizoram University, Aizawl during 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2023.

4. Esther Lalruatpuii. *Advancing Indigenous Knowledge in Virtue of Library Professional: A Study Based on Familiarity among Students of the Department of Library and Information Science (2022), Mizoram University*. Presented in the National Seminar organized by Central Library, Mizoram University, Aizawl during 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> May. 2023.
5. Lianhmingthangi & Esther Lalruatpuii. *Accessibility and Maintenance of Higher Educational Library Website: A study of North-Eastern Central University of India*. Presented in the National Seminar organized by Central Library, Mizoram University, Aizawl during 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> May. 2023.
6. Samuel Lalruatfela & Esther Lalruatpuii. *Liquor Policy and its Repercussions on Tourism Development in Mizoram*. Presented in the International Conference on Redefining Tourism Through G20's Key Priority Areas (KPAs) organized by the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Mizoram University, Aizawl during 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2023.

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DEPARTMENT : LIBRARY AND INFORMATION  
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TITLE OF THESIS : SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT  
OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE  
MANAGEMENT OF MIZO TRIBE  
DATE OF ADMISSION : 25.07.2019

### **APPROVAL OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

1. DRC : 19.09.2019  
2. BOS : 24.09.2019  
3. SCHOOL BOARD : 03.10.2019  
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EXTENSION (IF ANY) : NIL

Head

Department of Library and Information Science



**ABSTRACT**  
**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS**  
**KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF MIZO TRIBE**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF**  
**THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF**  
**PHILOSOPHY**

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**DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE**  
**SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS, MANAGEMENT AND**  
**INFORMATION SCIENCE**

**OCTOBER 2023**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE  
MANAGEMENT OF MIZO TRIBE**

**By**

**ESTHER LALRUATPUII**

**Department of Library and Information Science**

**Supervisor: Prof. R.K. Ngurtinkhuma**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy in Library and Information Science of  
Mizoram University, Aizawl.**

## **1. Introduction**

The significance of indigenous knowledge extends beyond its intrinsic value, since it also holds considerable importance in terms of the advantages it confers onto the indigenous communities that possess and engage with it. Indigenous communities across the world face recurrent challenges in preserving their rights, cultural practises, and knowledge. Indigenous communities perceived the earth as a vital entity that sustains, educates, and provides nourishment, considering it a sacred endowment from the divine creator. Indigenous knowledge is widely regarded as a valuable kind of social capital among marginalized communities. Investing in the pursuit of survival, the production of sustenance, the provision of shelter, and the attainment of autonomy are considered primary assets for individuals. Throughout the course of history, indigenous communities have endured the detrimental effects of invasion and persecution, resulting in the subjugation of their knowledge and the imposition of Western knowledge onto them through the establishment of Western institutions.

The erosion of indigenous knowledge is mostly attributed to the encroachment of foreign technologies and development ideologies, which often prioritize immediate benefits or problem-solving approaches that lack long-term sustainability. However, indigenous cultures have demonstrated remarkable resilience over the course of millennia, successfully adjusting to challenging climate circumstances and establishing sustainable subsistence systems. The indigenous communities' wide range of knowledge, which is deeply intertwined with their environment and cultural cohesion, have enabled them to effectively utilize and oversee natural resources in a sustainable manner. Additionally, this knowledge has empowered them to safeguard their environments which enhance their adaptability. The indigenous communities' capacity to observe, adapt, and mitigate has proven invaluable in navigating the challenges posed by novel and intricate circumstances that frequently pose significant threats to their way of life and territories.

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) encompasses the comprehensive range of beliefs, faith, wisdom, culture, practices, and experiences that are held by individuals within

aboriginal society. This information has served as the primary means of survival and sustenance throughout several domains of their everyday existence. The aforementioned phenomenon serves as a manifestation of the cultural attributes inherent to a particular group within the broader societal context. Interpersonal connectivity is established among individuals, which becomes particularly evident within a multicultural societal context. The aforementioned concept serves as the foundation for decision-making processes at the local level in several domains such as agricultural production, medical care, and the preparation of food, education, natural resources management, and numerous other endeavours within rural communities. The transmission of indigenous knowledge has occurred through oral tradition, ritual engagement, adherence to norms, and integration into daily cultural practices, ensuring its continuity over successive generations.

