

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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PHILOSOPHY**

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THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM**

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**In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy in Sociology of Mizoram University, Aizawl**



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Certificate

This is to certify that **Ms. Lalbiakzuali Colney**, a bonafide research scholar having enrolment No: MZU/Ph. D/1826 of 27.08.2021 attached to the Department of Sociology has completed his work for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in Sociology under my supervision and guidance on a research topic entitled '**Entrepreneurial Activity and Livelihood Options Through Floriculture: A Study in Mizoram**' for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, Mizoram University, Aizawl. The work embodies a record of original investigation and no part of it has been submitted for any other degree in other universities.

On evaluation of all the formalities, I am pleased to forward the thesis for evaluation and further necessary action.

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DECLARATION
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY
SEPTEMBER,2025

I **LALBIAKZUALI COLNEY**, 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 do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that this thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**.

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Dated:

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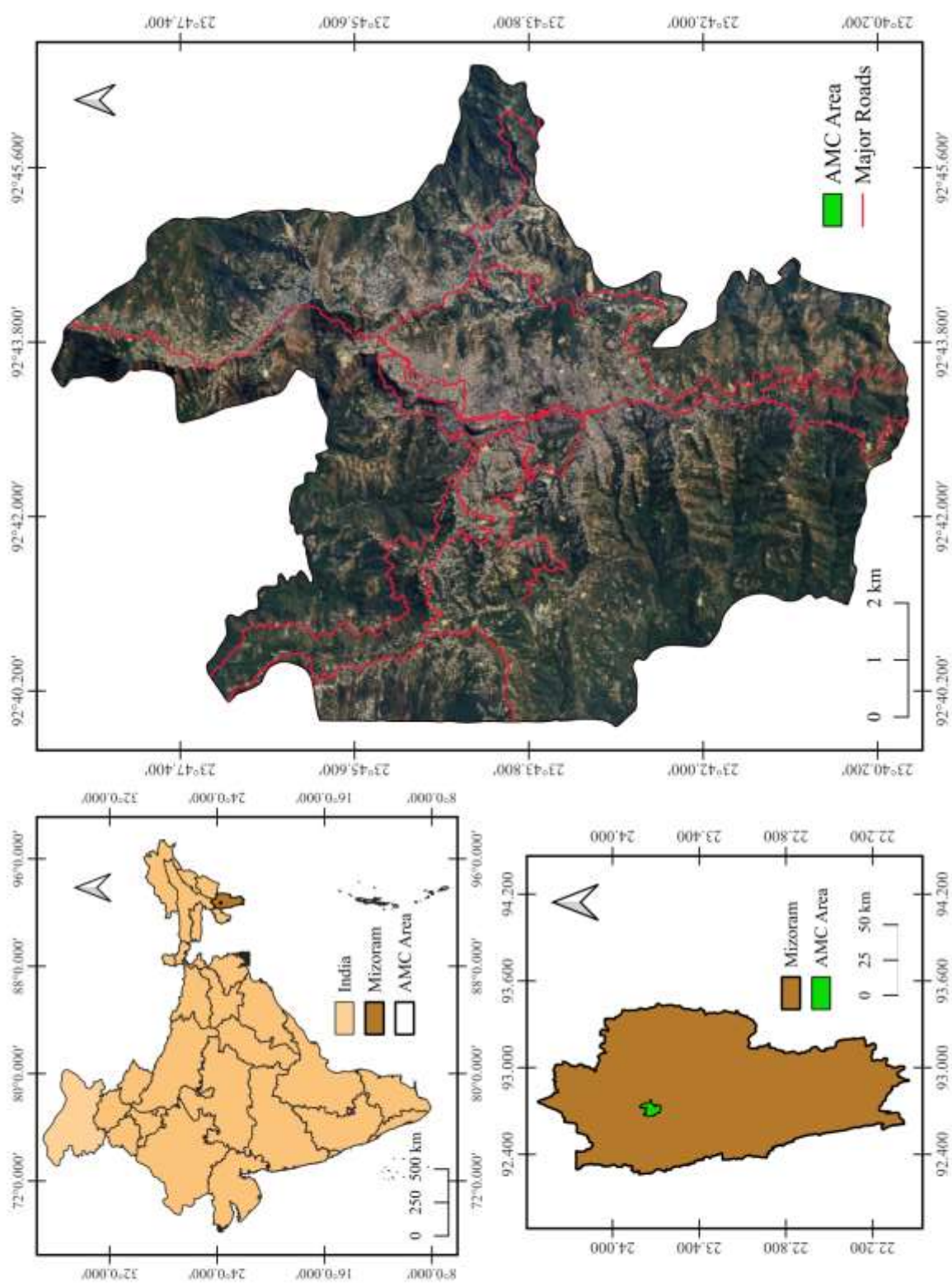
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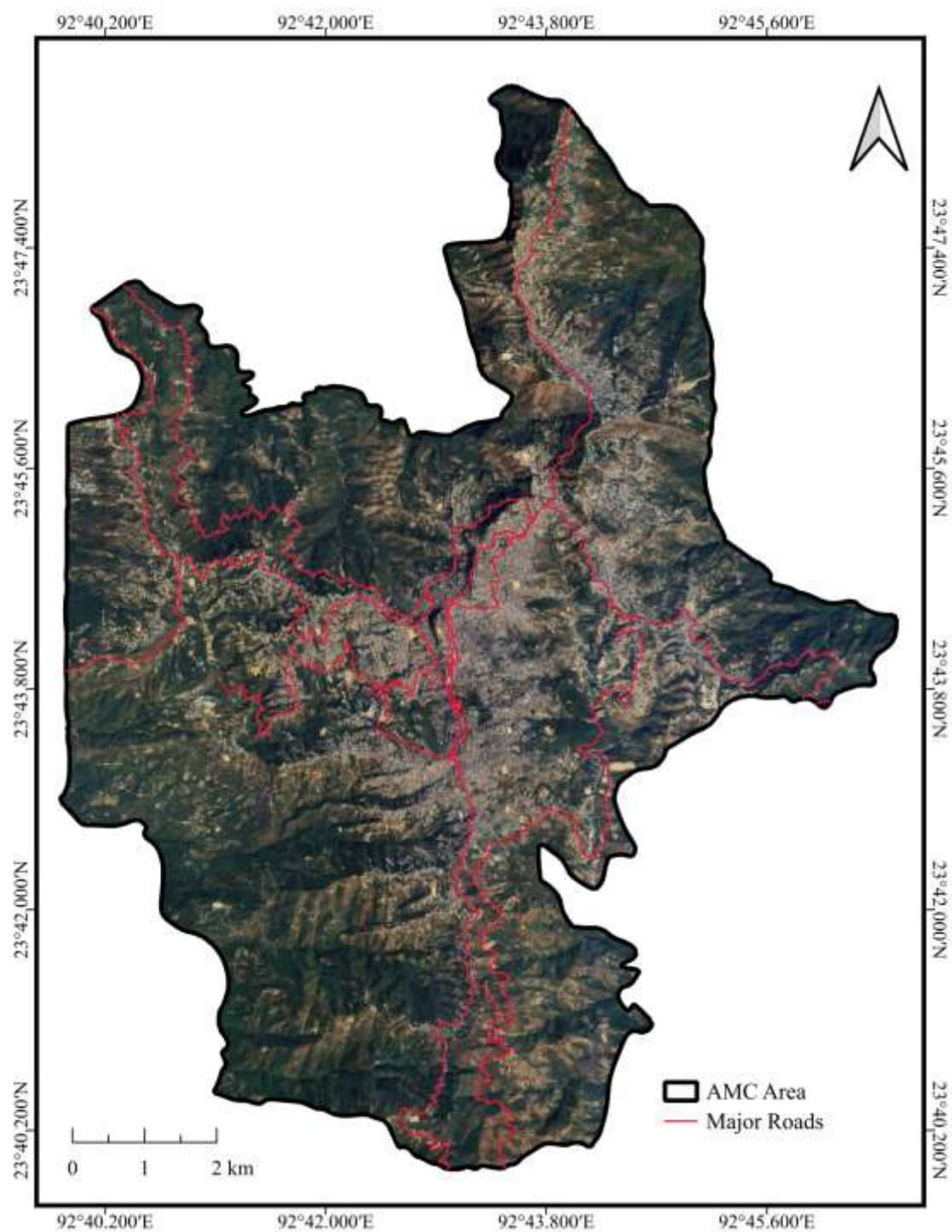
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BKHP	Baptist <i>Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl</i>
MFA	Mizoram Florist Association
PPZA	<i>Pangpar Zuar</i> Association
ZAGCS	Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society
MHIP	Mizo <i>Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl</i>
MIDH	Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture
NABARD	National Bank for agriculture and Rural Development
IIM	Indian Institute of Management





CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Global scenario of floriculture

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1.4 Floriculture in North East India

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Flowers have always occupied a prominent position in diverse cultures across the globe. They have consistently served as a symbol of love, beauty, and spirituality in both ancient rituals and contemporary festivities. These vivid and fragile natural creations have the ability to surpass linguistic obstacles and unite individuals from many cultures, therefore rendering them a crucial factor in fostering societal unity (<https://fastercapital.com/content/Flowerbond->). Flowers, with their diverse array of colors and shapes, have always served as a universal means of communication that surpasses geographical and cultural boundaries. These elements of nature provide more than simply visual beauty; they are intricately connected with the structure of communities, holding significant symbolic meaning and serving vital roles in rituals and ceremonies in the society.

Throughout history, temples and pavilions have traditionally been accompanied by parks or green spaces. The renowned Babylonian gardens, in particular, were regarded as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Subsequently, affluent Romans established gardens in the vicinity of their residences, cultivating flowers for internal adornment. Ancient Islamic civilizations held nature in respect. Trees and flowers possess religious or symbolic significance. During the Christian era, roses were spread in churches as a way to honor and remember the Holy Spirit's gift. The white lily, scientifically served as the emblem representing the Virgin Mary (Volckaert & Gobin, 2022: 2-3).

Floriculture is a highly promising sector within the field of horticulture. It holds significance from aesthetic, social, and economic perspectives. It possesses the capacity to create year-round opportunities for employment and income. Engaging in flower planting in the vicinity of residential areas is a significant aspect of the floriculture industry. This branch of horticultural activity possesses aesthetic significance and is increasingly essential for the purpose of air purification and the creation of pollution-free environments in urban and residential regions.

The production of flowers is becoming increasingly important from social, economic and aesthetic points of view. Flowers represent beauty, strength and purity and its aesthetic value attracts people, it is impossible to overstate the aesthetic worth of flowers in our daily lives. Flowers have always been a crucial component of the social fabric of human life because their essence and scent are required for all social, cultural, and religious purposes in any culture from time immemorial. Cultivation of flowers though of recent origin is increasingly developing because people's aesthetic sense is fast growing with urbanization and improved living standard (McDonald & Kwong, 2005: 375).

Floriculture, also known as flower farming, is the field of study that focuses on the cultivation and commercialization of flowers and foliage plants. It is the cultivation of flowering and attractive plants for the purpose of selling them directly or using them as raw materials in the cosmetic, perfume, and pharmaceutical industries. Additionally, it encompasses the generation of planting materials through seeds, cuttings, budding, and grafting. Floriculture can be defined as the cultivation of flowers with the aim of achieving optimal growth and quality.

Floriculture, as a part of horticulture, is becoming a fast-growing industry as a result of urbanisation, rising living standards, and people's growing aesthetic sense, which has paved the way for increased demand for flowers and flower products, making it one of agriculture's most important commercial trades. Floricultural activity is prevalent worldwide and is gaining economic significance in numerous countries. The commerce of cut flowers or flowering plants and their derivatives, such as potted plants, foliage, and bedding plants, significantly contributes to the economies of many countries worldwide. Floriculture is a significant domain that focuses on the cultivation of flowering and attractive plants. These plants are cultivated either for direct utilization or as raw materials in the cosmetics, perfume, and pharmaceutical industries.

Individuals worldwide acknowledge that flowers significantly improve the overall quality of life and exert a greater impact on human emotions compared to verbal expressions or other presents. The global phenomenon of globalization, cultural

interactions, and communal festivities, such as New Year, Valentine's Day, Memorial Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Christmas, and weddings, have prompted individuals worldwide to utilize flowers as a medium for expressing their emotions. Most importantly, these celebrations are often associated with specific flowers, such as roses for Valentine's Day and carnations for Mother's Day. The growing demand for flowers and decorative plants has created a profitable market for flower marketing (Belwal, 2008:217).

1.2 Global scenario of floriculture

Floriculture is a significant industry in global plant production. The significance of flowers and indoor plants is heightened in developed countries, where the high quality of living motivates individuals to willingly purchase them. However, the situation contrasts in emerging nations. In Egypt, there is a growing trend in tourism and a rising demand for landscape ornamentals, cut flowers, and potted plants, both for outdoor and indoor use. The scenario is same in Greece, southern Turkey, Morocco, and Tunisia (Eleni & Dimitra, p.10).

Globally, floriculture has evolved into an export-oriented agroindustry that is rapidly developing. The Netherlands is the world's greatest flower producer, with Germany being the largest flower importer. Flowers are imported in great quantities by countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, and Japan. Colombia, Israel, and Spain major flower exporters, whereas Kenya, the United States, and Japan are the top flower consumers (Adebayo, Pam, Arsad, et al., 2020:1).

The floriculture industry in the Netherlands is renowned for its exceptional quality and acts as a central commercial base for Europe. The sector has a significant influence on the Dutch economy, as it is the largest exporter of fresh products in Europe. The Netherlands is considered the hub of the global floriculture sector, with a comprehensive and excellent network of businesses that cover all aspects of the industry, including plant breeding, production, sales, and export (van der Vorst et al., 2012:241).

The consumption of floricultural goods in Europe has increased over time. Increased rise in income and prosperity have resulted in greater demand for decorative plants in

these countries. European countries are significant producers and consumers of decorative things. Product diversity, production infrastructure, and production areas characterise European floricultural output (Van Huylenbroeck, 2010:369-370). In Europe, there is a considerable demand for floricultural products, which is fuelled by urbanisation and affluence. Sri Lanka is progressively gaining international recognition for producing some of the world's top floriculture products. The phenomenon of globalization is expected to significantly influence the production and distribution of horticultural and floricultural products worldwide. Observations on changes in production areas and markets for cut flowers and floricultural products have been made in recent decades. Currently, plants are cultivated in locations that offer the most advantageous mix of climatic conditions and labor costs (*Ibid*: 374).

Urbanization and wealth have led to a significant demand for floricultural goods in several European countries. The Netherlands have a significant influence on both floricultural production and flower trading. The main issues that growers will face in the near future include increased competition in the international market, shifts in consumer demand, changes in trade and markets, and the rising prices of energy and other resources (*Ibid*: 376).

Floriculture has advanced both in terms of scientific knowledge and commercial success as a result of the focused endeavors of floriculture scientists. Floriculture is a rapidly growing and fiercely competitive industry. Currently, commercial floriculture is the most lucrative industry worldwide. The application of scientific procedures in flower growing has significantly contributed to the expansion of this business in different regions of the world. The floriculture industry is experiencing significant growth worldwide, especially in India (Datta, 2019:71).

Due to the necessity of generating large volumes of excellent blooms throughout the year while minimizing labor and production expenses, certain floriculture production has relocated to countries in the Southern Hemisphere. The global output of floriculture products is projected to increase, particularly in emerging producing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Furthermore, the productivity in these countries is anticipated to rise even further. The Netherlands, Japan, and the US, who

are traditional major producers, are still at the forefront of global production. These countries are focused on increasing productivity per worker and per unit area. The total area dedicated to production in these three countries is expected to remain unchanged or slightly decrease. The production of cut flowers, which requires a significant amount of labor, tends to be concentrated in regions with lower labor and production expenses (Xia et al. 2006: 337). The floriculture business undergoes tremendous changes due to globalization. A few years ago, the international commerce of floriculture goods was limited to national borders. Currently, the world has transformed into a global community, with borders becoming less significant and the global market expanding as a result of an enhanced and effective air transportation system (Kargbo et.al. 2010: 7406).

The global demand for flowers and decorative plants is highly unpredictable, as it is influenced by changing trends and a constant pursuit of new varieties. In order to adapt, producers strive to stay current and continuously gather knowledge on fashion trends, consumer behavior, and the introduction of new species, hybrids, and variants. At the floral market, products degrade rapidly and deteriorate, particularly due to the emergence and spread of stigmas such as "out of fashion," "funeral ceremony products," and "rustics," among others. In light of this, the ornamental plant genetics sector has been actively involved in introducing new goods or rebranding existing products with new names and concepts. Globally, the ornamental horticulture industry is consistently and enduringly challenged to produce products of increasingly superior quality, using sustainable methods, while also reducing prices for end consumers (Junqueira & Peetz, 2018:160).

Flowers possess a substantial cultural and emotional significance and serve an essential function in several social and religious rituals. Weddings, religious ceremonies, funerals, and festivals all necessitate the presence of flowers as integral components in décor and offerings. Furthermore, in the realm of business, there is a growing inclination towards using flowers to augment the atmosphere of gatherings, hotels, and public areas, hence establishing visually captivating and inviting surroundings. With the increase in disposable incomes and the expansion of urbanisation, individuals are becoming more inclined to invest funds towards

enhancing the memorability of their important occasions through the use of sophisticated flower arrangements. As a result, the floriculture industry is seeing an increasing need for a variety of cut flowers, potted plants, and floral accessories, which is causing significant expansion in production and trade (Devrani et al., 2023: 210).

An essential part of the world economy is the production and trade of flowers. In addition to providing substantial income through domestic and international trade, the floriculture sector supports millions of employments globally. On their own, flowers constitute an essential component of the economy. For instance, flower markets are a major feature in many European nations such as the Netherlands. There is a business aspect to flowers in India as well. In addition to their aesthetic value, many people rely on the flowers for their employment whether it be direct or indirect. The final consumers mark the end of the chain, which starts with the people who grow the flowers. Typically, the primary outlets are the florists. There are also decorators, vendors outside of houses of worship and cemeteries frequently seen in countries like India.

1.3 Floriculture in the Indian context

India has a rich history of floriculture dating back to ancient times. Ancient Sanskrit literature, such as the Rig Veda and Ramayana, contains references to flowers and gardens dating back to 3000-2000 BC. The act of presenting and exchanging flowers during social events, in religious settings, and their utilisation as embellishments for women's hair and home decor have been an intrinsic aspect of human existence since ancient periods. While flowers have always held significance in Indian culture and were grown for many purposes including art, social events, and religious ceremonies, the commercial floriculture industry is a relatively new development.

India, not lagging far behind the European countries has a long history of floriculture, which is currently establishing itself as a significant commercial crop sector. Cut flower trade, seed and bulb production, nursery plants, potted flowering plants and foliage, micro propagation, and essential oil extraction from flowers are all part of this business. Throughout the year, India has several agro-climatic zones

that are suitable to the development of delicate and sensitive floriculture goods. The Indian floriculture sector is distinguished by the cultivation of traditional and cut flowers in open fields and protected environments (Leah & Sharma, 2018:326). The Indian government has acknowledged floriculture as a thriving business and given it 100% export-oriented status (APEDA, 2017).