## **2. Significance of the Study**

The study is significant since there has not been a study on the Mizo people's indigenous knowledge management's sustainable development. To have an impact on indigenous organizations' and local communities' attempts to achieve sustainable socio-economic progress, indigenous and outside knowledge must be acquired, disseminated, and used to influence change. Because the genuine findings of this study would add to the body of theoretical and scientific research already in existence, it is necessary. Additionally, it is believed that the study's findings would provide policymakers with information regarding IK practices around which strong and comprehensive policies must be created, particularly for the sake of the nation's socioeconomic growth.

## **3. Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to the indigenous knowledge of the Mizo Culture in Mizoram. In the Indian Constitution (Schedule Tribes), under 1950 (Part III- Rules and Orders under Constitution) there are 15 different tribes in Mizoram. Further study was limited to indigenous knowledge of Mizo tribes with special

reference to the cultural life, agricultural practices, traditional dress, festivals and dances and religious beliefs of the Mizo (Lushai) tribes in Mizoram.

#### **4. Research Gap**

From the literature available, it could be found that a great deal of works has been carried out in the sustainable development of indigenous knowledge of many different tribes but no study has yet been found concerning to indigenous knowledge of the Mizo people and therefore, to bridge the gap, this study, “Sustainable Development of Indigenous Knowledge Management of Mizo Tribe” had been done.

#### **5. Statement of the Problem**

The study analysed the sustainable development of the indigenous knowledge management with special reference to the Mizo people. The culture of Mizo concerned with knowledge collection and storing was to a large extent based on oral communication. Local knowledge was not recorded, but kept in people’s minds. This knowledge has been passed on from generation to generation through story-telling, poems, songs or through informal ways of teaching. A disadvantage to this form of knowledge management is that, the human mind has a limited capacity. Knowledge in someone’s mind could be forgotten altogether. It can also be distorted in the process of sharing or else it can even be lost if someone who has it dies. Indigenous Knowledge is tacit knowledge as it is in the beholders’ minds, but it can then be re-classified as predominantly explicit when it has been documented. Due to lack of documentation as well as preservation of indigenous knowledge of Mizo tribe, need arises to conduct the study and record, document and preserve the indigenous knowledge up to some extent in proposed area.

#### **6. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the cultural history of Mizo tribe.
2. To examine the different practices and traditions within Mizo indigenous knowledge.

3. To identify the preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe through librarianship.
4. To examine the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge among the Mizos.

## **7. Research Methodology**

This research is a qualitative as well as an exploratory research in nature. So in order to accomplish the objectives of the study, the data/ information/ knowledge required is collected from primary, secondary and tertiary sources available in various places and in various forms. Apart from this, the following methods are used for collecting the required data/ information/ knowledge related to indigenous knowledge:

### *a) Survey Method*

In this method, the detailed survey of the villages within Mizoram is made and indigenous knowledge of Mizo people is assessed. Additionally, the qualitative data are obtained from a number of interview conversations that are semi-structured using a recording device (with the interviewees' permission) to record their exact words in order to prevent data loss and a digital camera in order to record tangible items (images and video formats) related to local indigenous knowledge. Questionnaire was also used to gather data from Library professionals and general public to understand the role of Libraries and Civil Society Organizations in the preservation of Indigenous Knowledge.

### *b) Observation*

The fact that it occurs where the event really takes place brings the scholar more closely to the activity. The scholar observes their actions, decisions, behaviours, practices, rituals, and so on, from their perspective. The audio-visual and image format is most commonly used to record and preserve the

indigenous knowledge during observation. The information is thus being collected from all the available sources in Mizoram.

## 8. Findings

The objective of the study was to investigate the practices of indigenous knowledge within the Mizo tribe, explore how librarianship may contribute to the preservation and management of this knowledge and how the Mizo people would be more aware about the concept of indigenous knowledge. The important findings of the study are given below:

1. **Cultural History:** The cultural history of Mizos can be found in different forms such as **oral sources** which encompasses a wide range of non-conventional sources, including folklore, folk music, beliefs, ceremonies, hymns, rituals, and other related elements; **archaeological sources** that may consist of historical items, including pottery, tools, weaponry, ornamentation, and various forms of material culture; **foreign accounts** that comprised of a wide range of materials, such as historical records, travelogues, missionary narratives, anthropological inquiries, and academic studies conducted by individuals or groups outside the Mizo community; **existing literatures** such as books, magazines, government records and articles on research perspectives related to Mizo culture can be found from writings of Christian missionaries, Mizo writers and various Indian authors; **archival records** which comprises of British individuals' exploratory missions and documentations on their observations on the customs and practices of the indigenous populations.

Cultural history has contributed a significant body of knowledge and experiential insights that have played a crucial role in facilitating the attainment of sustainable development. Several indigenous civilizations have established durable practices in environmental management, resource utilization, and social organization during the course of millennia. By drawing insights from cultural history, individuals might cultivate creative

and inventive approaches to fulfill their needs sustainably for the environment.

2. **Customary Law:** Mizos have customary law which is a collection of historical norms, traditions, and laws that have grown up over time in a Mizo society. It frequently draws on ingrained cultural norms and ideas that have been handed down through centuries. The scope of Mizo customary law extended to a variety of topics like social relations, entitlement to property, marriage, inheritance, and conflict resolution. The Mizo Customary Law, also known as **The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act of 2014** (Act No. 9 of 2014), was enacted to establish a legal framework controlling marriage, divorce, property inheritance, and other relevant issues within the Mizo community.

Customary law has the potential to facilitate the achievement of sustainable development objectives by effectively governing the sustainable management of social relations, entitlement to property, marriage, inheritance, and conflict resolution. Furthermore, it facilitates the advancement of social justice by guaranteeing equitable access to every domains of life for all individuals within a society. Moreover, the utilization of customary law has the potential to enhance the resilience and cohesion of local communities through the establishment of a structured system that facilitates collaboration and the resolution of disputes.

3. **Death:** Mizos classified death into five primary categories, which are – *Hlamzuih*, that referred to an infant death occurring within the first three months of life; *Raicheh*, that referred to the tragic incident of a woman's death occurring during childbirth; *Awmlai*, death resulting from natural death such as old age, various sicknesses affecting the metabolism and death; *Sarhi*, that refers to instances of accidental death that are deemed unnatural in accordance with cultural norms; *Zachhamlak*, a term that arises out of a believe that a daily mortality rate of one hundred individuals was necessary and in the event when the numerical value does not reach one hundred, an abrupt and anomalous fatality would occur.



4. **Cultural Life:** Mizos lived a life of unique lifestyle where almost every day basic supplies were gathered around their environment, without the need for trade and commerce with the tribes neighbouring them. They established their own village, a local structure, a way of living, and most importantly cultural life of their own. Some of the cultural life of Mizos could be manifested under different heads such as – **Patriarchy**, Mizo society was patriarchal in which the father in the house decide and directed the family affairs, and inheritance of property was also capitalized on male basis; **Food habits/cuisine**, which was significantly shaped by the historical customs of agriculture and hunting-gathering in the region. Rice is considered the primary dietary staple in Mizo cuisine, commonly accompanied by an assortment of meat, fish, and vegetable preparations; **Hunting**, the act of hunting was observed to be prevalent in both the early and contemporary Mizo society. Animals like elephant, tiger, bear, serow, monkey, warthog, and birds like pheasant, wild chicken are usually killed with guns. Other wild animals like bear, warthog, squirrel, porcupine, were usually killed with hunting traps; **Social Service (Hnatlang)**, as Mizos lived in a close-knit community, villagers interact with each other in many realms of life. *Hnatlang* is a social service that involves helping others in need of help, rendering assistance at times where individuals or families need assistance.

Mizo have established a growing movement to integrate sustainable development principles into their cultural life. Although Mizo society was patriarchal in nature, there is a growing awareness among contemporary Mizos that gender equality shall be achieved, this can be reflected in the everyday life of Mizos that showed that women were empowered and had the same opportunities and social status as men, which is also in parallel with Sustainable Development Goals number 5 – Gender Equality.