Commercial floriculture has better potential per unit area than other agricultural crops, according to Wani et al. (2016b) (cited in Wani, Nazki, Din, et al. 2018: 92), and is thus expanding as a profitable industry in India. Many countries' economies benefit considerably from the trade of cut flowers, blooming plants, and related products, such as potted plants, foliage, and bedding plants.

From a geographical and historical standpoint, the use of flowers is extremely diverse (McDonald and Kwong, 2005: 375). Floriculture has emerged as a crucial economic activity in the field of agriculture during the era of globalization. It has become a feasible and lucrative option, with the potential to promote profitable self-employment among small and marginalized farmers, hence increasing the income of developing countries like India (Ghimiray, 2015: 4).

The Indian government has recognized the floriculture industry as a rapidly expanding sector that is primarily focused on exporting goods. The floriculture trade has become a significant commercial industry in both horticulture and agriculture due to the ongoing rise in demand for flowers. Floriculture in India is seen as a rapidly expanding industry, with commercial floriculture gaining significance in terms of exports (Harisha, 2017: 9).

Due to a consistent rise in demand, floriculture has emerged as a significant commercial sector in the field of agriculture. Floriculture in India is regarded as a rapidly expanding industry. The export aspect of commercial floriculture is gaining significance. The relaxation of industrial and trade policies facilitated the growth of export-focused production of cut flowers. The Indian floriculture sector has been transitioning from the cultivation of traditional flowers to the production of cut flowers specifically for the purpose of exporting. The liberalized economy has provided a boost to Indian entrepreneurs in creating floriculture operations that focus

on exporting flowers, while maintaining controlled climatic conditions. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is the organization in charge of promoting and developing the export of floriculture products in India (Ninama et al., 2016: 1150).

Due to the present surge in demand for flowers and related goods, the flower market is currently highly lucrative. India's floriculture exports are primarily comprised of fresh and dried cut flowers. Karnataka is first among states in terms of production, with a total of 253.24 thousand tons. Kerala is the top region in terms of area for floriculture, with approximately 53.26 thousand hectares dedicated to cultivating flowers. Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are also significant states for flower cultivation in the southern region, while West Bengal is prominent in the eastern region. Maharashtra plays a significant role in the western region, and Rajasthan, Delhi, and Haryana are key contributors in the northern region (Devrani et al., 2023:199).

According to the National Horticulture Database released by the National Horticulture Board, in the year 2023-24, the total area used for floriculture production in India was 285 thousand hectares. This resulted in an output of 2284 thousand tonnes of loose flowers and 947 thousand tonnes of cut flowers (Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfares, 2nd Advance estimates, 2023-24). Commercial cultivation of floriculture is currently practiced in many states, with Tamil Nadu leading at 21%, followed by Karnataka at 16%, Madhya Pradesh at 14%, and West Bengal at 12%. These states have surpassed other producing states such as Mizoram, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Haryana, Assam, and Chhattisgarh. Cultivation is carried out in both open agricultural circumstances and advanced poly and greenhouses. India's floriculture exports amounted to Rs. 717.83 Crores/ USD 86.63 Million in the fiscal year 2023-24. The primary importing nations included the United States of America, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Canada, Malaysia and Singapore. India has about 300 export-oriented units. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu collectively host over 50% of the floriculture units. Through technical collaborations with foreign

enterprises, the Indian floriculture industry is positioned to expand its presence in global trade (APEDA, 2023-24).

Floriculture in India is emerging as an important commercial crop sector. The industry comprises of flower trade, seed and bulb production, nursery plants, potted flowers and foliage, micro propagation and extraction of essential oils from flowers. India is bestowed with several agro-climatic zones conducive for production of sensitive and delicate floriculture products throughout the year. Indian floriculture industry is characterized by growing traditional and cut flowers under open field conditions and protected environment condition respectively (Leah & Sharma, 2018:326). The states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu account for almost 77.00 percent of the floriculture units. Through technical collaborations with international enterprises, the Indian floriculture industry is positioned to expand its portion of global trade. Due to urbanization and higher disposable income, there has been a substantial rise in the market for floriculture products. This has led to an increased demand for cut flowers such as rose, gladiolus, carnation, gerbera, orchid, liliun, and others (*Ibid*: 326).

The marketing of cut flowers in India is highly disorganized. Wholesale markets in most Indian cities predominantly function in open yards, where flowers are commonly presented. From this point, the flowers are transferred to the nearby retail establishments, which often operate outdoors along the roadside, displaying various blooms in big containers. Metropolitan cities have floral showrooms that maintain controlled temperature settings to preserve the quality of flowers. These showrooms also provide value-added services. The government is currently allocating funds towards the establishment of auction platforms and well-equipped florist shops to enhance storage capabilities and extend the shelf life of flowers.

Floriculture is a longstanding agricultural practice with a rich history in India as a form of horticulture. This sector has become increasingly significant due to its substantial potential for creating profitable self-employment opportunities for small and marginalized farmers. The commercial activity in India has been profitable mostly because of its ability to meet the aesthetic demands of people, generate higher

returns for farmers, and facilitate foreign exchange in the worldwide market. The process of urbanization enhances people's quality of life and fosters the development of environmental consciousness among individuals, encouraging them to live in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner. Floriculture products are widely utilized as primary ingredients in the production of essences, perfumes, medications, and confectioneries that are directly consumed by society. Consequently, there has been a surge in the demand for floriculture products in a developing nation such as India.

The significant increase in the demand for cut and loose flowers has entirely revolutionized the floriculture industry, making it one of the essential sectors in Indian agriculture. Currently, the metropolitan areas and the more affluent cities in India are the main consumers of flowers in the country. Due to the growing urbanization and the impact of Western cultures, the practice of expressing emotions through the giving of flowers has become extremely common on various occasions, including Valentine's Day, birthdays, festivals, anniversaries, marriages, farewell parties, and religious rites. The consumption of flowers is projected to increase due to the trends of urbanization and the influence of western culture in the next years (Sharma, 2020:61).

Flowers have been associated with humanity from ancient times. In India, these objects are utilized for religious rituals and significant social occasions such as weddings and birthdays. They possess both social and commercial importance, as they generate revenue and are utilized as adornments in social gatherings and significant events. In India, bouquets and floral ornaments hold significant social value as both gifts and decorative accessories. The aesthetic significance of flowers in our everyday existence is immeasurable as they represent purity, beauty, tranquility, love, and ardor. Flowers are an essential component of any social gathering in India (Randhawa & Mukhopadhyay, 1986:6).

India possesses a diverse and abundant legacy of decorative horticulture. There are countless references to flowers in mythology and puranas, highlighting their significance. It is clear from ancient literature that Indian flowers have been intertwined with social customs for a very long time and have been utilized for

various purposes, such as offerings to deities, decorative accessories for women, embellishments for auspicious rituals, and ingredients for making perfumes. In recent times, floriculture has experienced a surge in popularity as a commercial crop with significant prospects for export (Datta, 2019: 72).

The demand for flowers is subject to seasonal fluctuations, as is the case in the majority of countries. The demand for flowers consists of two components: a constant component and a seasonal component. The elements that impact the demand for traditional and modern flowers vary to some degree. The consistent need for traditional flowers arises from their utilisation in religious ceremonies, home decorating, and the creation of garlands and wreaths. The demand for flowers for these uses is especially high in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, and West Bengal, as the utilisation of flowers for these purposes is deeply ingrained in their local culture. The majority of seasonal demand is driven by festivals and weddings. Typically, there is a preference for particular kind of flowers.

In India, flowers hold both cultural and religious significance. The Lotus, revered as sacred, holds a significant position in the ancient Indian mythology and serves as a distinctive emblem of Indian culture. It is also recognized as the national flower of India. Flowers function as a representation of elegance, power, and innocence. The visual appeal of scented flowers is so captivating that Indian ladies adorn their hair with them to enhance their beauty. They are utilized throughout various religious celebrations and wedding parties. Flowers are regularly presented as birthday gifts, wedding presents, and are now frequently utilized as a gesture of goodwill when visiting loved ones in hospitals. Flowers are commonly utilized at funerals in various Indian cultures as a means of expressing sympathy, grief, and respect, serving as a symbol of condolence for the deceased.

The prevalence of loose flower productions in India may be attributed to women's aesthetic inclination towards adorning their hair. Loose flowers are individual blossoms that have not been organised into bouquets or floral arrangements. These flowers are usually offered in large quantities, either by weight or in groups, and they provide a wide range of choices, including both common and rare types that are only

available during certain seasons. They offer unparalleled flexibility, allowing clients to design their own distinctive arrangements according to their individual preferences and special events. Consumers who desire a more personalised touch in their floral arrangements are attracted to this versatility, which enables them to combine various types, colours, and sizes of flowers according to their creative vision. Furthermore, florists and event planners choose them since they simplify the design process for large-scale events and weddings (Devrani et al., 2023:211).

1.4 Floriculture in North East India

Floriculture as a commercial industry is still in its infancy in India's North East. Despite the fact that the region's meteorological and geographical conditions and its rich biodiversity, are ideal for flower cultivation, there are only a few established commercial floriculture businesses within the area. The region currently lacks the infrastructure required for commercial floriculture to thrive.

The North-Eastern and Himalayan States focuses on promoting commercial floriculture due to its rich biodiversity and favorable agro-climatic conditions, which are appropriate for cultivating a wide range of flowers. The Horticulture Mission for North-East and Himalayan states (HMNEH) was launched in 2001-02 with the aim of fostering the growth and cultivation of horticultural crops, particularly flowers, in the region where they have a distinct advantage. This horticulture mission encompasses the eight North-Eastern states, namely Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura, as well as the Himalayan states, namely Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttarakhand. The Indian Government has introduced advanced technologies and high-quality inputs, such as planting materials, greenhouses, drip irrigation systems, feeds, and fertilizers, to produce flowers of international standard for export in

the global flower market (Pusa, 2017:5).

The North-Eastern region possesses abundant natural resources that need to be converted into economic prosperity through the promotion of entrepreneurship. Floriculture is a labor-intensive economic activity that creates significant employment opportunities. Therefore, Floriculture has the potential to provide

employment opportunities for women empowerment, unemployed educated youth, the development of marginalized parts of society (SC/ ST, women), and poverty alleviation initiatives. The Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture, a centrally sponsored scheme, has successfully facilitated the establishment of large Anthurium plantations in Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh in the North-Eastern states, including Sikkim. This achievement was made possible through a 50 percent subsidy in kind for planting material and the provision of production units with buy-back arrangements under contract farming (Chittibomma, 2023: 1341-1342).

The rapid urbanization, rise in per capita incomes, shift in lifestyles, advancements in information technology, and flourishing corporate sector are the factors responsible for the quick expansion of floriculture. The increasing popularity of flowers in the corporate and information technology sectors, as well as their use in elections and as presents serves as a strong indicator of their future growth and development. By implementing appropriate policies, government departments have the potential to transform the socio-economic landscape of some villages in Assam, as well as the entire north eastern region of India, through the development of the floriculture industry.

1.5 Floriculture in Mizoram

Mizoram, previously known as the Lushai Hills or Mizo Hills is situated in the northeastern region of India. The capital city is Aizawl. Located between Bangladesh and Myanmar, it holds significant strategic importance both geographically and politically. It has a shared international border of 585 km with these two nations. The state is adjacent to Tripura on its northwest, Assam on its north, and Manipur on its northeast. Mizoram's overall area is 21,087 square kilometres, making it the 24th largest state in India. Mizoram is situated within the 21° 56`N - 24° 31` N latitudes and the longitudes of 92° 16` E - 93° 26`E. In terms of size, Mizoram's total area comprise of only 0.64% of the total area of the country (Pachau, 2009: 1). The total population of the state in 2011 census is 1,097,206 with 5,55,339 males and 5,41,867 females. The population comprise of 52.11% as urban population and 47.89% as

rural population. The density of population is 52 persons per square Km. It is the second least populous state in the country. The sex ratio stands at 976 females per 1000 males. The literacy rate as per 2011 census is 91.33% and is currently ranked third in the country (Statistical Handbook Mizoram 2022: 1-3). The state has 94.46% of tribal population.

The arrival of Christian missionaries in Mizoram in 1894 brought about significant changes in terms of religion, culture, and way of life. The missionaries disseminated education and Christian principles, hence facilitating the advent of modernity in Mizoram. Christianity facilitated the overall adaptability of people into Western society. The impact of this on the socio-economic activity of the people is likewise important. The Mizo culture is cohesive, with individuals actively engaging in social and religious events, disregarding social hierarchies (Pachau 2009:8).

In Mizo society, a patriarchal system is followed, where family ancestry is traced through the paternal side. According to the inheritance norm, the youngest son is designated as the heir to his father's property. Young females adopt distinct roles at an early age, participating in activities that equip them for maturity. Throughout history, women have been perceived as having less worth compared to men. Culture exerts a substantial influence on the status of women in society. The society's patriarchal nature resulted in the clear manifestation of male domination and the submissive status of women. The influence of patriarchy on family relations was significant. The father exerted dominion and control over his wife and children. Mizo society in the past demonstrated a notable segregation of work based on gender. Men abstained from engaging in domestic tasks, perceiving them as exclusively women's obligations (Malsawmdawngliana & Lalsangpuii, 2024: 127-129).

Similar to other indigenous women, Mizo women are resilient and diligent, often performing more tasks than their male counterparts. Women in Mizo society have consistently had a powerful and influential presence. Their entrepreneurial spirit and firm determination have enabled them to transcend the influence of their previous circumstances. The combination of economic need, a high cost of living, and a desire for improved standards of living and more amenities has resulted in an increasing

number of women seeking jobs to augment their family income (Chuaungo, 2009:76).

Floriculture was started by interested women and is still the domain of women, though men too are slowly drawn to this entrepreneurial activity. Floriculture activity flourished in Mizoram from its nascent stage with the coming up of the Mizoram Florists' Association, founded on 16th November 1997 in Aizawl with the motto 'Blooming Mizoram with Flowers'. It has 27 branches now in other districts like Lunglei, Champhai, Saiha, Kolasib, Khawzawl and Serchhip. From then onwards, more and more people have taken up flower and ornamental plants cultivation for their aesthetic appeal and value not only as a hobby but as a family business generating income through their propagations and importing new varieties of foliage, indoor plants, flowering plants and perennials to meet the demands of local consumers. In Mizoram, flowering plants and potted plants are home grown on roof tops, terraces and in available spaces around residences.

The Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram introduced the first commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers in 2002 under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India. Anthurium was then initially cultivated by 24 farmers in 2002, where the Horticulture Department provided the necessary inputs, such as planting materials, shade nets, cocopeat, garden tools and so on free of cost to the farmers. The initial Anthurium cultivators experienced encouraging results. The implementation of the Technology Mission by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram is leading to significant growth in the cultivation of commercial floriculture. This is positively impacting the income and livelihood of the growers, thus contributing to the economic development of Mizoram.

The production of Anthurium has not only transformed the horticulture industry in Mizoram, but has also significantly improved the living conditions of the growers. It offers jobs and consistent revenue to the cultivators and other untrained labourers. The Anthurium cultivators in Mizoram cultivate the flower either in a shade house or in a hi-tech facility, depending on their financial circumstances. Despite the higher

initial investment required, the quality of flowers cultivated in a Hi-tech facility is significantly superior than those grown in a conventional shade house (Singh & Punitha, 2012:75).

Gender significantly influences the progress of entrepreneurship in Mizoram, particularly in the context of Anthurium production. Remarkably, all of the Anthurium growers in Mizoram are females. The findings indicate that young female farmers are more inclined to begin entrepreneurial development activities in comparison to older farmers (*Ibid* :78).

This initiative in Anthurium cultivation has created significant opportunities for the expansion of commercial floriculture. As a result, the income and livelihood status of growers have improved, leading to the overall economic development of Mizoram. There is a high demand for flowers in the state for different events such as special occasions, church events, functions, funerals, gifts, weddings, and home arrangements. The cultivation of Anthurium in Mizoram has not only revolutionized the horticulture industry but also significantly improved the living conditions of the producers. Additionally, it has created employment opportunities and a stable source of income for both the growers and unskilled laborers (Lalbiakthangi, 2020: 161-162).

There is a significant demand for flowers in the state of Mizoram for various purposes such as special occasions, churches, functions, funerals, weddings, and home arrangements. Products of slightly lower quality of Anthurium flowers, which are not suitable for export, are used to meet local demands. Meanwhile, the highest quality cut flowers are transported to major cities. A substantial quantity of Anthurium cut flowers has been cultivated and shipped out from Mizoram. As the demand for cut flowers in India grows, more and more Anthurium varieties are being transported from Mizoram (Lalnunmawia & Khawlhing, 2011: 204).

The Anthurium Festival, organised by the Tourism Department, Government of Mizoram is the most renowned celebration in Mizoram and serves as a very effective initiative to promote tourism and Anthurium flowers. The annual two-day festival is held at the Tourist Resort Reiek, situated in the charming village of Reiek, which is

approximately an hour's drive from the state capital, Aizawl. The Tourism Department, in collaboration with the Horticulture Department, initiated the Anthurium Festival in 2006 with the aim of acknowledging and promoting this endeavour of anthurium cultivation. The Anthurium Festival in Mizoram is usually graced by the Chief Minister of the state. Its purpose is to promote farmers, flowers, and horticulture in the region. The festival too showcases the rich and rhythmic cultural dances and games of Mizoram.

The Anthurium Festival originated from the extensive cultivation of Anthurium flowers by women of the Mizo community. The popularity of Anthurium flowers is largely attributed to the diligent efforts of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram. The festival aims to empower housewives by providing them with the means to achieve financial independence. As a result, this endeavour quickly gained popularity and finally paved the way for their entry into the export industry. The cut flowers are exported domestically and internationally.

Floristry encompasses the art of creating and arranging bouquets, as well as designing floral decorations for various settings such as stage shows, mandaps, cars, and banquet halls. These skills are utilised for a wide range of occasions, including weddings, celebrations, and other events. This is a highly lucrative flower-based business that yields substantial profits in a relatively short period of time.

1.5.1 Emergence of florists' associations in Mizoram

The development of floriculture is a relatively new phenomenon in Mizoram. Floriculture started to gain popularity as a side business in the middle of the 1980s among Mizo women who loved collecting different varieties of flowers and growing them around their residences. Interest and love towards the native flowers existed even during the traditional Mizo society, because mothers coming home from jhum fields after a hard day's work often brought home marigold, zinnias, vinca flowers and arrange them in whatever container they had in their residences (10th MFA Anniversary Souvenir, 2007: 51).

With the increasing aesthetic interest in flowers and its cultivation, flowers gained significance in the socio-cultural life of the people, so much so that the need for

association to further their interest and goals was felt. As floriculturists increased in number in the 1990s in Mizoram, two associations existed side by side namely Pangpar Ching Association founded in 1994 in the southern part of Aizawl city, and Mizoram Floriculturists Association in 1995 in the northern part of the city. On 14th November 1997, as advised by the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram to amalgamate into one group, a joint meeting was held at Horticulture Conference Hall and a new association named Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA) with a motto "Mizoram pangpara tihvul" (Blooming Mizoram with flowers) was formed. The MFA headquarters has 500 members, with Rs 100 as membership fee and Rs 50 as annual fee. The annual fee has to be given annually to be a member continuously.

The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) was born on 14th November 1997 with these objectives:

- a) Production of flowers by propagating and germinating as much as possible in Mizoram
- b) To work toward the advancement of floriculturists
- c) Marketing of flowers and development of floriculture business
- d) To inculcate and instill cooperative spirit amongst floriculturists
- e) To help the needy by encouraging them to take up floriculture
- f) To assist and cooperate with the Government in their steps toward developing floriculture business
- g) To uphold honesty and reliability in floriculture related activities
- h) Not to import flowers and plants from outside except those flower plants which are impossible to be propagated in Mizoram (MFA Silver Jubilee Souvenir, 2022: 2).

The Association was officially registered on October 13, 1998, in accordance with The Mizoram Society Registration Act (Act 3 of 1997). The registration number is SR-10/97/MZ-RFS of 1997. The MFA Headquarters and its branches are included in the registration. Members of the executive committee and elected officials keep their posts for two years. MFA Headquarters currently has 9 office bearers and 83 members as executive committee. MFA has 27 branches in Mizoram at present.

The association has published six books, two as commemoration of its 10th and 25th anniversaries and these mementos include contributions on a number of flower-related topics, two books named *The Florists* which contains articles and different writings on flower cultivation and two manuals on flower arranging called "*The Florists- Pangpar Khawi Bu*" with visual pictures. These publications have been significant in assisting beginners and inexperienced floriculture entrepreneurs. The functional aspects of MFA are manifested along these lines which have promoted flower cultivation increasingly.

Another florist association called *Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA)* was formed in 2017 functioning within the capital city Aizawl. The Association currently has 180 members as per 2020 enrollment and is not yet registered. The association has 7 office bearers and 20 executive committee members, with 'uplifting floriculture entrepreneurs' as their motto. The association too has devised its own rules and regulations. The PPZA does not have branches outside Aizawl city. PPZA's main objective is to generate income through sales of floriculture goods procured from other states and other countries and relies on the florist fairs organized by the association three to four times annually.

Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) was formed by Anthurium plant growers in 2002 with 80 active members (as per 2020 enrollment) currently in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The society is registered under Mizoram Co-operative Society. Unlike the other associations, members of ZAGCS export their products to other states, export rejected products are vended in local markets. ZAGCS organizes Anthurium fair once annually which serves as the platform for members to exhibit their potted anthurium plants and anthurium foliage. ZAGCS members participate in the Anthurium festival organized by the Tourism Department, Government of Mizoram, an opportunity to showcase their products and generate income.

1.6 Social significance of flowers and floriculture

Throughout history, flowers have been largely grown for their visual attractiveness and social functions, as well as for extracting essential oils and manufacturing

perfumes. Flowers have always been an essential part of human society, serving a vital function in social, cultural, and religious occasions throughout history because of their intrinsic essence and fragrance. Flowers hold significant importance in numerous cultural traditions worldwide. The use of flowers has long been a common practice, representing love, beauty, and spirituality in both traditional rituals and modern occasions. Flowers serve as both artistic offerings from nature and integral components of society, bearing profound symbolic significance and fulfilling crucial functions in ceremonies and customs. For thousands of years, flowers have been a part of human civilization because people have appreciated their beauty, scent, and symbolic meaning. Flowers have long been used to mark important occasions and convey feelings.

Flowers are symbolic objects for portrayal of cultural beauty. They are symbolic items which expresses something far more than they are the reproductive organs of flowering plants or angiosperms. They are also symbolic objects as presentation of self or extension of sentiments. Flowers hold a unique significance in our cultural setting, distinguishing them from other objects. It is rare for an individual to take the time to completely acknowledge or understand the profound influence that flowers have on one's lives, given their widespread presence. Flowers have a profound impact on our cultural sensitivities, interwoven into a society that is inherently different.

In many cultural traditions across the world, flowers have long been considered important.

Flowers are found to be present and contributing their brightness and serenity to ceremonies, prayers, births, deaths, marriages, and medical practices. But their presence is not limited to the material world. Even engraved on stone are floral designs and cultural references to flowers. Their designs and patterns are marvels of architecture that have withstood the test of time to become popular choices for buildings across the nation. Flowers have a profound effect on a person's emotional range and longevity. They are rarely, though, a fascinating aspect of a nation's

culture. Furthermore, flowers are an essential component of every cultural expression across the country, so their requirement is not restricted to just one or a few events.

Flowers have always been linked to love and romance, representing profound emotions and desires shared by two people. Flowers have had a notable impact on expressing love, romantic interest, and even proposals for marriage, spanning various cultures and historical periods. Roses, unquestionably the most renowned emblem of affection, have been cherished for ages due to their enchanting beauty and alluring scent. Red flowers symbolise intense love and longing. They are commonly given as gifts on Valentine's Day, anniversaries, and other romantic occasions to convey profound devotion and dedication. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that various colours of roses can communicate distinct messages (<https://fastercapital.com/content/Flowerbond-->).

Flowers have played a significant role in our lives, spanning from birth to death. Flowers are used to celebrate the birth of a new-born, to wish a quick recovery to the sick, and to bid farewell to the deceased in various religious and social contexts. Floral decorations, bouquets, and flower arrangements are also prominently displayed during social gatherings, birthday parties, welcoming returning friends or relatives, and honouring dignitaries. The phenomenon of globalisation, together with cultural exchanges and other celebrations that promote unity, such as New Year, Valentine's Day, Memorial Day, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Christmas, and weddings, have led people worldwide to utilise flowers as a medium for expressing their emotions. Primarily, these festivities have established a direct association with certain types of flowers in certain instances, such as roses being linked to Valentine's Day and Poinsettia and carnations being associated with Mother's Day (Koley et al. 2014:312)

The interpretation of flower colors and arrangements might differ based on the culture and circumstances in which they are employed. Gaining knowledge about the symbolism of flowers and arrangements enables us to better communicate, convey our feelings, and demonstrate respect for diverse cultures and customs.

In India, flowers hold both cultural and religious significance. The Lotus, revered as sacred, is the national flower of India and holds significant importance in the ancient mythology of the country. It serves as a distinctive symbol of Indian culture. Flowers symbolize grace, strength, and purity. Their aesthetic appeal greatly attracts people, to the point where Indian women decorate their hair with fragrant flowers to enhance their beauty. They are utilized throughout various religious holidays and wedding parties. Flowers are frequently presented as birthday gifts, wedding presents, and are now commonly utilized as a gesture of goodwill when visiting loved ones in hospitals.

Flowers possess profound cultural importance in religious ceremonies. For example, marigolds are extensively utilised in Hindu celebrations such as Diwali and Holi to adorn residences and temples. Marigolds are symbolic of purity, prosperity, and good fortune, as represented by their vibrant orange and yellow colours. In Christian traditions, flowers such as lilies are frequently used at Easter to symbolise purity, resurrection, and new beginnings. The flower arrangements serve the dual purpose of enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the sacred areas and fostering a tranquil and inspiring ambiance for worshippers (<https://fastercapital.com/content/Flowerbond>).

Flowers are believed to be pleasing to gods based on cultural, mythological, and religious beliefs. Just like flowers provide happiness to humans, deities also cannot resist their charm. Devotees appease the deity by presenting flowers. In addition, flowers possess abundant positivity and are regarded as one of nature's most exquisite creations, so they are also presented as offerings to deities. Indeed, the term "puja" is derived from the amalgamation of two components: 'pu', signifying flowers, and 'ja', denoting chanting and water. Flowers hold significance not only in Hinduism but also in various other religious practices. Muslims adorn tombs with the phool chadar, a carpet made of flowers. Christians attribute spiritual value to roses and their petals, while Buddhists consider the lotus as a symbol of enlightenment and purity (<https://www.caleidoscope.in/art-culture/flowers-in-indian-culture>).

An illustration of the importance of flowers in cultural customs is evident in the Hindu celebration of Holi, sometimes referred to as the Festival of Colours. During

this exuberant festivity, individuals gather to hurl brilliant colours and water at one another, symbolising the advent of spring and the conquest of righteousness over wickedness. Flowers, especially marigolds, have a vital significance in this occasion as they are utilised to create garlands that are subsequently given among friends and family. The act of exchanging these floral garlands not only symbolises affection and companionship but also promotes a feeling of solidarity and cohesion among those involved (<https://fastercapital.com/topics/the-significance-of-flowers-in-cultural-traditions.html>).

Flowers are tremendously used at funerals as an expression of sympathy, grief and respect, as a mark of condolence to the deceased in different cultures in India. Throughout history, flowers have consistently served as a universal emblem of love, beauty, and spirituality, connecting ancient rituals to contemporary celebrations. Garlands indicate joy and are used in celebrations, weddings and religious ceremonies. The circular form indicates oneness. They show honour and respect, sometimes placed around someone's neck as a gesture of appreciation. Offering garlands to guests demonstrates gracious hospitality (Venkatesh et.al 2023:14).

Currently, flowers are commonly utilised as decorative items in our homes. Flowers brighten our home when placed in vases and pots, and their aroma introduces a refreshing scent. The same idea remains true when particular attention is given to adorning residences during festivals or family events. In addition to their decorative function, flowers are renowned for increasing personal beauty as witnessed amongst Indian women.

With advancement in urbanization and standard of living in the urban areas, demand for cut flowers have increased for indoor decorations, Sunday church flower arrangements, in events like marriage, funeral services, birthdays, social functions and official events floral arrangements are increasingly becoming an indispensable part in the socio-cultural context of Mizo society. Cut flowers in the form of wreath and bouquets are given as a mark of condolence, as an expression of sympathy at the time of death, coffins are also decorated with flowers. Flower bouquets and garlands have become symbols of respect and welcome as they are presented to important

dignitaries on official functions. An emerging new trend is the practice of exchanging and gifting potted plants as a mark of friendship and celebration of achievements. The socio-cultural importance given to flowers and plants have in turn created a source of livelihood and network building for those who have invested in this business. It has contributed towards empowerment socially and economically for floriculturists. People are now interested in the aesthetic value of the floriculture products in enhancing the beauty of their balcony, verandas, porch and front lawns with different varieties of floriculture products.

1.7 Floriculture as livelihood option

Livelihood studies gained prominence in the field of development studies during the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the Sustainable Livelihood Framework was heavily promoted by the Department for International Development (DFID), the British government's development cooperation agency. The concept of Sustainable Livelihoods became the central focus of DFID's program aimed at reducing poverty (De Haan, 2012:346). The livelihood approach was much indebted to the work of Chambers and Conway (1991: 6) who propose a definition of sustainable livelihood as "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with or re- cover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contribute to net benefits to other livelihood at the local and global levels and in the short and long term."

However, Carney's interpretation of livelihood, based on the concept provided by Chambers and Conway, gained widespread acceptance, which is "A livelihood system comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base" (Carney 1998, 2) cited in (De Haan, 2012:347).

A livelihood refers to the tangible resources that enable an individual to sustain their life. Livelihood generation encompasses the range of actions individuals engage in to meet their fundamental necessities, or perhaps exceed them. The term livelihood is used to refer to the results or outcomes of those actions. Livelihood encompasses both the activities that individuals engage in, taking into account their available resources and assets, as well as the outcomes they attain via these activities (Niehof & Price, 2001:8).

Floriculture can be a viable livelihood option, generating income and employment opportunities in both rural and urban areas. It has become a significant commercial activity in Indian agriculture following the globalisation of the Indian economy. It has emerged as a feasible option, with the ability to create profitable self-employment opportunities for small and marginal farmers, while also bringing in the necessary foreign currency. Floriculture has become a commercially viable industry in the last decades due to changes in lifestyles and the growth of metropolitan areas. Floriculture has recently been recognised as a viable choice for diversifying cereal-based agriculture in the country. The flower industry has experienced significant growth due to emerging market trends influenced by changing lifestyles and outlook towards life, as well as the economic boom and increased affluence, especially among the middle -class population (Ram & Aier, 2017:55).

Flower farming has significantly contributed to the improvement of the rural economy in hill states through several means such that flower crops have become the primary cash crop, it has created chances for self-employment, it fulfils aesthetic needs and establishing a viable and enduring agricultural system in hilly regions (Raj,2017:108) The advancement of floriculture has not only created chances for cultivating flowers, but also for enhancing livelihoods in comparison to other crops.

Floriculture is becoming a highly diverse and promising sector within the horticulture business, both domestically and internationally. This is due to its fast expansion, rising purchasing power, and increased knowledge among the general population. India's youth is benefiting from increased income, profit, and employment prospects, while women are becoming more engaged and exports are

being enhanced. Furthermore, floriculture not only enhances the income of farmers in comparison to other crops, but the data on average unit prices obtained from exports also demonstrates that floriculture products command better prices than fresh fruits and vegetables (Anumala & Kumar,2021:7).

The floriculture sector in the North East of India offers many prospects for entrepreneurial endeavours owing to a multitude of factors. The increasing domestic and worldwide demand for flowers, for both decorative and gift-giving purposes, creates a significant market for floriculture products. The rising awareness and inclination towards unique and native flowers, particularly in urban settings and for certain events, generate specialised markets that entrepreneurs can use for financial gain. Floriculture has the capacity to provide job prospects, especially in rural regions, by involving local communities in the processes of growing, gathering, packaging, and distributing flowers. Floriculture-based entrepreneurial endeavours have the potential to generate income and improve livelihoods, particularly for small-scale farmers and women in the area. Government schemes and efforts to promote horticulture and floriculture provide financial assistance, subsidies, training programs, and infrastructure development, creating favourable conditions for entrepreneurial endeavours. Entrepreneurs can take advantage of these programs by accessing financial aid, specialised knowledge, and market connections offered by the government. The floriculture industry in North East India presents several prospects for businesses who are willing to invest in inventive techniques, enhancing value, exploring new markets, and practicing sustainable production. Entrepreneurs can build successful companies and contribute to the economic prosperity of the region by using market trends, technical advancements, government assistance, and different agro-climatic conditions (Chittibomma et al. 2023:1343).

Floristry is another area which offers livelihood and it encompasses the art of creating and arranging bouquets, as well as designing floral decorations for various settings such as stage shows, mandaps, cars, and banquet halls. These skills are utilised for a wide range of occasions, including weddings, birthday and anniversary celebrations, and other events. This is a highly lucrative flower-based business that yields substantial profits in a relatively short period of time.

Flower arrangement is a visually pleasing and artistic way of displaying flowers that stimulates the aesthetic perception and serves as a source of income. It is a crucial component of the commercial floriculture industry. Flowers, either on their own or accompanied by fillers, can be utilised to create a variety of floral arrangements. These floral designs can be showcased during certain events such as birthdays, New Year festivities, Christmas, marriage anniversaries, weddings, etc. and enhance the aesthetic appeal of the table when utilised as centrepieces. Florists utilise dried flowers, grasses, seed heads, and pods to create long-lasting, low-maintenance flower arrangements for beautifying residential and commercial spaces worldwide (Singh, Kumar & Verma, 2017: 71).

Value-added items, such as flowery greeting cards, handmade paper inlaid with petals, potpourris, buttonholes, corsages, and floral jewellery, floral gifts encompass a variety of items such as flower bouquets, floral containers, paper weights, book marks, photo frames, tablemats, and more. Toiletries and personal hygiene goods, floral processed products, such as syrups (khus), squash (rose, rhododendron), pankhuri (rose, marigold), rose water and gulkand (rose), tea (rose and chrysanthemum), jam and marmalade (rose petals), and wine (rhododendron), play a significant role in the commercial floriculture industry. These products not only contribute to the farmers' profits but also enhance their livelihood (*Ibid*: 72).

1.8 Floriculture for women empowerment and entrepreneurship

Women consistently experience disparities in position and status throughout many societies and domains. Consequently, it is imperative to empower them by ensuring equitable possibilities. Empowerment is a complex social process that enables individuals to exert control over their own life. Moreover, it can be referred to as a procedure that empowers individuals to utilise their own power in their lives, communities, and society by taking action on issues they deem significant. The empowerment of women is not only necessary but also vital for the comprehensive development of society and the nation as a whole. The issue of 'women empowerment' has gained significant importance in the agendas and initiatives of the United Nations and various governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Several academics have attempted to delineate the concept based on their individual viewpoints. The concept of empowerment can vary in interpretation depending on the socio-cultural, economic, and political circumstances (Mandal, 2013:18).

The urgent requirement at this hour is to achieve economic empowerment. By being employed, women have the opportunity to earn income, which allows them to become financially independent and active contributors to their family. (Promilla Kapur (2001) cited in Mandal, 2013) defines women's empowerment as the progressive acquisition of control over various resources, including material, human, and intellectual resources such as knowledge, information, ideas, and financial resources such as money and access to money. This empowerment also entails gaining control over decision-making processes within the household, community, society, and nation, with the ultimate goal of attaining power. Economic empowerment is achieved by providing equal employment opportunities, equal organisational benefits, equal treatments, and equal working environments (*Ibid*:21).

Women empowerment entails granting women the authority to exercise control over their life, exercise agency in making choices and decisions, and enjoy equitable access to resources and opportunities. It entails establishing a setting in which women may engage in society and the economy with the same opportunities as men, and where their opinions are acknowledged and their entitlements safeguarded. Women's empowerment encompasses various dimensions, such as education, economic, political, and social aspects. The ultimate goal of women's empowerment is to establish a society in which women possess the authority and liberty to lead their lives without facing any form of gender-based prejudice or constraints (<https://www.rawatbedcollege.org/blog/womens-empowerment-in-india-and-its-importance>)

Women in villages have been empowered by the floriculture industry to pursue non-traditional occupations, such as site supervisors, nursery raisers, or village agricultural extension workers.

Historically, women were excluded from engaging in these activities. The cottage-style flower industry has evidently empowered rural women to unite and engage in

many activities, including forming dairy cooperatives, establishing savings and credit systems, and organising floriculture and horticultural groups. In some areas, women have become more assertive in participating in community development activities. Floriculture, on the other hand, provided impoverished tribal farmers, particularly women, with enormous opportunity to quickly increase their income through the development of floriculture. The implementation of small-scale floriculture in rural regions has undeniably invigorated and empowered tribal women, enabling them to improve their lives, boost the local economy, and preserve biodiversity. Consequently, this practice holds great potential to make a substantial contribution to India's sustainable development in the future (Agoramoorthy & Hsu, 2012: 73-74).

Floriculture, a sector in Nagaland that was once a mere hobby has now become a means of livelihood and is actively contributing to the economic growth, either directly or indirectly. Women now have the ability to empower themselves through autonomous decision-making. Contrary to other states in India that produce flowers, this specific state is completely dominated by women. Therefore, the continued growth of this industry presents more promising opportunities to enhance the empowerment of women in Nagaland due to the rising demand for flowers in various events and celebrations. The increased involvement of women in the floriculture industry has led to a rise in employment prospects for women, unemployed young women, as well as local and non-local workers. The income generated from this sector allows growers to allocate their earnings towards more productive endeavours, such as expanding their nurseries, increasing production, meeting personal needs, providing for their families, and investing in their children's education. This empowerment enables them to make independent decisions and manage their income effectively (Pusa & Mahasamudram, 2016: 51).