Hunting have been prohibited in order reduce its environmental impact, a common phrase “*Ram vah nan silai aiah camera*” meaning ‘usage of camera instead of guns for hunting’ was popularized to raise awareness for reduction of hunting culture. In social service, i.e., *hnatlang*, local communities have been working to facilitate cleanliness on their natural

environment; and steps have also been taken by communities to obtain clean water for domestic usage especially in rural areas. This has been in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals number 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation.

5. **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the basis of economy among Mizos, the agricultural practices employed by the Mizos involve the utilization of shifting cultivation, whereby a specific parcel of land is allocated for cultivation for a single year. This particular set of practices is commonly referred to as *Lo neih* (Jhum) in academic discourse. Crops such as rice, maize, and ginger constitute the main cultivation; while beans, bitter gourd, pumpkin, okra, cucumber, aubergine, and mock tomato were also planted along the main cultivation.

The traditional practice of farming – *lo neih*, that involves shifting of cultivation land after one year to another has been heavily criticized on the ground that it degraded natural environment, decrease forest cover and also contributed to global warming. Keeping this in view, the State government also initiated many programs and policies focusing on ‘land use policies’ to put an end to shifting cultivation. With this, sustainability of forest cover could be achieved and was also in compatible with Sustainable Development Goals number 13 – Climate Action.

6. **Traditional Attires:** Mizos have several different types of attire, such as, ordinary or everyday dress, festive or occasional dress, and statutory dress, which was reserved for those of high rank such as chiefs and other esteemed individuals. The pre-colonial dress of the Lusei people was intricately woven by the Mizo community themselves.
  - i Ordinary or everyday dress consisted of a singular white homespun sheet, which was worn by all members of the community.
  - ii Festive and specific occasional dress included *Puanrin*, *Puanlaisen/Puanchei*, *Kawrchei*, *Pawndum*, and *Puanropui*. The act of donning these garments serves as a symbolic representation of the significance attributed to the specific occasion or festival within the cultural and societal context.

- iii Ceremonial and statutory attire refers to formal dresses worn on ceremonies and constitutes different attires such as *Thangchhuah Puan*, *Mangpuan*, *Puential*, and *Tawlhloh Puan*.

The Mizo community has a rich heritage of practicing sustainable lifestyles. They exhibit a profound respect for the natural world and display sensible utilization of its resources. This distinctive feature is seen in their traditional clothing, which is crafted using organic materials. Mizo traditional attire can contribute to sustainable development through the promotion of sustainable materials, thereby mitigating the environmental impact associated with the textile industry. The utilization of Mizo traditional dress can contribute to the economic development of the region by generating employment opportunities and boosting the local economy, as the production of Mizo traditional attire predominantly involves a manual weaving technique which is in relation to Sustainable Development Goals number 12 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.

7. **Festivals:** The Mizo community celebrates three distinct festivals, namely Chapchar Kut, Mim Kut, and Pawl Kut. *Chapchar Kut* can be regarded as the prominent cultural celebration observed by the Mizo community and it has been commemorated annually. *Mim Kut* was traditionally observed between the late August to early September period. The event was perceived as a commemorative celebration dedicated to deceased individuals. The event took place once the maize crops had reached full maturity. The *Pawl Kut* celebration was traditionally observed at the completion of the paddy harvesting season, typically occurring in late December. During this period, it was common for households to possess a substantial quantity of paddy, grains, and root crops. The *Pawl Kut* festival was primarily regarded as an event primarily designated for the participation of youngsters.

Mizo festivals constitute a significant occasion that showcases Mizo cultural practices and heritages. During festivals, people gathered on the occasion wearing traditional dresses, and programs were also structured in such a way to best manifest the cultural activities. This helped in preserving, promoting and protection of indigenous knowledge and practices.

8. **Dances:** Mizo tribe has a diverse range of traditional dances, Mizo festivals are considered incomplete in the absence of this aspect. Various kinds of dances were – *Cheraw, Tlang Lam, Chai Lam, Chheih Lam, Sarlamkai/Solakia, Chawnglaizawn, Khual Lam.*

Dances are also an important requisite of every cultural program. Mizos are proud of their distinct dancing styles that involved the use of *Khuang* and *Darbu* (Mizo musical instruments) that were unique, and they have multiple dances for different occasions. These dances play an important part in protecting and preserving Mizo traditional knowledge.