Mizoram has also achieved substantial success through the implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Technology Mission scheme from 2001-02. The government's initiative to introduce commercial cultivation of exotic varieties of anthurium flowers through this mission has received a positive response. This is evident from the increasing areas dedicated to cultivation and production, which has helped the state become one of the country's major producers of this flower. The farmers have

generated substantial income from the sale of this flower, and its cultivation has fostered gender empowerment within both the family and community (Thanga & Rohmingliani, 2015:80).

Entrepreneurship is an endeavour that bring changes in the different economies and societies of the world. A complex concept, it has been defined differently by different scholars. Shane and Venkataraman (2000:219 cited in Basnayake, 2022: 89) define entrepreneurship as “a process that includes discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities to introduce new products, services or markets”. The most prominent illustration of entrepreneurship is the establishment of a new enterprise, representing a creative human endeavour that reallocates resources from one level of production to a higher one (Basnayake, 2022:89). Empowering women economically, particularly through their participation in floriculture trade, generates several prospects for their livelihood and economic advancement, as women constitute the most vulnerable group affected by poverty (*Ibid*: 92).

Women entrepreneurs are those who conceptualise business ventures, whether in the agricultural or non-agricultural sector, launch and organise them, integrate the factors of production, manage operations, assume risks, and navigate the economic uncertainties associated with running a business firm (Illayarani & Lalitha, 2021: b547). Women entrepreneurs in various parts of the world have disrupted the monopoly of men and have proved that they are not subordinate to men. In a few decades, women have turned the traditional role of a housewife and a homemaker to entrepreneurial role. However, women have to go a long way to be on equal footing with men in entrepreneurial endeavour though entrepreneurial spirit is not men’s privilege exclusively (*Ibid*).

1.6 Overview

Floriculture is a fundamental component of our culture. Flowers have been utilised in India from ancient times. Floriculture is a specialised field within Horticultural Science that focusses on the cultivation of flowering and attractive plants for the purposes of floristry and gardening. This is a global sector worth billions of dollars that include the cultivation of fresh flowers, foliage, bedding and garden plants,

potted plants (including foliage and flowering varieties), landscape gardening, bonsai, flower drying, and floral arrangements. It has become a feasible choice for diversification in the agricultural industry.

Floriculture has emerged as a significant economic endeavour within the agricultural industry in the era following globalisation. Floriculture has emerged as a lucrative and successful industry that has the ability to generate self-employment opportunities for farmers with low and middle incomes. Additionally, it can contribute to earning foreign money, which is crucial for developing nations like India.

This industry has been stimulated due to its high demand in both domestic and international markets. The rise in per capita wealth and urbanisation has resulted in a stronger inclination and heightened desire for flowers and beautiful plants. Currently, flowers are becoming widely utilised in numerous countries. The evidence for this phenomenon is the rapid and significant increase in the number of flower centres in urban areas.

While flower plantation has been a part of Indian culture for some time, floriculture is a more recent advancement in the world of horticulture. The transition from conventional flower plantation to the cultivation of cut flowers for export purposes is attracting businesses in the floriculture sector in India. The demand for floriculture has experienced a substantial increase due to shifts in individuals' lifestyles and growth in their per capita income. Due to the present surge in demand for flowers and their byproducts, the flower market is currently extremely profitable in the country.

Floricultural crops require a significant amount of work, and in a country like India, the floriculture business has great potential for creating profitable employment opportunities in both rural and urban regions. India has the potential to take full use of this opportunity to address the issues of unemployment and poverty by attaining a steady increase in the production and export of this commodity.

Currently, floriculture has evolved into a lucrative agricultural industry that generates substantial cash. Due to its ability to create substantial employment opportunities in both rural and urban regions, it plays a significant role in augmenting household

income. The implementation of floriculture as an alternative means of generating income has been undertaken with the objective of enhancing the livelihoods of the local inhabitants. The implementation of floriculture in rural areas has undeniably stimulated and strengthened rural farmers, leading to improvements in their livelihoods, the economy, and the preservation of natural resources. Floriculture in India has provided extensive options for women in terms of employment, generating income, empowering them, and improving their general well-being.

The rise in urbanisation and shifts in lifestyle have heightened the significance of floral adornments in daily life as well as for a variety of occasions including social, political, and cultural events. Moreover, there has been a rise in the quantity of retail florist establishments in urban and suburban areas. The generating of income from flower decorations during wedding ceremonies, including the decoration of the wedding stage, backdrop, venue, cars, bridal bouquets, and other elements, has become quite significant in Mizoram. Flower cultivation in Mizoram can significantly contribute to rural and urban employment by providing opportunities for uneducated and low-educated women to gain empowerment.

Entrepreneurship is a global process that involves discovering, evaluating, and exploiting opportunities to introduce new products, services, or markets. It involves reallocating resources from one level of production to a higher one, transforming economies and societies.

Empowering women economically, especially through participation in floriculture trade, offers opportunities for their livelihood and economic advancement. Women entrepreneurs conceptualize, launch, manage, and navigate business ventures, integrating production factors, operations, risks, and economic uncertainties, making them the most vulnerable group affected by poverty.

Women entrepreneurs worldwide have challenged men's monopoly and demonstrated their independence. They have transitioned from traditional roles like housewife and homemaker to entrepreneurial roles, but they still need to work hard to equalize in entrepreneurial endeavors.

Though several studies have been made on floriculture in the national and regional level in India, those studies are not specific to the domain of our topic that is, not specific to a sociological analysis on the impact of floriculture on the people. Sociological study on floriculture as an entrepreneurial activity and livelihood option at the national and state level is a neglected one, research on the issue has been limited. Beyond a profession and livelihood option, floriculture connects people within culture and beyond with passion and emotion. Rituals, extension of sentiments, ceremonial gatherings, social events and festivities cannot go without flowers. People's attachments and sensitivities to flowers have their sociological implications and significance. Addressing the issue on the emerging sociologically significant floriculture sector, a small- scale enterprise for livelihood, entrepreneurial activity and empowerment would be crucial and to explore and understand the importance and contribution of the floriculture sector in the society and the state.

The present study thus, will have a holistic view of floriculture focusing on the social aspects in terms of entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options in Mizoram. The study will highlight and major concern will be given to the social importance of flowers, the socio-economic background of the floriculturists, recent trends and growth of floriculture as livelihood options, floriculture as women empowerment and the constraints faced by the floriculturists will also be taken up.

Against the above -mentioned issues, questions evolved which led to the problematization of the study leading to research questions such as-

1. What significance does floriculture have in creating cultural space in the society?
2. What is the socio-economic background of those involved in flower cultivation?
3. What is the recent trend of floriculture and how has it developed as a viable livelihood option in Mizoram?
4. What implications does it have for gender question and empowerment of women?

5. What problems are faced by the floriculturists?

The next chapter is on review of literature as a part of procedural requirement so as to find the research gap and rationale for this study ahead.

CHAPTER -II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Theoretical review

- 2.1.1. Sustainable livelihood**
- 2.1.2 Social capital as livelihood asset**
- 2.1.3 Social Exchange**
- 2.1.4 The Norms of Reciprocity**
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2.2 Thematic Review

- 2.2.1 Employment generation and self-sufficiency**
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2.3 Methodological review

2.4 Overview of literature review

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CHAPTER-II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2. 0 Introduction

Reviewing existing literature helps in better comprehending the theoretical underpinnings and empirical aspects emphasised by the previous researchers. It also aids in identifying the conceptual, theoretical, methodological and operational issues and gaps in the available literature and determines how to best approach them within the framework of an ongoing study. This requires collection, classification and consolidation, which have been duly done. To gain an insight and for a better understanding of the proposed study, and to find out the research gap, a review of literature has been done under three broad heads: theoretical review, thematic review and review of methodology in available studies.

2.1. Theoretical perspectives: Theoretical review explores theories that expound on the topic under study and which, thereby helps in better understanding of the study in question while at the same time putting forth a justification for the current study. Theoretical review of literature on sustainable livelihood approach, sociology of entrepreneurship, social exchange theories, norms of reciprocity and gift giving are presented along with thematic and methodological reviews on floriculture studies.

2.1.1 Sustainable Livelihood Approach:

Livelihood simply refers to making a living. It covers the provision of fundamental human needs such as food, shelter, and clothes, as well as health and education. Employment and income-generating activities are also referred to as "livelihood."

Niehof and Price (2001:8-10) propose that livelihood refers to the tangible resources necessary for sustaining one's life. Livelihood generation encompasses the range of activities individuals engage in to meet their fundamental requirements or exceed them. The term "livelihood" is used to refer to the results or outcomes of those activities. According to their explanation, the concept of livelihood in research encompasses the actions and outcomes of individuals based on their available resources and assets. They argue that the process of generating livelihood involves

the utilization of activities, resources, and assets to fulfill basic needs. They also assume that because all of these actions are focused on securing and improving livelihood, they are interconnected and have an impact on one another. They emphasise that livelihood is the result of such efforts. They also believe that the household is where livelihood is generated. They also point out that the household is the immediate or internal livelihood environment, and that household characteristics influence livelihood generation opportunities and limits.

Thieme (2008: 4) claims that the livelihoods approach is employed to elucidate the multitude and intricacy of the methods by which individuals sustain themselves economically. This addresses the living situations of impoverished individuals, including their possibilities and abilities to achieve a state of well-being, their ability to bounce back from adversity, and the different resources they possess. The connection between livelihood strategies and livelihood assets or capital is fundamental to the approach. The categories of capital mentioned are social, human, financial, natural, and physical capital (DFID, 2002). These assets counteract the perception of impoverished individuals as being 'inactive' or 'starved'. While the impoverished may lack financial resources and savings, they possess alternative tangible and intangible assets, like familial support, good health, valuable skills, and access to natural resources.

Livelihood conditions differ from place to place, among groups, and in various social contexts, according to Timalina (2012:1-4). He believes that the livelihoods approach sees the world from the perspective of people, households, and social groups who are attempting to make a living in unstable circumstances and with little resources. He continues to state that it offers a framework for comprehending the chances and resources available to the poor, the causes of their susceptibility, as well as the effects of outside organisations, procedures, and policies on them.

According to van Dijk (2011:102), livelihoods consist of arrangements in the domains of community, state, family, and the private sector. These arrangements are delicate yet they are emergent features that depend on the specific paths taken within the network of structures in which families operate. For her, capitals, assets, and

resources (CARs) consist of both potential and actual functions, powers, duties, and living arrangements that are integrated into local to larger structures. Moser (1998), as cited by (van Dijk, 2011:102), defines the modern livelihoods approach as the combination of skills, resources, and activities necessary for survival. However, van Dijk's argument focuses on the relational aspects, namely the arrangements made to meet needs and ambitions. She argues that social connectedness is the foundation of wellbeing. Furthermore, she holds the belief that the potential, ambitions, and paths of human beings are influenced by their specific circumstances and relationships.

According to Long (1997) cited in (De Haan and Zoomers, 2003:352), the concept of livelihood encompasses individuals and organizations who are actively working to sustain themselves, striving to meet their economic and consumer needs, managing uncertainties, seizing new chances, and making choices based on different value systems. Gaillard et al. (2009: 121) points out that livelihood typically encompass multiple activities. Households employ intricate, situational, varied, and ever-changing techniques to fulfill their demands.

Hebinck and Bourdillon (2002: 3,4) define livelihood as a social construct, a way of life created by individuals who make their own value judgments and pick their own path to match their own identities. They also examine livelihood resources, which are commonly referred to as the "capitals" that people require in order to live sustainably. They explain that such resources include human capital, which includes labour, skills, knowledge, creativity, experience, and experimentation; natural capital, which includes land, water, crops, and forests; physical capital, which includes food stocks, livestock, tools, and machinery; financial capital, which includes money, loans, and credit; savings; and social capital, which includes the quality of interpersonal relationships and family support or mutual assistance. Furthermore, they argue that social capital is important for achieving long-term development because livelihoods are based on interpersonal relationships. They listed three key components of social capital: trust, reciprocity, and exchange between individuals, which are typically founded in unique local forms of organisation and influenced by cultural repertoires; connection, networks, and groups.

According to Chambers and Conway (1992: 5-6), livelihood refers to the way people earn a living. They describe sustainable livelihood as a concept that includes abilities, fairness, and long-term viability. A livelihood is defined as the combination of skills, resources, and activities necessary for a person to support themselves. A sustainable livelihood is one that can withstand and recover from challenges, while also improving its own resources and opportunities for future generations. Additionally, a sustainable livelihood should have a positive impact on other livelihoods both locally and globally, in both the short and long term. They divided their analysis of the sustainability of livelihood into two categories: whether a livelihood is sustainable socially, that is, able to withstand stress and shocks and maintain its ability to continue and improve, and whether it is sustainable environmentally, in terms of its effects on local and global resources and other assets. In order to maintain livelihoods, they describe sustainability as a function of how resources and capacities are used, maintained, and improved. Social sustainability refers to the internal ability to bear pressure from the outside world, whereas sustainability in the environment refers to the outward impact of livelihoods on other livelihoods. According to their argument, all livelihoods must be socially and environmentally sustainable in order to be equitable. If a human unit (person, household, or family) can achieve and maintain a sufficient and respectable standard of living, it is socially sustainable. They assert that this has two aspects, one of which is negative and reactive, dealing with stress and shocks, and the other positive which is proactive, improving and exercising abilities in adapting to, utilising, and producing change, as well as ensuring continuity (*Ibid*, 1992:9-10).

Krantz (2001:12) argues that the usage of asset portfolios by both men and women on a short- and long-term basis becomes a factor in the sustainability of livelihoods. He says United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) believes that sustainable livelihoods are ones that are: economically viable; able to adapt to and recover from shocks and pressures through coping mechanisms; ecologically sound, which ensures that livelihood activities do not permanently degrade natural resources within a particular ecosystem; and socially equitable, which contends that the promotion of one group's livelihood opportunities should not negate options for other groups,

either now or in the future. However, Kranz notes that the sustainable livelihood strategy does not necessarily attempt to address all aspects of poor people's livelihoods.

The Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and the British Department for International Development (DFID) have implemented the sustainable livelihood idea and strategy. The Department for International Development (DFID), a British government agency for development cooperation, played a significant role in promoting the Sustainable Livelihood Framework. This framework brought livelihood studies to the forefront of development studies during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The concept of sustainable livelihoods was initially introduced by the Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development. This idea was further developed and emphasized as a broad objective for poverty eradication during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

According to DFID (2000) and Carney (1998: 2), sustainability can be understood as both long-term adaptability and ecological soundness. They define a livelihood system as consisting of the capacities, assets (including material and social resources), and activities necessary for a means of living. A sustainable livelihood is one that has the ability to withstand and recover from pressures and unexpected events, while also preserving or improving its resources and capacities, without depleting the natural environment.

Ashley and Carney (1999: 5-7) define sustainable livelihood as a strategic approach to development that aims to enhance progress in poverty eradication by considering the goals, extent, and priorities of development. The objective of sustainable livelihood is to facilitate impoverished individuals in attaining durable transformations in poverty indicators. The DFID's sustainable livelihood framework is said to offer a method for comprehending livelihoods, which is crucial for ensuring that external aid aligns with individuals' livelihood objectives and priorities. They look at DFID's sustainable livelihood framework to learn about various livelihood components and factors, such as: people's priorities; the different strategies they use to pursue their priorities; the institutions, policies, and organisations that determine

their access to opportunities and the outcomes they can achieve; their access to social, human, physical, financial, and natural capital, and their ability to put it to productive use; and an analysis of the context in which people live including man made, natural shocks or seasonal problems.

Meikle, Ramasut, and Walker (2001: 3-12) argue that certain livelihood strategies may rely on individual endeavors rather than household endeavors, while others may involve collaboration between family members who reside separately, such as cooperation between rural and urban extended family members. The economic well-being of individuals living in urban poverty is mostly determined by the opportunities and limitations that they face. To comprehend the essence of sustainable urban lives, it is imperative to grasp the urban setting. Livelihood strategies are influenced by the combination of accessible assets, the urban contextual elements that determine the accessibility of these goods, and the goals of both men and women. People and families develop different sets of activities that collectively form their livelihood plans. A significant number of households include both rural and peri urban activities into their livelihood choices.

Serrat (2017: 22) says the sustainable livelihood strategy contains development goals, scope, and priorities based on how the poor and vulnerable live and the role of policies and institutions. The sustainable livelihoods approach, he claims, makes it simpler to set realistic priorities for activities based on the viewpoints and interests of those affected, but it is not the solution. He further argues that it also focuses on people's inherent potential in terms of their skills, social networks, physical and financial resources, and ability to influence key institutions.

Toner and Franks (2006: 82) examine the livelihood framework developed by DFID (1999), which conceptualizes livelihoods as the outcome of individuals' decision-making processes while utilizing their many "capital assets" categorized as human, natural, social, physical, and financial assets. According to them, the extent to which individuals may utilize or develop particular capital assets to sustain their livelihoods is influenced by policies, institutions, and practices. They argue that the interaction between financial resources and the opportunities and limitations imposed by certain

policies, institutions, and practices leads to the development of livelihood strategies, which in turn impact the outcomes of people's livelihoods.

According to Farrington et al. (1999: 3), the sustainable livelihoods paradigm assumes that individuals want various outcomes such as health, income, and reduced vulnerability. They achieve these objectives by utilizing different assets and engaging in diverse activities. The activities they engage in and the manner in which they reinvest in asset-building are influenced, to some extent, by their own tastes and priorities. Nevertheless, they are additionally impacted by other forms of vulnerability, encompassing sudden and severe events (such as drought), general patterns (such as changes in resource stocks), and fluctuations that occur during specific seasons. Options are contingent upon the institutions, such as the functions of government or the private sector, as well as the processes, such as institutional, policy, and cultural elements, that individuals encounter. They opine that collectively, their circumstances dictate their ability to obtain resources and opportunities for their livelihoods, as well as the manner in which these can be transformed into results.

Farrington et al. (2002: 1) argue that the Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) approach aims to comprehend the tangible circumstances and priorities of impoverished individuals, encompassing their actual livelihood activities, available resources, and the obstacles they face in pursuing them. Effective strategies within the SL approach should aim to enhance the access and control that low-income individuals have over assets, thereby improving their quality of life and lowering their vulnerability to unexpected events and external pressures. Farrington, Chapman, and Slaymaker (2001) as cited in Farrington et al. (2002: 28-29) state that sustainable livelihood approaches are implemented on three levels: as an overarching development goal, a set of guiding development principles, and an analytical framework. The primary objective of SL techniques is to enhance the sustainability of people's lives, specifically targeting underprivileged individuals, both men and women, as well as households. They argue that several low-income urban households employ a range of revenue sources, such as formal employment, informal trading, and service industries, involving different family members in diverse economic activities and sectors. They hold the belief that livelihood strategies extend beyond being a mere response to the available

resources and current circumstances. Individuals' objectives and choices also played a role in their contributions. These decisions are then shaped by personal and cultural factors, including gender stereotypes that dictate whether occupations are deemed suitable for men or women.

De Haan and Zoomers (2005: 32–33) emphasize that the notion of livelihood should be comprehended as extending beyond the objectives of the material or economic realm. They argue that this does not mean that livelihood is not related to material well-being, but rather that it also includes non-material aspects of well-being. The notion of livelihood should be perceived as dynamic and comprehensive. The understanding of the whole significance of livelihood is demonstrated not only in its viewpoint on livelihood outcomes, but also in its consideration of many resources that the poor utilize to build their livelihoods. The argument is centered around the dynamic amalgamation and trade-offs of different forms of capital.

According to Ellis (2000: 15) as stated in Elliot (2013: 202), rural livelihood diversification refers to the strategy employed by rural households to enhance their level of living by continuously expanding their range of business activities and assets. Elliott argues that the concept of rural "livelihoods" emerged in the late 1980s as a means to comprehensively analyze the various elements that contribute to sustaining a household's quality of life in rural regions, and how these aspects change over time. She asserts that it is now acknowledged that in rural homes, several activities are often integrated to obtain the goods, labor, and resources needed to build livelihoods. According to her, in recent years, there has been an increased focus in the importance of non-farm revenues in household livelihood portfolios. In addition, she argues that the question of whether livelihood diversification functions as a "coping mechanism" that ultimately heightens vulnerability or as a means of ensuring security and sustainability for rural livelihoods and a way out of poverty is of utmost importance (2013: 202-204).

Bebbington (1999: 2022) asserts that an individual's belongings, such as land, fulfill a dual role by not only generating revenue but also providing a sense of meaning and direction in life. He emphasizes that assets serve not just as means for individuals to

earn a livelihood, but also empower them to exist and accomplish. He emphasises the importance of considering assets not only as tools for survival, adaptation, and poverty reduction, but also as the fundamental basis for an individual's capacity to take action, reproduce, defend, or modify the regulations that regulate the administration, utilization, and alteration of resources.

According to Rakodi (2002: 7), the livelihood approach focuses on placing individuals and their families at the center of the development process. It emphasizes starting with their strengths and assets rather than focusing on their difficulties. Consequently, she stresses the significance of prioritizing poor people and their households within a broader framework. She perceives the notion of "livelihoods" as a practical recognition of the diverse endeavors that families do to secure their existence and enhance their prosperity.

According to Devas (2002: 205), urban livelihood analysis focuses on how the urban poor may sustain and enhance their means of living in a secure and sustainable way, considering their abilities and resources. According to him, the way people and households in urban poverty make a living is primarily determined by how they react to their surroundings and the economic opportunities available to them.

Ramasut, Walker, and Meikle (2001:4-8) highlight that the opportunities and constraints faced by the urban poor have a significant impact on their way of life. According to them, it is crucial to grasp the urban environment in order to gain a complete understanding of the characteristics of sustainable urban livelihoods. According to their sustainable urban livelihood model, they argue that the fundamental concepts in the sustainable livelihoods approach include a comprehension of the following: a) The defining characteristic of poverty is being sensitive to shocks and stresses, rather than simply lacking income. b) Poor individuals utilize a variety of assets to overcome vulnerability. c) Poor individuals employ complex strategies, both short and long-term, to mobilize these assets. d) Poverty and adaptation are dynamic in nature. e) It is important to study livelihoods from the perspectives of disadvantaged women and men. f) Households and families are crucial units for organizing livelihoods.

Farrington, Ramasut, and Walker (2002: 43) opine that although livelihood techniques have their roots in rural contexts, they argue that there is nothing fundamentally different about urban environments that would prevent them from being applied there. In fact, there is a strong case to be made for both the urgent need for livelihoods initiatives in urban contexts and the potential for large returns on their implementation. In most countries, urban population levels are growing at a rate that is twice that of rural areas. The underlying tenet of these arguments is that, in many nations, urban population levels are increasing at a rate that is twice that of rural areas, necessitating a thorough grasp of the scope and dynamics of their means of subsistence.

2.1.2 Social Capital as Livelihood Asset

Farrington, Ramasut, and Walker (2002: 17-24) maintain that the assets of poor men and women are heavily stressed in Sustainable Livelihood approaches, and the kinds of assets included in the various SL models apply to both urban and rural regions. In reality, not all assets are entirely controlled or owned by the individuals who are striving to use them in their livelihood strategies. For example, "social capital" cannot be owned but implies a network of relationships. It is crucial to evaluate and make a distinction between control over and access to assets. Resources may be available to people, either inside or outside the home. They might not always have command over these resources, though. Due to the urban environment, men and women in low-income households are more inclined to rely on specific sorts of assets. Social capital is a crucial resource for the impoverished in both urban and rural areas. Farrington et al. cites Moser (1998) and Dersham and Gzirishvili (1998) who defines "social capital" as networks of reciprocal support that exist within and between households, extended families, and communities and that people can mobilise to access things like loans, childcare, food, housing, and information about jobs and opportunities. In addition to local social ties, they argue that social capital can also refer to broader networks of ties between the rich and the poor, such as patronage systems—systems that aren't necessarily beneficial. But for low-income urban households, social capital is a crucial and valued resource, particularly in times of socioeconomic upheaval and catastrophe. They maintain that since the idea of

social capital is based on relationships between particular people and groups and is hence linked to particular places, it is challenging to define its generalised qualities in cities.

Social capital, as defined by Putnam (1994: 6–10), encompasses the elements of social organization, including networks, norms, and trust, that enable the coordination and collaboration of individuals for mutual advantage. Investing in physical and human capital is made more advantageous by the presence of social capital. According to Putnam, sociologist James Coleman states that social capital, like other types of capital, is productive and enables the accomplishment of specific goals that would not be possible without it. Putnam argues that social capital, which includes trust, norms, and networks, tends to accumulate and reinforce itself over time. According to him, successful collaboration promotes interpersonal connections and confidence - social resources that facilitate future cooperation on unrelated tasks. In addition, he believes that social capital is becoming acknowledged as a crucial element in global economic development.

Tzanakis (2013: 3-6) analyzes the theoretical considerations of social capital by Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. Bourdieu (1986) cited in (Tzanakis, 2013: 3) defines social capital as the collective sum of tangible resources that are associated with having a stable network of relationships characterized by mutual familiarity or acknowledgment, which may be more or less formalized. Tzanakis notes that there is a correlation between Bourdieu's concept of social capital and both the size of an individual's network and the quantity of social capital they have already accumulated. Bourdieu contends that individuals engage in and sustain connections within a network primarily for specific economic benefits. According to Bourdieu, it is possible to simplify it to economic profit, even if that profit is not always purely economic. Bourdieu also highlights that social capital evolves into a collective reality through group affiliations. In contrast, according to Coleman (1988) cited in (Tzanakis, 2013: 4), social capital refers to a particular aspect of social structure that enables individuals or corporate actors to engage in specific activities. He argues that social capital is effective when it is used to assist individuals in achieving goals that would otherwise be impossible, thereby serving a distinct instrumental function. He

defines social capital as a collective asset that may be utilized by individuals with well-defined goals. Social capital relies on being well integrated into social networks. Coleman believes that the social structure is comprised of interpersonal connections, which serve as the foundation for social capital. Tzanakis emphasizes that Putnam's notion of social capital is primarily influenced by the theoretical principles provided by Coleman, whether directly or implicitly. Tzanakis cites Putnam (1993a, 1993b) who defines social capital as the attributes of social groups, such as connections, shared beliefs, and confidence, that facilitate individuals to collaborate and cooperate for their mutual benefit.

According to Winters, Corral, and Gordillo (2001: 8,9), social capital may be used to support and enhance livelihoods, and it is influenced by both the quantity (density) and quality of interpersonal connections. They contend that because social capital is ingrained in social structure and interpersonal relationships, these institutions control its production and utilisation. They suggest that the value of social capital depends on the quantity and variety of interactions a household has, as well as the quality of those relationships—where quality refers to how firmly established the relationships are.

Turner (2007: 409) maintains that social capital has gained popularity recently in a lot of development literature as a term for examining the resources made accessible to individuals and groups through social connections and linkages. Turner cites Putnam (1993) who holds that social capital may be understood as a combination of important elements of social organization, including trust, norms, and networks. This combination contributes to better economic performance and the ability to adapt successfully to a specific environment.

According to the Department for International Development (DFID) (1999: 1), the concept of "social capital" conveys the idea that social ties and social norms are a crucial component of the foundation for sustainable livelihoods. Social capital is increasingly acknowledged as one of the five resources essential for ensuring people's livelihoods (together with natural, human, physical and financial capital). Relationships are not solely focused on achieving material success, thus this

economic model has some limitations. A sense of identification and belonging, increased spiritual well-being, honour, social position, and prestige are just a few more advantages that can be brought about by social capital. DFID makes a distinction between three key components: (1) relationships of trust, reciprocity, and exchanges between people that promote cooperation; (2) norms, rules, and sanctions that are shared by societies and are either passed down or mutually agreed upon; and (3) interconnectedness, networks, and groups that provide access to larger institutions. Various sorts of connectedness that have an impact on people, for better or worse, are examined as part of the social capital analysis.

According to Abenakyo, Sanginga, Njuki et al. (2007: 537–539) social capital is a crucial aspect of a community and one of the elements of the asset pentagon of the sustainable livelihood framework. They note that households with medium and high social capital demonstrated improved problem-solving abilities, had an increased capacity to assist other farmers in resolving their agricultural problems, and had an increased capacity to conduct research to test various technologies and haggle with middlemen for better prices. They contend that the interactions inside and between the existing networks, which encourage knowledge and information sharing, are responsible for the increase in knowledge and skills. Bonding and bridging social capital are said to further strengthen these contacts. They contend that social capital serves as a framework to enable learning through the horizontal and vertical interactions in networks. They find that social capital played a role in supporting shared decision-making by enabling more women to take part in decisions about land, money management, going to markets, choosing what to sell, borrowing money, and money use. They contend that a condition of stress, elevated trust, and confidence among household members are produced by increasing social capital. They argue that social capital encourages interaction-based learning and necessitates the creation of both horizontal and vertical networking channels. According to the authors, social capital is crucial for supporting the social networks and information exchange essential for collective action as well as for maintaining a social and institutional environment that is flexible enough to adjust to changing circumstances.

Xiong, Zhu, Xiao et al. (2021: 2-13) discover that social capital plays a crucial role in diminishing poverty and promoting a sustainable lifestyle. They assert that the fundamental element of the framework for sustainable livelihoods is the notion of livelihood capital, encompassing natural, financial, social, and human capital. The cornerstone and essential to the capacity of disadvantaged households for sustainable development is livelihood capital, as they emphasize. The authors argue that social capital, a key element in social networks, consists of interconnected relationships among persons inside the same organization. These relationships are stable and provide valuable interpersonal resources. They argue that enhancing the social capital of non-poverty households can significantly enhance their ability to sustain themselves. According to their suggestion, social capital plays a vital role in keeping marginalized households from returning to poverty. It has the most significant effect on households that have a restricted ability to sustain themselves and are already out of poverty. They argue that this provides additional evidence supporting the notion that "social capital is the wealth of the impoverished" and, consequently, fostering social capital can help narrow disparities in household income.

Khosla and Jena (2019: 15-16) note that poverty reduction in rural regions depends heavily on social capital. A household's likelihood of diversifying its sources of income is higher when it engages in more social capital. Their findings demonstrate that households' membership in credit or savings groups, as well as groups for development or non-governmental organisations, were found to be negatively significant, while social capital lowers the likelihood of being chronically poor. They point out that social capital, such as membership in various social groups and savings schemes, may help people escape poverty traps. They argue that being a part of a social group helps disadvantaged households get access to important information that is disseminated inside the group. They maintain that it serves as a pledged asset by removing the obstacles for households with insufficient social security to obtain bank credit. Social capital also considerably assisted the poor, the uneducated, and homes that needed financial assistance. Social capital has been found to help spread awareness and empower women. As a result, they draw the conclusion that it is reasonable to assume that increasing social capital through NGOs, extending

microfinance into remote locations, offering regular training, and teaching people through social capital all contribute to reducing poverty in rural areas.

According to Lyons and Snoxell's (2004: 1077, 1093-1094), the sustainable livelihoods approach considers social capital to be one of the poor's most crucial resources for managing their lives. According to the definition used in the literature on the sustainable livelihood approach, which stipulates that social capital must be applicable to the material or spiritual needs of sustaining a livelihood, their findings demonstrate how new and valuable social capital is created by traders in the marketplace in the study area, where networks and trust are key components. The number of persons who traders consciously cultivate as friends and acquaintances increases rapidly. Because of this, maintaining business relationships is crucial for both day-to-day operations and the strategic management of corporate affairs. The new social capital created by traders in these marketplaces is not only based on new relationships, but also serves new purposes in their professional life.

2.1.3 Social Exchange Theories

Social exchange theory views man as seeking rationally to maximise material profits from transactions with others through a process of cost-benefit analysis in the society.

According to Blau (1964) cited in (Ritzer, 2011: 418), social exchange refers to the comprehension of social structure through the examination of the social processes that regulate the interactions between people and groups. The fundamental inquiry revolves around the process by which social life becomes structured into progressively intricate systems of connections among individuals. Blau focuses on the exchange process, which he says guides most of human behaviour and underpins interpersonal and group connections.

According to Homans (1958: 606), social behavior is viewed as a transaction involving the exchange of products, which can be both tangible and intangible, such as symbols of approval or prestige. According to him, individuals who are generous towards others have an expectation of receiving a significant amount in return, whereas those who receive a lot from others feel obligated to reciprocate by giving a

substantial amount back. He states that this process of influence typically results in an equilibrium in the interactions. In addition, he highlights that the cost and value of what an individual offers and receives are directly related to the amount of what they give and receive.

Cook, Rice, and Cheshire et al. (2013: 84), highlights the role of exchange processes at the micro-level and how such processes create the foundations of social structure and change. They believe the process signifies the social interactions that result in the exchange of valuable resources and services that occur on a regular basis in all communities. One of the primary contributions of this theoretical perspective, according to them, is understanding these interactions and how they develop, change, and transform the groups and networks in which they are embedded.

Redmond (2015: 27) argues that social exchange focuses on the factors and process by which individuals engage in an exchange seeking gains and incurring costs. He claims that social decisions are made after weighing the benefits and costs of various options, such as pursuing or terminating relationships. According to Redmond, engaging in continuing social exchanges can help form a trusting pattern that facilitates the development of close connections.

Cook and Whitmeyer (1992: 113-123) assert that exchange theory and network analysis are two typically comparable approaches. Exchange relations are seen by them as connected sets in exchange networks. According to Collins (1988) cited in (Cook and Whitmeyer, 1992: 412), These models portray individuals as simultaneously experiencing freedom and limitations. Humans possess the ability to generate or bargain for everything they desire at any given moment. Nevertheless, humans are constantly influenced by external factors and regulations, which ultimately impact the outcomes and circumstances of their creative endeavors and negotiations.

Exchange theorists argue that network linkages consist of exchange relations that involve valuable goods. The causal factor that matters in these links is the exchange value, which is decided by the individuals involved.

2.1.4 The Norm of Reciprocity

The reciprocity norm as a social rule maintains that, among other things, people should return favours and other acts of kindness. Smooth and fair social exchange can be possible if people adhere to the social rule of reciprocity.

Alvin Gouldner (1960:170-171) argues that there exists a moral standard of reciprocity, which establishes specific behaviors and obligations as payback for benefits received. According to him, we have some obligations towards others due to their past contributions and the history of our previous interactions with them. This type of obligation is implied by the universal principle of reciprocity. The reciprocity norm, according to Gouldner, is a social rule that mandates, among other things, that people should repay favours and other acts of goodwill.

Burger et al. (2009:12) states that following this norm of reciprocity allows for smooth and fair social interactions. Furthermore, they argue that individuals who are looking for an unjust advantage may also exploit the norm. They argue that individuals may reciprocate favors due to concerns about the perception of others. Additionally, they highlight that due to the widespread acceptance of the reciprocity norm, certain individuals may choose to adopt it as a criterion for evaluating their own behavior. In addition, they highlight the concept of internalized social norms, which suggests that engaging in morally correct actions and reciprocating favors might provide a sense of self-satisfaction.

Perugini et al. (2003: 252-253) state that in most studies on reciprocity, reciprocity is characterized as a method that can be used in repeated interactions, namely in repeated social dilemma (or two-person mixed incentive) games. Reciprocity can also be conceptualized as a person's tendency to reward others for their positive actions and to penalize others for causing damage. This inclination is rooted in the personal preferences of the individual. They argue that reciprocity can be seen as an objective in its own right, rather than solely as a method to get better material results.

2.1.5 Gift Giving Theory

Marcel Mauss (1966: 9-11) examines the practise of exchanging gifts in ancient societies and claims that friendship lasts the longest—if it has a chance of succeeding—when friends give and receive gifts. Mauss points out that in Maori tradition, the obligation associated to a gift is not passive, because it remains a part of the giver even if he abandons it. He goes on to say that entire prestation entails not just the need to repay gifts received, but also the obligation to give and accept presents. He argues that giving creates a social bond between the giver and the receiver, with the recipient having an obligation to reciprocate. Mauss further says that there are rights and responsibilities for consuming and repaying that exist alongside rights and obligations for giving and receiving. He demonstrates that primitive exchange systems focus on the duties to give, receive, and, crucially, to reciprocate.

2.1.6 Sociology of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is crucial to the structure and operation of businesses and economies. Individual entrepreneurial behaviour, according to Reynolds (1991: 47-64), refers to an individual's pursuit of new economic ventures, which might vary from self-employment to the establishment of a major organization. He notes that entrepreneurship is a major occupational choice for a large number of people. Reynolds claim that information from a wide variety of reliable social contacts will aid in the decision "to start a business." He argues that as operating entities, new businesses that have a highly cohesive interpersonal group and a focus on the effective delivery of goods or services may be the most successful. Participation in a variety of social networks, he says will aid in the decision to launch a new business, but efficient administration of the business may demand attention to a dense web of interactions among a few important members.

Entrepreneurial activities, Lippmann, Davis, and Aldrich (2005:10) notes are critical to the evolution of capitalist societies because new enterprises promote economic and employment growth. They distinguish between two major forms of entrepreneurial activities: opportunity and necessity entrepreneurship, as well as their social, human,

and financial capital links. They assert that awareness of such opportunities is linked to social and human capital. Financial capital, they say, becomes relevant to success once a decision has been made.

Entrepreneurial opportunities exist, according to Cuervo et al. (2007:2), because various agents have diverse perspectives on the relative value of resources or when resources are converted from inputs to outputs. Reynolds (2005) cited in (Cuervo et al. 2007: 1). claims that "entrepreneurship can be conceptualised as the finding of opportunities and the subsequent production of new economic activity, generally through the creation of a new organisation," Entrepreneurial behaviour, Miller (1983) cited in (Cuervo et al. 2007:3) defines as actions that combines creativity, risk-taking, and proactiveness. They suggest that the emergence of entrepreneurial activity can be explained by three core ideas. The first is individual-centered; in other words, entrepreneurial action is seen as a human quality, such as the ability to deal with uncertainty (Kihlstrom and Laffont, 1979), willingness to take calculated risks, and need for success (McClelland, 1961), which set entrepreneurs apart from the rest of society. The second fundamental concept focuses on economic and environmental factors that spur and support entrepreneurial activity, such as market size, the pace of technological advancement (Tushman and Anderson, 1986), the normative and demographic makeup of the market (Acs and Audretsch, 1990), or merely industrial dynamics. The third factor is associated with societal ideals, cultural norms, and institutional effectiveness (*Ibid*, 2007:4).