9. **Religious Beliefs:** Before the advent of Christianity, Mizos have developed a fascinating set of belief systems and eschatological perspectives which can be termed as ‘animism’. Mizos held the belief that locations such as expansive trees, caverns, bodies of water, rocky terrains, mountains, and similar environments served as abodes for diverse spiritual entities.

10. **Mizo Indigenous Rituals and Practices:** The term ‘*Inthawi*’ can be understood as the act of making sacrificial offerings with the intention of appeasing and propitiating supernatural entities. These offerings are made in the context of many purposes, such as the treatment of ailments, the prediction of unfavorable omens, and the engagement with the supernatural realm through negotiation, challenge, and capitulation. The sole authority responsible for this matter lies with the *bawlpw*. The two groups of priests, namely *sadawt* and *bawlpw*, will each possess unique ceremonial responsibilities that are delineated by the principles of *inthawi* and *sakhua*.

11. **Preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizo tribe through librarianship:** For this, questionnaire was responded by 50 individuals practicing Librarianships. Their views were taken into account to understand the preservation and management of indigenous knowledge of the Mizos.

- i. Respondents exerted their view on the role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK, majority (66%) of the respondents held that ‘developing specialized collections on indigenous knowledge’ was the primary role of Library in maintaining and safeguarding IK.

- ii. All respondents agreed that Library plays a vital role in preservation of IK, and Library also had to take action for its preservation. However, various views on the action for preservation of IK varied. Majority (40%) of respondents held that ‘Acquiring indigenous materials through purchase or donation’ was what Library ought to do.
- iii. The study revealed that limited funding and resources was the biggest challenge for Libraries in their attempt to preserve IK which was opted by 30% of the respondents and 20% of the respondents said the challenges in attempting to preserve IK was issues of resource management.
- iv. Different strategies to overcome challenges for Libraries in preservation of IK were proposed. 50% of the respondents held that ‘creating specialized collections or sections dedicated to indigenous knowledge within the library’ were a necessity for strategy in order to overcome those challenges.

**12. Examination of the level of awareness of indigenous knowledge among the Mizos:** For this objective, a total of 50 respondents were involved in the data collection. Questionnaire respondents vary as – government employees, civil society leaders, school teachers, engineers, journalists, photographers and so on.

- i. Over 66% were aware of the concept of Indigenous Knowledge, while the rest, i.e., 34% responded with ‘maybe’ meaning they were unsure about the concept.
- ii. 66% of respondents understand IK as ‘traditional knowledge systems passed down through generations’.
- iii. 80% responded that enhancing awareness on IK was crucial to preserve the cultural diversity and heritage.
- iv. Over 86% of responses alleged that IK contributed in ‘providing alternative solutions to environmental challenges’ to Sustainable Development.
- v. 92% of respondents held that individuals must respect and learn from indigenous cultures to enhance the awareness of IK.

- vi. 94% of the respondents were in favor of the argument that technology rendered in facilitating the documentation and sharing of indigenous knowledge.
- vii. Over 96% alleged that ‘preserving cultural heritage and fostering mutual respect’ was the outcome of enhancing awareness on IK.
- viii. Respondents expressed their view on the available reliable sources for enhancing awareness of IK to people, and 44 % of respondents held that indigenous knowledge holders were the key sources.

## **9. Suggestions**

Based on the outcomes of the study, it is recommended that certain relevant suggestions be taken into consideration.

1. Proper awareness should be given to the people especially in rural areas. They should be aware of the importance of keeping everything in records least they forget, such as the traditions and practices of Mizo.
2. Traditional knowledge is becoming vulnerable to forces of globalization; hence, indigenous identity, culture, heritage, language and livelihood must be protected.
3. It is imperative for the global community, both at the national and international levels, to acknowledge the significance of indigenous peoples and their knowledge as key collaborators in dealing with the issues of climate change, sustainable development, and the preservation of global biodiversity.
4. It is strongly recommended that academicians, policymakers, and planners to allocate increased attention to traditional knowledge that is currently at risk of extinction.
5. In order to move away from the traditional way of imparting knowledge to the continuing development of digital technology, it is necessary that we acquire information from local experts at the village level, who possess valuable indigenous wisdom.
6. Libraries, in partnership with local traditional knowledge holders, should undertake the task of gathering and preserving various aspects of

Indigenous Knowledge (IK) within their collections. These resources should be made accessible to users in both tangible and digital formats.