Ruef and Lounsbury (2015:1,2) views sociology of entrepreneurship as the study of the social context, process, and outcomes of entrepreneurial activity. They suggest that "entrepreneurship" can be defined either strictly as intentional action leading to the formation of new formal organisations, or more broadly as any attempt to bring long-lasting improvements in routines, technologies, organisational forms, or social institutions.

Bettenelli, Alain, and Randerson (2014:168) examine family entrepreneurship by concentrating on entrepreneurial behaviours among family members, family companies, and family enterprises, as well as the potential for interplay between

them. They argue that an individual's entrepreneurial behaviour is often anchored in the family setting, and that the family firm's long-term viability is dependent on individual or collective entrepreneurial behaviour. They also point out that entrepreneurial behaviour as well as the success or failure of the family business have an impact on the family unit. According to Rogoff and Heck (2003) cited in (Bettenelli, Alain and Randerson, 2014: 171) entrepreneurship behaviours start in the family.

Patricia Thornton (1999: 21,22) believes that only certain types of people develop entrepreneurship. She notes that in order to progress economically; societies require an appropriate supply of these unique individuals. She argues that individual variances in psychological, social, cultural, and ethnic traits are responsible for differences in the rate, form, and location of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship, according to Ahmad & Seymour (2008:10-14), is the process of discovering and acting on opportunities that create value (be that economic, cultural or social). They describe entrepreneurial activity as enterprising action aimed at creating or expanding economic activity by recognising and utilising new products, processes, or markets in order to generate value. They point out that while entrepreneurial activities necessitate the leveraging of resources and talents through innovation, the opportunities themselves are always tied to the discovery of new products, methods, or markets. Entrepreneurship is defined by them as the phenomenon connected with entrepreneurial action.

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of innovation, employment, and economic progress (Birch, 1979; Carree and Thurik, 2003; Parker, 2004; Storey, 1994; van Stel et al., 2005; Wennekers and Thurik 1999), among others cited in (Thornton et al.,2011: 105). According to Aldrich and Zimmer (1986) cited in (Thornton et al.,2011:106) scholars emphasise the significance of socio-cultural elements in the decision to start new firms, contending that entrepreneurship is anchored in a social framework. However, Thornton, Ribeiro-Soriano, and Urbano (2011) contend that a study of the literatures reveals that personal and economic aspects have received the majority of attention when focusing on either individual entrepreneurial behaviour or the

activities of new entrepreneurial enterprises. Because entrepreneurship is a social phenomenon as well as an economic activity, scholars continue to contend that understanding entrepreneurial variability requires taking into account the social context in which the firm is founded (Berger, 1991; Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Steyaert, 2007) cited in (Thornton et.al, 2011:106). Shane, (1993); Shapero and Sokol, (1982) claims that culture has significance for economic behaviour and entrepreneurship, as opposed to political, social, technological, or economic circumstances cited in (Thornton et.al, 2011:108).

Edewor, Abimbola and Ajayi (2014: 19-22) discusses two major sociological approach to the concept of entrepreneurship. The supply side approach and the demand side approach. The supply side perspective has psychological and sociological dimensions. The psychological component is attributing entrepreneurship and its practise to the presence of specific features in "special persons" that are absent in others. The demand for achievement, internal locus of control, and inclination for risk-taking are some of the features that have been identified. The sociological viewpoint emphasises how society exerts strong pressure on individuals to engage in entrepreneurial behaviour. Weber (1904), Shapero and Sokol (1982), Aldrich and Waldinger (1990), and Shane (1993) cited in (Edewor et.al, 2014:22) are scholars who share the same view. These scholars, according to the authors, believe that having a culture, social class, or group that supports entrepreneurship can lead to behaviours that support and promote entrepreneurial activities. On the other hand, Lee and Peterson (2000) cited in (Edewor et.al, 2014:22) support the demand-side approach and clarify that the more macro view, more recent in entrepreneurship research, holds that entrepreneurial success is not only a condition of individual traits and behaviours but also of the environment in which entrepreneurship takes place. According to the authors, the environment in this sense includes things like infrastructure, culture, economic, social, and political elements. These environmental factors are capable of either obstructing or promoting entrepreneurial actions in society.

In Stephen, Urbano, and van Hemmen's (2005:414, 417) discussion of entrepreneurial activity, the concept includes all attempts made by people to launch a

new business (which frequently involves self-employment); it also includes decisions made by companies to allocate more resources to new business opportunities. They contend that the presence of entrepreneurship supports future economic expansion. The presence of entrepreneurial "role models" is mentioned as another crucial aspect in boosting entrepreneurship. According to the authors, entrepreneurship is likely to be higher in economies with higher levels of current firm ownership, and it is also influenced by inequalities in legal institutions (as represented by legal family).

According to the sociological approach to entrepreneurship, Gibb and Ritchie (1982) cited in (Nguyen et.al, 2020:5) explains that people's perceptions of their capacity for entrepreneurship and the behaviour that results from those perceptions can be understood in terms of the kinds of situations they encounter and the social (reference) groups to which they relate throughout their lives. According to Nguyen et al. (2020:5), the sources of influence are primarily family background, situational circumstances, and the larger entrepreneurship environment.

According to Randerson et.al (2015:143), the entrepreneurial behaviours of an individual are frequently grounded in the familial setting. Likewise, the viability of the family enterprise relies on individual or collective entrepreneurial actions. Ultimately, both entrepreneurial behaviours and the outcomes of the family enterprise influence the family unit. The family serves as a domain for the experimentation and development of entrepreneurial behaviours, facilitating interactions with others (Chung & Gale, 2009) and fostering entrepreneurial aspirations (Krueger, 2003) (*Ibid*: 144&145).

2.2 Thematic Review

Literature reviews focusing on eight broad themes that is, employment generation and self-sufficiency, floriculture as livelihood, cost and labour efficiency, floriculture as entrepreneurial opportunity and activity, floriculture for women entrepreneurship and empowerment, export potentiality of cut flowers, socio-cultural importance of flowers, sustainability of floriculture and constraints faced in floriculture activity, have been covered.

2.2.1 Employment generation and self-sufficiency

In her article 'Cut-Flower Exports, Female Labor, and Community Participation in Highland Ecuador,' Tanya Korovkin (2003:24-35) concludes that employment in the cut-flower sector pays better than other off-farm jobs available to indigenous peasants. She finds that employment in the cut-flower sector has provided indigenous women with tangible but small improvement in terms of income and decision-making autonomy. She discovers that the rise of the cut-flower industry has offered an economic safety valve to destitute rural areas.

'Endogenisation or Enclave Formation: The Development of the Ethiopian Cut Flower Industry,' written by Melese and Helmsing (2010:58) observes that Ethiopia's floriculture business is a significant source of employment. They argue that because the majority of flower farms are located in rural areas, they provide an essential source of income for many local residents, enabling them to diversify their sources of income and escape poverty.

Pusa (2017:264-270) in his study of 'Floriculture in Nagaland: A Comparative Study of Dimapur and Kohima Districts' concludes that Nagaland Floriculture industry has opened up avenues for women and unemployed youth towards self-employment and has created employment opportunities for local and non-local daily labourers. He argues that the protected method of cut flower cultivation has opened new paths for women and unemployed young people to earn an alternative source of living.

'Government Policies for Development of Floriculture and its Impact in Sikkim: A Socio-Economic Study', a study by Bhui and Bhandari (2014:7), reveals that Sikkim farmers have been encouraged to cultivate flowers on a large scale and for commercial purposes. They observe that for some people, this represented a greater opportunity to make money and work for themselves. Additionally, young people have decided to focus their time and energy on flower cultivation, who are now self-employed as a result. In Sikkim, they claim that floriculture has paved the path for independent work. They also state that after retirement, some of them start working in the flower industry, giving them a sense of reemployment and supplementing their income.

In his study on the "Socio-economic and Environmental Impact of Floriculture Industry in Ethiopia," Tilahun (2012:27-28) notes that the floriculture industry generated employment opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labourers for the nearby rural population as well as the local area. Even people from far cities and rural areas have been observed working in the floriculture plantations. He analyses the study findings from the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry from the year 2006, which show that, up to April 2006, the floriculture sector provided 21,356 job possibilities for both trained and unskilled workers on 321.3 hectares of floriculture coverage. In addition to creating direct jobs, the floriculture industry also creates indirect jobs as a result of development spillovers. For example, small neighbourhood cafes, tea rooms, and home rentals were established near the floriculture farms, providing services for directly hired workers as well as indirect job opportunities for business owners.

2.2.2 Floriculture as Livelihood

In their paper 'Exploring Floriculture Potential for Sustainable Livelihood of Subsistence Communities in Indian Himalaya,' Phondani, Bhatt, Maikhuri et al. (2018:3,4) examine how floriculture as an alternative source of income generation was started with the goal of improving the livelihood of the local communities. They conclude that, with institutional assistance, floriculture in rural areas strengthened and empowered rural farmers to improve their livelihoods, economy, and natural resource conservation.

Agoramoorthy and Hsu (2012:74) in their case study, 'Impact of Floriculture Development Enhances Livelihood of India's Rural Women,' discover that the floriculture industry has provided impoverished tribal farmers, particularly women, with tremendous opportunities to significantly increase their income through floriculture development in a short period of time. They point out that the small-scale floriculture sector clearly energised and empowered indigenous women to improve their livelihoods, economies, and biodiversity in their communities.

In their work 'Floriculture and Livelihood Security: A Case Study of the Rural–Urban Fringe in North West Delhi, India,' Saini, Anand, and Singh (2018:10) found that

farmers are getting more interested in floriculture, and that it has become a stable livelihood alternative that outperforms others. Their findings reveal that as technology and globalisation advance, the demand for flowers grows locally and globally, resulting in an increase in flower production and the creation of new livelihood options.

Singh (2017:4160-4162) in her study on 'Floral Crafts for Improved Livelihood and Women Empowerment' concludes that small-scale floricultural craft in rural regions has the potential to strengthen and empower tribal, rural, and urban women in strengthening their lives and economies, and so has the potential to contribute to India's long-term sustainability. She points out that floriculture crafting, such as dried flower making, floral design, bouquet making, and the like, has recently been seen as an appropriate business and for women empowerment in both rural and urban places.

In his study 'Problems and Prospects of Floriculture in Selected Regions of the East and North-East Himalayas,' Banerjee (2017:181-223) finds that in the Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya, systematic hi-tech cultivation of cut flowers for farmers has led to higher income, which has increased the poor farmers' purchasing power, allowing them to enjoy a much better and more decent standard of living. His findings show that floriculture has become a potent tool for creating jobs, and that agricultural diversification has shown to be a viable livelihood alternative, particularly for the agricultural poor.

Lalbiakthangi (2020:2) observes in 'Institutional Arrangement for Export of Anthurium in Mizoram: A Study of Two Districts,' that anthurium cultivation opens up a lot of opportunities for expansion in commercial floriculture, with a positive impact on growers' income and livelihood status, contributing to Mizoram's economic development. She discovers that institutional involvement to promote cut anthurium flower marketing has resulted in increased income for growers.

Wei (2013:408-410) notes that floriculture is a small, newly developing private sector enterprise in Fiji and is still in its infancy in her work on "Improving Livelihoods Through Floriculture Out-growing Scheme – The Koroipita Village in Fiji." The development of hotels and resorts on the island has increased the demand

for floricultural goods. As seen in the out-grower and South Sea Orchids (SSO) supply chain, the Fijian floricultural industry is one of the few in the South Pacific that has been able to build a wholesaling structure. Cut flowers are a source of income for Koroipita floriculturists, who also gain from floriculture. The Koroipita village's various separate projects in floriculture have given the locals, especially women, the opportunity to make a living.

Patel, Chaudhary, and Chaudhary (2018:66,67) in their work on "Floriculture Increasing Women Empowerment and Livelihood Development," notes that India's dried flower sector has a lot of potential to grow and offers rural women, housewives, and unemployed youths and adults the opportunity to find work. They observe that the dry flower industry has helped disadvantaged rural women organise as a group to participate in various activities such as dairy cooperatives, savings and credit groups, floriculture groups and agriculture groups. Certainly, rural areas' small-scale floriculture has made a positive impact by empowering tribal women and enhancing their livelihoods and economy as a whole.

2.2.3 Cost and labour efficiency

Van Huylenbroeck (2010:365) states in his 'Status of Floriculture in Europe,' that European floricultural output is characterised by a high range of products, production facilities, and production sites. He claims that now, the majority of Europe's produce is consumed within the continent, and that globalisation will have a significant impact on worldwide horticultural and floricultural production and distribution. Plants are grown in places with the best combinations of climatic conditions and labour cost (2010:374).

In her paper 'Economics of Floriculture: A Study of Assam,' Dipali Bhaisya (2017:133) shows that the overall cost of cultivation for medium-sized farms in Assam was the highest. She notes that the benefit-to-cost ratio for all flowers was highest for medium-sized farms. As a result, she claims that the larger the farm, the higher the expense and the higher the profit. She claims that as the size of the farm grows, so does the amount of labour used.

In their study "Catalysts and Barriers to Cut Flower Export A Case Study of Ethiopian Floriculture Industry," Belwal and Chala (2007:222) note that Ethiopia is one of the three most populous nations in Africa. They note that the labor-intensive nature of the floricultural sector gives Ethiopia, which has a sizable population, a competitive advantage. They contend that Ethiopia has a large, labor-intensive, relatively inexpensive, orderly, and readily trainable labour force and that this presents a significant domestic market for flowers in the future. They also assert that labour costs in Ethiopia are lower than those in several Asian countries as well as those in some African nations, like Tunisia, Mauritius, Kenya, etc. Producers have competitive advantage of cheap available unskilled labour force in Ethiopia according to the authors.

2.2.4 Market potentiality of floriculture products

In his article "Market Structure of Flower Market in Bangladesh," Karmaker (2022:2,3) notes that from July to November 2013, Bangladesh exported flowers worth US\$16.58 million to a number of countries, including India, Pakistan, Italy, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, the United States of America, South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Japan, Germany, Britain, Denmark, and France. However, the country only accounts for 0.3% of the total global cut flower trade. He also highlights that data from the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) which shows that Bangladesh exported cut flowers, leaves, trees, plants, bulbs, and roots worth \$86,000 in the 2016–17 fiscal year, a 10.26 percent increase over the \$78,000 exported the year prior. He concludes that the entire Bangladesh floral industry is changing, with a bigger percentage of flower purchases for various occasions quickly expanding both locally and internationally.

In their paper 'Cut Flower Export from Bangladesh: Prospects, Challenges, and Propositions,' Chowdhury and Khan (2015:15-17) argue that cut flower has a promising export growth potential. They state that large-scale commercial cut flower production began in the mid-1980s. Bangladesh now exports cut flowers and ornamental greenery to other countries and observes that tube rose, rose, orchid, and marigold are among the key flowers that make up Bangladesh's floral basket for

export. They also note that through domestic and export sales, Bangladesh has reaped significant economic gains from this sector. However, they mention that cut flower export performance has shown a decrease trend since 2011. They further observe that Bangladesh's government has designated this area as having future growth potential and has designated this industry as a priority area, and it is committed to providing particular assistance in the form of monetary incentives, venture capital, and other subsidies.

In their study 'Production and Export Performance of Indian Floricultural Sector,' Kumarasamy and Harshavardhini (2021: 5) state that floriculture has evolved into a high-tech commercial activity carried out under regulated climatic conditions inside a poly house or green house. According to them, India ranks 18th in the world floriculture trade, contributing 0.6 percent. They believe that the country has significantly improved its flower production, particularly cut flowers, which have a high export potential. They point out that India's overall floriculture exports in 2020-21 were Rs. 575.98 Crores/77.86 USD Millions, an increase from the previous year's export figure. They also claim that while the quantity of exported goods has decreased, the value of exported goods has increased which is necessary for economic growth.

Matthee, Viviers, and Naude (2006:514,524) in their paper "Challenges for the Floriculture Industry in a Developing Country: A South African Perspective," highlights that South Africa currently exports cut flowers, plants, foliage, and bulbs on a daily basis via air. The majority of floral exports are cut flowers, followed by foliage, bulbs, and plants making up the remaining 40%. (Nofal, 2001 cited in Matthee et.al,2006). They state that traditional greenhouse items of South Africa's floriculture sector are in high demand around the world. There are efficient and effective channels for distributing floriculture products. They claim that the exporters employ research and up-to-date market data to innovate and stay connected to market trends (i.e., shifting consumer needs). The paper also explains that the types of products that exporters manufacture are mostly determined by the market and the exporters themselves, therefore they primarily produce the items that are in demand. 55% of the exporters claim that they do not regularly export, and 62% claim that

when they do, it accounts for less than 25% of their overall sales. The researchers conclude that these facts show that they are not committed to exporting, as the majority of their revenues go to the domestic market.

Lalnunmawia and Khawlhing (2011:204-206) in their work on 'Cultivation of Anthurium in Mizoram, India: present scenario and future prospect' note that a good number of Anthurium cut flowers has been produced and exported from Mizoram, which have been gaining recognition in the national as well as the international level. The researchers opine that to enable the anthurium growers and quantity in Mizoram, function more efficiently and competitively and to increase the bulk of exports, it is necessary to turn this business entirely on a new angle.

In their study titled "Marketing Efficiency of Anthurium Cut Flowers in India: An Analysis," Rohmingliani and Thanga (2014:75,78) concentrate on the Mizoram state, which appears to be the largest producer of anthurium cut flowers by contributing nearly half of the country's total production (44.11 percent) during the 2012–2013 period. According to the writers, there are three main organisations involved in the selling of anthurium flowers in Mizoram: Zopar Export Private Limited (ZEP), Zo-Anthurium Growers Society (ZAGS), and Anthurium Growers Society of Kolasib (AGSK). Local markets exhibit the highest level of marketing effectiveness of all the markets for the state's anthurium cut flowers, while the least effective markets are Bangalore and Mumbai. They point out that different levels of marketing success have been achieved for cut Anthurium flowers in the major markets outside the state. They contend that the availability of direct transportation options to the destination should be one of the primary determinants of marketing effectiveness because there is a significant likelihood of transit loss when transporting perishable goods.

The two biggest markets for fresh cut flowers from India are Europe and Japan, according to Murray and Rao's (2006:51-52) article, "Export Opportunities for Indian Floriculture." They say that many nations with a relatively high per capita consumption of cut flowers are part of the EU, which is estimated to consume more than 50% of the world's flowers. They maintain that around 75% of India's fresh cut flower exports go to Europe and Japan, and these two markets form the backbone of

the country's fresh cut flower export business. They believe that due to the significant freight and transaction cost disadvantage that Indian exporters face in comparison to African nations, Indian exports to Europe, which has historically been the largest market for Indian fresh cut flowers, have been declining in recent years. According to analysis, they find that Indian cut flower exporters are at a disadvantage when compared to their rivals in terms of the cost of airfreight by 50–60%. The authors stress that geographical location, the inability of Indian exporters to receive airfreight discounts due to low export volumes, frequent increases in air freight for Indian exports, decreases in airfreight rates for competitors due to large volumes and economies of scale, and the disadvantage of import duties to Indian exporters in the EU market are all causes of increased costs.

2.2.5 Floriculture as entrepreneurial opportunity and activity

‘A Study on Entrepreneurial Challenges of Floriculture in Odisha’ a study by Mishra and Mishra (2016:419-421) discusses that entrepreneurs in the floriculture industry are drawn to the gradual transition from conventional flower plantations to the production of cut flowers for export and that the liberalised economy encourages business entrepreneurs to launch export-focused floriculture units. They also highlight that the floriculture industry in Odisha not only benefits the state's farmers, but it also draws a lot of small and medium-sized business owners. They state that the government of Odisha has chosen various production zones for various categories of flowers in an effort to draw a significant number of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs to the state's floriculture industry. Further, they mention that in order to support floriculture businesses and fulfil the rising demand for flowers, the state government allocated 200 crores of rupees under the National Horticulture Mission during the fiscal year 2014–15, which will raise the state's flower production, and increase business opportunities.

In their research on "Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Flower Growers in Tumkur District of Karnataka State," Bindu, Shivalingaiah, and Shwetha (2019:663), measure the entrepreneurial behaviour of floriculturists. Less flower farmers fall into the group of high entrepreneurs, according to their research. By setting up meaningful

and successful entrepreneurship development programmes, they advocate for the need to increase the entrepreneurial behaviour of flower growers. Additionally, they point out that a sizable portion of them fall into the low category for leadership and coordination of farm activities, and the medium category for knowledge of farming enterprises, decision-making ability, risk-taking, economic motivation, scientific motivation, and management motivation. Therefore, it is of vital importance in this area to improve the aforementioned traits by carrying out training and capacity building activities.

In their study, "Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Commercial Floriculture Nursery Owners in Kadiyam of Andhra Pradesh," Bhaskar, Rao, and Gopal (2019:5) measure the entrepreneurial behaviour of commercial floriculture nursery owners. Their findings show that the majority of nursery owners had medium entrepreneurial behaviour, which is a definite sign of progress. The majority of nursery owners had medium decision-making ability, achievement motivation, management orientation, risk orientation, and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, according to their observations. The results of their study show that inventiveness and decision-making skills were the factors that had the greatest influence on the entrepreneurial behaviour of nursery owners, but they observe that most nursery owners had medium levels of inventiveness and decision-making skills, necessitating the implementation of intensive training programmes to educate nursery owners on entrepreneurial skills.

2.2.6 Floriculture as women entrepreneurship and empowerment

According to Tripathi, Shukla and Babu et.al (eds) (2012:37-39), who wrote 'Role of Women in Floriculture' there are almost 70% women employed in floriculture business. He claims that women are involved in planting, harvesting, and post-harvest operations including packaging. He points out that women are more involved due to their manual abilities, aesthetic sensibility, and delicacy. He believes that encouraging women farmers to become entrepreneurs will help them gain power and break down barriers that prevent them from participating in commercial agriculture. He notes that women have a great deal of entrepreneurial possibilities in the floriculture industry by starting modest businesses where value-addition in the form

of bouquets and flower arrangements can be pursued. He further suggests that women organise themselves into self-help groups at the village or block level with the assistance of extension agencies, which could strengthen group ties and provide technical knowledge, training and entrepreneurial motivation so that they could start their own floriculture business and generate profit.

In their study 'Economics of Anthurium Flower Cultivation in North East India,' Thanga and Rohmingliani (2015:79,80) found that female family members cultivate this flower, with female members owning 86.76 percent of the business in Mizoram. They believe this figure demonstrates how floriculture has aided female empowerment in the home and in society. They conclude that the flower's cultivation has encouraged gender empowerment in the household as well as in society, and that the growers have made a large profit from the sale of cut flowers.

In their article titled 'Indicators and Impact of Empowerment: Evidence from Flower Trading Women in West Bengal', Sarker and Chakrabarti (2013:221) attempts to look at the empowerment of women who work in the flower crop trade in West Bengal. In the flower industry, they find that women who work as marketing agents have higher levels of empowerment than housewives, and when compared to the same type of marketing agents who have lower levels of regular income, the former's higher levels of regular income have positive and significant impacts on their empowerment. Compared to working women who serve as marketing representatives in various flower trading venues, they claim that housewives are viewed as having less authority. The researchers believe that the economic aspect, the ability to make little purchases, and their psychological aspect are the major features for the significantly higher levels of empowerment for women marketing agents. They mention that empowerment ratings for women wholesalers are much greater than retailers for all types of markets.

The focus of Orozco, Anastasio, Gabriel et. al study "Active Role of Flower Shops in the Commercialization of Roses" (2021:532), is on the florists' entrepreneurial role in the commercialization of roses in southern Veracruz, Mexico. Their research demonstrates that roses are a commodity with significant economic and symbolic

value to flower shops in southern Veracruz, Mexico. Based on the demographic, psychological, and sociocultural profile, they point out that florists are positioned as entrepreneurs since they promote economic growth. The authors discover that florists are categorised as family micro-entrepreneurs who take risks and are accountable for their choices. They contend that the flower shops' entrepreneurial endeavours produce economic incentives with local and regional influence. They also believe that in order to increase their capacity for innovation, florists need to expand their connections with producers, distributors, and other florists. Their findings show the potential of florists and present a chance to employ the available technology to lengthen the vase life, produce new floral designs and styles, and support local and regional florist events to broaden their customer base.

2.2.7 Sustainability of floriculture

The economic, social, and cultural sustainability of floriculture in Ecuador is discussed in Sawers' (2005:1-9) working paper, 'Sustainable Floriculture in Ecuador'. He says that since their inception in 1983, flower exports have accounted for 9% of the nation's export revenue. For the near future, Ecuador's exports of flowers are anticipated to increase. Ecuador's most sustainable export product is flowers, which brought in \$9437 per hectare in 2004. He observes that the flower boom has significantly increased household incomes, boosted labour force participation, and either stopped or reversed migration from rural to urban areas. He further states that in the communities where it is concentrated, the extraordinary rise in female wage labour is planting the seeds of a social, economic, and cultural revolution. The primary role of women as the family's breadwinners and their ownership of their earnings have changed the social status of women in the family and community, raised their self-esteem, decreased violence against women, and given them more authority within the family, including the authority to decide how money is spent and whether to get pregnant (Newman et al. 2001, cited in Sawers,2005). He concludes that all signs point to the fact that flower exports will continue to transform gender relations and play a significant and a sustainable role in Ecuador's economy.

In their paper 'Prospects of Women Cut Flower Enterprise for Sustainability Approach: A Case Study,' Leah and Sharma (2018:327) state that the North East region shows considerable promise for commercial floriculture. They argue that the demand for floriculture goods has expanded dramatically in Nagaland as a result of urbanisation and rising disposable income levels. Their findings suggest that the cut flower industry has a positive impact on growers' annual revenue, food spending, and savings.

In their review article titled "Sustainability in Brazilian Floriculture: Introductory Notes to a Systemic Approach," Junqueira and Peetz (2018:160) note that the consumption of flowers and ornamental plants is volatile around the world, subject to cycles of fashion and a never-ending search for new trends. They assert that over time, the Brazilian commercial floriculture has acted as a section that is creative and technologically adaptable to the new trends, demands, and expectations of the markets. However, they contend that in order to increase the productivity and competitiveness of floriculture and decorative plants, more attention must be paid to them and more money must be invested in new technologies, particularly if farm sustainability is to be achieved.

2.2.8 Socio-cultural importance of flowers

Koley, Verma and Chawla (2014:312) in their work 'Role of Floriculture in Sustainable Development of Socio-Economic Status of Indian Farmers' analyses the social and cultural sustainability of flowers. They state that in every culture and religion, flowers are used to celebrate the birth of a child, to wish ill people a swift recovery, and to bid farewell to the deceased. They stress that floral decorations, bouquets, and flower arrangements frequently take centre stage at social gatherings, birthday celebrations, get-togethers to welcome friends or family members home, and ceremonies honouring dignitaries. To them, people all across the world are aware that flowers have a greater positive impact on people's lives and emotions than words or other gifts. They note that globally, people utilise flowers as a way to express their emotions at holidays like Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and New Year's, events encouraging cultural exchanges. Belwal and Chala, (2008)

opines that marketing flowers is a lucrative industry due to the rise in popularity of flowers and ornamental plants (cited in Koley et.al, 2014). The authors also note that flowers are necessary for a religious offering to the family deity every morning for a devout Hindu, and thus, there is no way to overestimate the aesthetic importance of flowers in our daily lives. They stress that flowers are a necessity at every social event in modern society and so ignoring the significance and importance of floriculture is not possible.

A flower garden at home can beautify the surroundings and brighten the interior, according to Ekhuemelo and Ekhuemelo (2012:443) in 'Impact of Floriculture and Landscaping on Sustainable Environmental Management'. They argue that the cultivation of flower gardens has been practised all over the world for many centuries and that people from all walks of life are drawn to these flowers because of their inherent beauty. They emphasise that the landscaping of a home raises its value and psychologically too, the presence of flowers fosters sentiments of warmth and tranquillity. They further note that shrubs beautify sporting fields for recreation; grass offers protection and cushioning. They believe that parks, polo fields, football fields, and other landscaped spaces serve as places for relaxation and recreation as well as markers of wealth and prosperity.

According to Torun's (2011:6017) study, "The Effect of Demographic Factors (in floriculture) on Acquiring Ornamental Plants Marketing as a Profession," consumers in Istanbul and Kocaeli cities in Turkey primarily utilise flowers as gifts for special occasions and for their own taste and enjoyment. He notes that purchasing flowers for special occasions like New Year's Eve, Mother's Day, Teacher's Day, Valentine's Day, and birthdays results in higher flower sales. He also observes that flowers are significant and required during wedding receptions, festivals, and other occasions like visiting friends. On the other side, he notes that individuals frequently use flowers in their homes, gardens, or places of business. He contends that men make up the majority of consumers of decorative flowers and products derived from them. He also asserts that the primary cause of this is that males feel they must purchase flowers for the other sex at particular periods since the opposite sexes at various times ascribe various meanings to different flower varieties (special occasions). He

opines that most of the time when women purchase flowers, it is for their own pleasure or for special events. The majority of flower purchasers in the two Turkish cities, according to his analysis, are men.

The socio-cultural significance of floriculture is highlighted by Kalita (2019:90) in his article, "Prospects of floriculture industry in north eastern area of India." He believes that as the custom of giving flower bouquets as gifts for all occasions becomes more widespread, the demand for cut flowers has increased in urban areas. There are more florist shops in the nation's major cities. He claims in recent years, it has become customary to welcome guests and travelers with flowers and bouquets in airports and meetings, as well as attractive flower arrangements in business offices, hotels, and wedding venues. Giving flower bouquets to patients to wish them a swift recovery, as well as sending congratulations to sports and election victors, is a recent practice, and the presence of florist shops close to hospitals illustrates this trend. Nowadays, flowers are given to couples in wedding ceremonies instead of gifts.

2.2.9 Constraints faced

Jincy & Gomathi, (2023:523) in their 'Study on Scope and Challenges in Marketing of Flowers by Floriculturist with Special Reference to Nilgiri District' argues that production related barriers include the lack of sufficient infrastructure, high-quality and enhanced species planting material, and identical fertilisers and manures. Ignorance of high yield types, soil testing, and appropriate fertiliser and pesticide dosages are constraints faced. The output of floriculture is impacted by the shortage of qualified workers for plant protection, harvesting, and post harvesting of produce.

'Mobile Floriculture Operators in Southern Sri Lanka: Challenges and Solutions,' a study by Anuruddi, Fonseka, and Wickramaarachchi (2020:33) shows that in Sri Lanka, the majority of small-scale growers market their floriculture products either at home in their own nurseries, by street vending, or by mobilising into different places such as week fairs, exhibitions, or any other occasion where customers are available.

According to a study by Shukla et al. (2022:813) titled "Constraints in Marketing of Flowers: A Study in Solan and Sirmaur Districts of Himachal Pradesh," among the numerous problems farmers encounter are inadequate transportation infrastructure,

disorganised marketplaces, slow-paying middlemen, excessive intermediary commissions, unregulated markets, a lack of storage facilities, and high startup costs.

Manzoor, Alishahid, and Baluch (2001:88) in their study 'Economics of Floriculture in Pakistan: A Case Study of Lahore Market,' observes that in urban Pakistan, with increasing demand for flowers for a variety of utilities, the flower business is likely to expand, despite floriculture remaining a neglected segment of agriculture. Their findings demonstrate that the floral industry is gradually developing, and that there is a need to investigate the prospects for expansion of this business (Ibid).

Pawar (2014:181) finds in his 'Development of Commercial Floriculture and its Economic, Ecological, and Social Impact on Maval region of Pune District' in Maharashtra, that while floriculture as an occupation is helpful in and of itself, it has not been beneficial to Maval. He believes that Maval serves as a base for floriculture, with the profits of the industry being channelled elsewhere. He further says that the activity has not been properly adopted by the region, and that the majority of people are still unaffected.

In their work on 'Challenges for the Floriculture Industry in a Developing Country: A South African Perspective,' Matthee, Naude, and Viviers (2006:525) argue that the South African floriculture industry needs to shift its focus from the domestic market and become more export-oriented, as the domestic market is slowly becoming saturated and its turnover is small compared to the global market. They claim that the South African floriculture export business is underdeveloped and lacks competitiveness in the global market.

De and Singh (2016:2-8) argues in their work on 'Floriculture Industries, Opportunities and Challenges in Indian Hills,' that the region currently lacks supporting infrastructure for commercial floriculture, despite the market's enormous potential. They believe that transportation issues, poor market infrastructure, the lack of retail marketplaces and collecting centres, and the lack of integrated post-harvest management facilities are the main causes for the hill region's low commercial floriculture activity.

Gaikwad and Lalhriatpuii (2016:368) discovers in their work on 'Constraints Faced by Anthurium Growers in Aizawl District of Mizoram,' that the majority of anthurium growers in Mizoram face constraints such as investment problem, insufficient electricity, high labour costs, a shortage of skilled labour, non-availability of labour, and pest and disease management issues. They also add that transportation problem, lack of storage facilities, price fluctuations, and a lack of market knowledge are also issues faced by the anthurium farmers.

In their paper titled "Impact of Socio-Economic Factor on Floriculture in Kolaghat C. D. Block, Purba Medinipur District," Ghosh and Gupta (2019:68) note that the poor educational status of the flower growers prevents them from utilising the advanced flower management technology in order to receive a better return from the cultivation. The local growers face significant difficulties due to a lack of or unavailability of labour during the flower picking season. Lack of a storage facility also forces growers to markdown their products during periods of weak demand. Additionally, they mention how middlemen and input merchants take advantage of ignorant farmers when they need to buy inputs and while selling the produce.

In their article "Research and Development and Innovations in Floriculture: Lessons from the Market Giants for Developing Countries like Sri Lanka," Beneragama and Peiris (2016:127,130) note that, despite being a small island, Sri Lanka has been a consistent exporter of floriculture products to the global market, reaching its total floriculture trade value of Rs. 14.1 million in 2013. They contend that one of Sri Lanka's largest challenges is the lack of funding for large-scale floriculture projects, which leaves the majority of businesses on the medium- to small-scale scale. They also claim that Sri Lanka has depended on the readily available types for many years now. Furthermore, they assert that despite the people's expertise and high literacy rates, there is still insufficient postharvest processing of produce from floriculture. They further observe that the country lacks adequate training, research, and innovation facilities to enable the expansion of the business.

Rathnayake and Rathnayake (2019:7) note that high production costs and low unit land productivity are issues influencing favourable economic returns from exports in

their article "An Overview of Upcountry Cut Flower Industry, Sri Lanka." A barrier impeding the effectiveness of the marketing process and opportunities to explore new markets is the absence of direct flights to popular market destinations. The country's floriculture business struggles with issues such as lack of a suitable market, not receiving stable prices, seasonal demand, lack of water supply, access to new technology, high input costs, and competition from artificial flowers on the market.

2.3 METHODOLOGICAL REVIEW

A methodological review describes the research designs, methods and procedures employed in previous researches. Some of the reviewed literature on methodology focuses on field survey adopting semi structured questionnaire and interview schedule, sampling procedure for qualitative and quantitative data, they are discussed as follows-

A field-based study was conducted by Phondani, Bhatt, Maikhuri et.al (2018). In their work on 'Exploring Floriculture Potential for Sustainable Livelihood of Subsistence Communities in Indian Himalaya', they carried out their study in three different village clusters viz. Dharaunj, Gumod and Mudiyani in Champawat district of Uttarakhand State in India. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach was adopted for the field study; they made use of interview method to collect primary data from 150 farmers of fifteen villages (ten farmers of each village) Participatory learning and sharing of knowledge were the process they adopted during the field-based capacity building programmes.

Thanga and Rohmingliani (2015) used both primary and secondary data in their study 'Economics of Anthurium Flower Cultivation in North Eastern India', data were obtained from an interview of sample growers by canvassing a pre-determined schedule of enquiry. The researchers included only those growers who were actually cultivating the Anthurium flower and came up with 68 sample growers.

Leah and Sharma (2018) in their Case Study adopted a multi stage stratified random sampling technique for the selection of the cut-flower entrepreneurs. A total sample of 75 cut flower growers were selected. In the first stage they followed the random sampling method from Kohima and Dimapur districts. In the second stage, 15

growers from Dimapur district and 15 from Kohima district were selected. They made use of a list from the State Horticulture Department for the distribution of total respondents according to size of holding in the district under cut-flower cultivators. A total of 45 cut-flower growers from Kohima and Jakhama blocks were selected, 30 growers from the Dimapur district were selected from Medziphema and Chumukedima blocks areas respectively.

Saini, Anand and Singh (2018) in their research work on 'Floriculture and Livelihood Security: A Case Study of Rural –Urban Fringe in North West Delhi, India' relied on primary data which were collected from 75 households from Alipur, Bakhtawarpur, Ochandi and Qutab Garh. They made use of semi structured questionnaire for collecting primary data and adopted stratified random sampling method. They used semi-structured interviews as well as participant observation to explore participants' views more deeply and build on the information garnered from the village household questionnaire.

Anuruddi , Fonseka and Wickramaarachchi (2020) carried out a field survey in Galle district, Matara district and Hambantota district which belong to Southern province Sri Lanka. A pre tested semi structured questionnaire was used for interviewing the respondents. 40 flower vendors of these three districts and samples were selected randomly from a list of mobile vendors registered at Southern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka.

'Institutional Arrangement for Export of Anthurium in Mizoram: A study of two districts', by Lalbiakthangi (2020) was an exploratory one. Two blocks i.e. Bilkhawthlir of Kolasib and Tlangnuam of Aizawl district were selected out of the seven blocks in the districts, for the study. Data were collected after a rapid assessment procedure with interview method. The entire farmer households engaged in Anthurium production were interviewed. A total of 55 Anthurium growers from Aizawl district and 45 samples from Kolasib district were taken. A standard questionnaire was used to collect information from the selected sample of 100 growers. The selection of the sample is based on the simple principle of availability.