7. Sufficient funding should be made available and given to library in enhancing their collection on indigenous knowledge.
8. Proper training and more improved Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools should be made available for library professionals for archiving the available documents in indigenous knowledge in library.

### **10. Suggestions for Further Studies**

This research covers very vast and various indigenous practices and knowledges of Mizo tribe and has thoroughly explored almost all dimensions of its cultural life. However, there was certain areas worth of carrying out an in-depth and more insight study on each of these subject matter, such as,

1. **Agriculture and food systems:** Mizos have a wealth of knowledge about sustainable farming practices, crop varieties, and food preservation methods in their region. Studies could be conducted to document this knowledge and to assess its potential for contributing to food security and climate resilience.
2. **Traditional medicine:** When the medical world excelled in developing technologies and new innovations to better healthcare and medicines, yet traditional knowledge of Mizos also offered a great variety of traditional medicines to various illnesses, thus offering an alternative or possibly better organic medicines. Known generally as *Ramhmul damdawi*, this traditional knowledge on medicines served many purposes to contain epidemics and diseases.
3. **Role of indigenous women:** As far as preservation of indigenous knowledge of Mizos is concerned, special focus on the role of women in the transmission and preservation of the subject matter is also crucial. Women have been actively involved in many indigenous practices in the social, economic and religious practices. Thus, special focus on women on these areas would be of great value to obtain insightful knowledge.
4. **Education and social development:** As Mizos were communitarian in their way of societal administration, thus education on traditional education,

manners, social values and knowledge were transmitted greatly through social platforms and institutions like *Zawlbuk*. Through active participation in society, one learned the environment around them and this has shaped their outlook.

## **11. Chapterization**

The study comprises of the following chapters:

**Chapter 1:** This chapter contains an introduction to indigenous people, indigenous knowledge, and its significance as well as the study's overall introduction. It also includes the idea of sustainable development, which includes its dimensions, scope, basic characteristics, goals, principles and importance. Along with the sustainable development goals, the chapter discusses the link between indigenous knowledge and sustainable development, the idea of culture, knowledge management, documentation, and a description of the case study location. The study's significance and scope are also included, as well as a review of the relevant literature, a gap in the field's knowledge, and a research design that includes a description of the issue, study goals, a methodology, and references.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter contains the introduction of Indigenous Knowledge, the concept of knowledge management, definition of Indigenous Knowledge along with its definition, characteristics, scope and importance. It also highlights the importance and benefits of indigenous knowledge for the communities and local people; significance of and types of indigenous knowledge. In this chapter, the concept of indigenous knowledge management was point out with its steps involved in the management of indigenous knowledge, along with its benefits, and challenges. It further emphasize the importance of documenting and disseminating of indigenous knowledge, and how Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Library can take part in the management of indigenous knowledge



**Chapter 3:** This chapter contains the definition of cultural history, geographical presentation of selected area, sources of Mizo history, definition of Mizo tribe, explanation on different Mizo Customs such as Mizo Chiefs, Upa, Village Officials, Zawlbuk, Tlawmngaihna, Bawi and Construction of House. The Mizo Customary Law given by The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014 was also mentioned in this chapter under different acts such as Mizo Marriage Act, Dissolution of Divorce, Welfare Matters, Jurisdiction and Division of Property on Divorce.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of the study in accordance to the scope and objectives (No.1 and 2) of the study taken up. It elaborates and presented the cultural life of the Mizo people such as the patriarchal system in household, will and property inheritance given by The Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act, 2014, food habits, hunting and hnatlang (social service); agricultural practices, agricultural tools, the influence of agriculture on traditional organizational systems, traditional attire of the Mizo (Lushai) ethnic groups and festivals and dances as well as the religious practices of the Mizo tribe.

It also contains the data analysis and findings in reference to the objectives of the study (No. 3 and 4), which were presented in tables for better understanding.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter contains the conclusion and suggestions of the study.