Dey and Moinuddin (2016) adopted cross sectional sampling survey method through scheduled questionnaire in their study on ‘Socio-Economic Status of Women Flower Vendors in Purba Medinipur District: A Sociological Analysis’. Simple random sampling without replacement technique was used. 200 women flower vendors were surveyed through scheduled questionnaires from three major flower markets of Purba Medinipur district. Observatory findings helped the researchers choose proper sample size of women flower vendors from each market on the basis of their participation rate. 80 samples from each of the two markets (experience.e., Kolaghat & Keshapat) and 40 samples were drawn from Deulia flower market of Purba Medinipur District.

‘Present Status and Future Scope of Floriculture Industry in Sri Lanka and its Potential in Women Empowerment’, a study made by Padmini and Kodagoda (2017) was based on survey and interview at Colombo and Gampaha Districts of Sri Lanka. Data were collected for qualitative analysis by direct and open- ended questions from hundred flower growers and samples were selected randomly.

Kalita (2019) in his study on ‘Problems of Growth of Floriculture Business – A Study from Assam’ made use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through a survey conducted in selected villages under Hajo circle under Kamrup district. Scheduled questionnaires were used to collect data from different categories of respondents. The study area and the sample were based on concentration of area under flower farming. 80 samples were collected and analysed.

A descriptive survey research approach was used by Kipchirchir and Danie (2018) in their study, “Effect of Strategic Orientation on Organizational Efficiency of Floriculture Farms In Naiveté Sub-County, Kenya.” With the help of the descriptive research design, the researchers were able to compare results by exposing respondents to a series of standardised questions. Quantitative and qualitative research techniques were both used by the researchers. For this research method, both open-ended and closed-ended instrument forms were used. The Kenya Flower Council’s membership includes 37 flower companies that are multinational businesses. The management of the companies at various departmental levels,

experience the production manager, marketing manager, logistics manager, human resource manager, and finance manager, made up the accessible population of interest for this study. 185 people were accessible. Because specific individuals in the firms were involved in the development, execution, and management of the firm's plans, stratified random sample followed by random sampling in each category was the optimal sampling strategy for this study. In the study, primary and secondary data were both used, where Questionnaires with close ended questions were utilised in the study to gather data.

Friedemann-Sa'nchez (2006) did ethnographic fieldwork in the towns of Chi'a and Cajica in 1999 and 2000 for her paper, "Assets in Intrahousehold Bargaining Among Women Workers in Colombia's Cut-flower Industry." Participant observation, simple observation, structured, semi-structured, and open-ended individual interviews, group interviews, and a survey of employees were among the approaches used to gather the primary data. The men and women who took part in the semi-structured in-depth interviews were selected at random from a variety of categories based on how long they had worked for the biggest corporation in the area. She conducted 48 in-depth one-on-one interviews in all. 360 of the 488 male and female agricultural labourers were asked to complete a questionnaire who completed all 68 of the questions.

In their research on "Entrepreneurial Behaviour of Flower Growers in Tumkur District of Karnataka State," Bindu, Shivalingaiah, and Shwetha (2019) identified the top four villages from the taluk with the highest area under flower production. Then, 40 chrysanthemum, 40 jasmine, and 40 crossandra farmers were picked at random from each community. Consequently, there were 120 responders in all. Data was gathered utilising an ex-post facto research approach, a thorough pre-tested interview schedule, and a personal interview method. With the help of statistical techniques like percentage, mean, standard deviation, and frequencies, the responses were graded, measured, categorised, and tabulated.

A study titled "Active Role of Flower Shops experienen the Commercialization of Roses" by Orozco, Anastasio, Gabriel et al. was done in the southern portion of the

Mexican state of Veracruz, specifically in the cities of Coatzacoalcos, Minatitlán, and Acayucan. Twenty flower shops, including five in Coatzacoalcos, nine in Minatitlán, and six in Acayucan, were the focus of an exploratory study. Interview was conducted as part of the survey that was used to gather the data, using questionnaire as a tool. Their questionnaire's design included both closed and open questions about marketing-related topics, as well as questions about florists' perceptions of consumer preferences, florist/distributor relationships, and florist/customer relationships.

The study, "An Economic Study of Plant Nursery Business in Gazipur and Jessore Districts of Bangladesh," by M. A. Haque, M. A. Monayem Miah and M. A. Rashid (2007) was carried out in two Sadar upazilas of Jessore and Gazipur districts, where private, NGO, and government plant nurseries have been built. In consultation with the relevant nursery workers, they selected the sample plant nurseries. For the study, a total of 40 private plant nursery owners—20 from each area were purposively chosen. Additionally, from each area, they selected three NGO nurseries (BRAC) and two government nurseries (BADC) for interviews. Pre-tested interview schedules were used to obtain the data through the survey method. To fulfil the objectives of the research, the gathered data were edited, condensed, tabulated, and examined by the scholars.

In their work "An Overview of Upcountry Cut Flower Industry, Sri Lanka," Rathnayake and Rathnayake (2019) conducted a field survey in Sri Lanka's Nuwareliya, Kandy, and Badulla districts, which were located in the Central and Uva provinces, respectively. The sample was chosen using data from the register of the Nuwareliya flower farmers' cooperative organisation and the Department of National Botanical Gardens' (DNBG) database of registered flower grower associations. The sample was chosen through snowball sampling techniques. 58 flower farmers were interviewed face-to-face and over the phone using a pre-tested structured questionnaire to gather primary data. Secondary data was gathered online, through institutional papers, books, and research articles. Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyse the data (SPSS version 17).

2.4. Overview of the literature review

This section is a summative overview of the literatures reviewed under three headings: theoretical, thematic and methodological review. The literature review begins with the theoretical perspectives and different theories have been reviewed and such theories appear to be relevant and be taken up for contextualization. Theoretical reviews and analysis made by various scholars on sustainable livelihood, social capital as livelihood asset, social exchange theories, the norm of reciprocity, gift giving theory and sociology of entrepreneurship have given us theoretical understanding of these various issues.

Development agencies and scholars use the livelihood approach to eradicate poverty in rural and urban settings, focusing on sustainable livelihood programs and policies. Different definitions and approaches help conceptualize livelihoods. Livelihood system consists of the necessary skills, resources (including both tangible and intangible assets), and actions needed to sustain a livelihood. A sustainable livelihood is one that has the ability to withstand and recover from challenges and shocks, while also preserving or improving its resources and capacities, without depleting the natural environment. The Sustainable Livelihood approach considers people's practical situations, priorities, and challenges in earning a living, aiming for long-term viability, fairness, and improved resources to positively impact local and global livelihoods.

Social capital, a vital livelihood asset, comprises networks of mutual support, enabling access to resources like loans, childcare, food, housing, and job information for both urban and rural poor. Social capital, including trust, norms, and networks, promotes collaboration and mutual advantage, crucial for sustainable livelihoods. It accumulates over time, fostering interpersonal connections and confidence. DFID emphasizes the importance of social capital in sustainable livelihoods, emphasizing trust, reciprocity, common rules, and connectedness, emphasizing the role of social ties and norms.

Social exchange theory suggests that humans rationally maximize material profits through cost-benefit analysis in society, examining social structure and connections.

Transactions involve tangible and intangible products, with generous individuals expecting significant returns and those receiving a lot feeling obligated to reciprocate. This process results in equilibrium in interactions. Social exchange involves individuals seeking gains and incurring costs, making decisions based on benefits and costs. It helps form trusting patterns and fosters close connections.

The moral standard of reciprocity establishes specific behaviors and obligations as payback for benefits received, based on past contributions and interactions, and is implied by the universal principle of reciprocity. People may reciprocate favors due to concerns about others' perception and the widespread acceptance of reciprocity norms. It also suggests that internalized social norms may lead to morally correct actions and self-satisfaction through reciprocation.

In ancient societies, gift giving was a significant aspect of friendship. Mauss argues that friendships last the longest when friends give and receive gifts. In Maori tradition, the obligation to give and receive gifts is not passive, and the giver remains responsible even if they abandon it. This social bond is formed through reciprocation, and there are rights and responsibilities for both giving and receiving.

Individual entrepreneurial behaviour involves individuals seeking new economic ventures, ranging from self-employment to establishing a major organization. Entrepreneurship is a major occupational choice for many people, focusing on finding opportunities and producing new economic activity through the creation of a new organization. Family entrepreneurship, focus on the entrepreneurial behaviors of family members, family companies, and family enterprises.

The different theoretical perspectives reviewed on Sustainable Livelihood approach, social exchange theories, norm of reciprocity, gift giving and sociology of entrepreneurship appear to be relevant in the context of the present study. The livelihood strategies reviewed would be significant in analysing and understanding livelihood through floriculture in the context of Mizo society. The assets, capabilities and bundle of activities people require for a means of livelihood in floriculture, the social sustainability of floriculture and the stakeholders' ability to withstand and

recover from pressure and respond to new opportunities would be significant for the study.

Livelihood resource that poor households in the urban setting rely heavily on would be social capital in the Mizo context. Floriculture as one of the livelihood strategies of the Mizo society leads to the formation of florist associations which in turn create social capital. The study will focus on how floriculturists draw upon their social ties and network of relationships by being active members of the associations and gain access and control over their social capital asset to move forward and strengthens their business and sustain themselves against stress and shocks.

The theoretical perspectives on the social exchange theory, the norm of reciprocity and gift giving which are all based on exchange and reciprocation, giving and receiving, an internalized social norm fostering social bonds and close connections are significant for the present study because floriculturists practice gift giving and exchange of products in the form of potted plants and flowers which fosters connections and network of relationships.

Theoretical review on entrepreneurship is relevant for the present study where floriculture as a choice of occupation for the stakeholders who focus on finding opportunities and who generate economic activity establishing a new enterprise in floriculture as self-employment and family entrepreneurship.

Scholarly articles and research work on floriculture based on various themes such as employment generation and self-sufficiency, floriculture as livelihood, cost and labour efficiency, floriculture as entrepreneurial opportunity and activity, floriculture for women entrepreneurship and empowerment, export potentiality of cut flowers, socio-cultural importance of flowers, sustainability of floriculture and constraints faced in floriculture activity have been reviewed. These reviewed studies are the works of scholars from abroad, different parts of India, north-eastern region of India and Mizoram state. These research works are from different disciplines and they have been reviewed in order to better understand the theoretical foundations and practical aspects of the problem. Such thematic reviews are the perspectives of mostly economists and the discipline of commerce. There is lack of research study on

the sociological implications of floriculture and the social significance of flowers within a culture, and also on how beyond livelihood and entrepreneurship floriculture connects people with passion and emotion. Thematic review helps in finding the conceptual, theoretical, research gap, rationale of the study and operational issues involved in the study.

The methodological review of previous research works by scholars have been done. Majority of the literature on methodology reviewed use qualitative research. The most commonly used technique of data collection is the interview, interview schedule, semi-structured questionnaire, scheduled questionnaire and descriptive survey. The literatures reviewed mostly use simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, multi-stage stratified random sampling and snowball sampling. One conducted a case study and some adopted participant observation in their study.

2.5 Research gap and Rationale of the study:

The fundamental goal of literature reviewing would be identifying a research gap. A research gap signifies key problems or questions that has not been explored or under-explored by the existing studies or previous research works within a researcher's area of study. A research gap may also exist when little or no study is available on new ideas, approaches or concepts on certain issues and problems. From the review of a number of existing literatures, the following research gaps have been identified, and the rationale of the study presented as follows:

1. While North East India including Mizoram has created a space for itself in the context of floriculture innovations, the majority of the reviewed literature are all the research works of scholars from other countries and from different parts of India. Even in the context of Mizoram, though there are a few research works on the tedious Anthurium cultivation by farmers in Mizoram, there is little or lack of holistic research on floriculture and its viability as a means of livelihood for the Mizo people. The proposed study hopes to add new knowledge and contribute insights on floricultural activity as livelihood options and as entrepreneurial activities in Mizoram to add input to sociological literature on the subject. Therefore, apart from Anthurium

cultivation, a study of the present scenario of floriculture in Mizoram would be socially relevant so as to explore the factors influencing people to pursue it as their livelihood options.

2. The reviewed research works have focused on the economic aspect of the floricultural activity, the commercial potentiality, employment generation, challenges faced in the business and as a means of livelihood in international and national situations leaving aside social dimensions of floriculture which include gift exchange, festive occasions and aesthetic values associated with flowers and how it encourages the florists to become entrepreneurs.
3. Hence, it would be sociologically significant to explore and study the growth of floriculture to understand the neglected social aspect, the entrepreneurial activity associated with the aesthetic values attached to flowers, the importance flowers assume in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society.
4. There is deficiency of comprehensive sociological study on floriculture in Mizoram, so there is dearth of scholarly works on the subject and the study proposes to meet the deficiency in this regard.
5. The women component is largely missing in the context of those floriculturists who adopt this as one of their livelihood options in the reviewed literatures.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 Introduction**
- 3.2 Objectives of the study**
- 3.3 Research design**
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CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research simply refers to a search to gain knowledge, and it involves a process of looking for pertinent information on a certain problem through a scientific and systematic method. Research seeks the answer to certain unanswered questions. It is an attempt on the part of the researcher to discover, develop and validate knowledge. A researcher's intended course of action in the research is explained through research methodology. Thus, a researcher's general approach to the study in order to obtain valid and reliable result that meet the aims and goals of the problem is understood as research methodology. Methodology involves considerations of the philosophical framework that underpins what and why certain methods are chosen. Research methodology outlines a detailed plan of the research problem from the beginning to arrive at conclusion and provide scientifically sound outcome. An organized approach to addressing the research problem is through research methodology. One way to think of it would be as a science studying how research is done scientifically. It covers the many approaches that a researcher typically takes when examining his research problem as well as the reasoning behind them. It is imperative that the researcher understands methodology in addition to research methods and procedures.

This chapter highlights the necessary procedures followed, the methods and approach employed from the start to accomplish the end result of the present research project. In this connection, it is therefore crucial to mention the important research procedures adopted as methodological processes to complete the present work. The research objectives and methodology of research involving justification of the research design, sampling process, sources of data, techniques of data collection, data processing and analysis of data, and the research ethics followed are shown.

3.2. Objectives of the study

Any research effort is built upon its research objectives. They give the investigation a clear direction and goal. Objectives of a research study aid the researcher to focus and keep on track throughout the investigation. A research objective is a set of precise, quantifiable, and attainable goals that an investigator wants to achieve in a given period of time. They outline the goals and how to achieve them clearly and divide the research aims into smaller, more manageable parts.

The main aim of the present research is to analyze the entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options through floriculture in Mizoram. The research's specific objectives intend –

1. To prepare a socio-economic profile of floriculturists of Mizoram.
2. To study the importance of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context
3. To find out recent trends and growth of floriculture as livelihood option in Mizoram.
4. To analyze the growth of floriculture as a form of entrepreneurial pursuits.
5. To study the constraints faced by the floriculturists in Mizoram.

3.3 Research Design

The overall plan or structure that guides the process of conducting research constitutes research design. It refers to the logical, systematic planning and directing a piece of research. It is a critical component of the research process and serves as a blueprint for how a study will be carried out, including the methods and techniques that will be used to collect and analyze data.

The preparation of such a design facilitates research to be as efficient as possible yielding maximal information. The research design should take into account the time, resources, and energy that are accessible, as well as the availability of information that may be obtained from individuals or social organizations that may be able to provide the data.

The present research represents an exploratory cum descriptive research design. The study uses the mix method of mainly qualitative and need based quantitative design. The study focuses more on the qualitative analysis while looking at the social and aesthetic dimensions of floriculture in Mizoram. An exploratory research design is used to have an in-depth understanding of the problem to generate ideas, views and opinions on the research problem at hand that is, entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options available through floriculture in Mizoram. Descriptive research design is made use of to analyze the present situation of floriculture venture in Mizoram.

A thorough knowledge of social events in their natural settings is the goal of naturalistic inquiry, often known as qualitative study. It focuses more on the “why” than the “what” of social phenomena, relying on people’s personal experiences as meaning-makers in their day-to-day lives. Qualitative research looks at things in their natural environments and try to understand or interpret events in terms of the meanings that individuals assign to them. Researchers can gain insight into the significance that people assign to their experiences by using qualitative research methods to gain access to research part’cipants' thoughts and feelings. Qualitative methodology would provide deeper insight into the entrepreneurial activity provided by floriculture and the livelihood options offered through floriculture in the Mizo society. The methodology adopted would aid in understanding people’s experiences and the meanings they attach to them.

Qualitative data are those that are expressed either orally or through narratives. Direct interactions with people—one-on-one or group interviews—are the methods used to gather qualitative data. A variety of sampling methods are applied. For this research, interview schedule is administered for data collection.

To address scientific research inquiries, the quantitative technique involves gathering and evaluating numerical data. Utilising a quantitative approach allows one to average, identify patterns, make predictions, summarise and examine causal relationships and extrapolate findings to larger groups. The measurement of quantity or amount serves as the foundation for quantitative inquiry. It can be applied to

phenomena that have a quantitative expression. In order to answer the “what” or “how many” components of a research question or to quantify an issue, researchers employ quantitative data. That is, numerically measurable data that can be compared or counted. In the social sciences, quantitative approach is the most often used research framework. It describes a collection of methods, approaches, and presumptions that are used to examine numerical patterns in order to investigate psychological, social, and economic phenomena. A variety of numerical data are gathered for quantitative study. In the social sciences, quantitative approach is the most often used research framework. It describes a collection of methods, approaches, and presumptions that are used to examine numerical patterns in order to investigate psychological, social, and economic phenomena.

3.4 The universe and sampling

In statistical language, the term “universe” or “population” describes the totality of individuals or items in a given spatial or social context. Universe represents the entire group of units which is the focus of the study. It could also consist of non-human units such as farms, buildings or things. The entire aggregation of items from which samples could be drawn is known as a population/universe.

The present study is conducted in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The universe of the study comprises of the following categories of respondents:

1. Those floriculturists involved in the business as their livelihood options belonging to the three large florist associations in Mizoram namely, Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS).
2. Church elders belonging to the three church denominations in Mizoram namely The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
3. Leaders of Decoration Committee / Women’s Wing belonging to the three denominations such as The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.

4. Flower arrangers in the three church denominations: The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
5. Floral artists/designers in Aizawl, Mizoram
6. Leaders of the three florist associations in Mizoram as Key Informants such as Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS).
7. Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram as Key Informants.
8. *Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo Women's Organization as Key Informants

To promote entrepreneurship in the field of floriculture in Mizoram, Non-Governmental Organizations or civil society can play a vital role. They play a significant role in encouraging local initiatives in terms of mobilization and environment building. NGOs play a crucial role in mobilizing the local human and physical resources and creating appropriate entrepreneurial environment, thereby generating new opportunities. The NGOs have a huge role in stimulating and nurturing the spirit of entrepreneurship among women floriculturists in Mizoram. As such, the first florist associations namely Mizoram Florist Association came up in 1997, followed by Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society in 2002 and *Pangpar Zuar* Association in 2017. It is thus pertinent to look into the formation and their objectives in order to know their contributions towards promoting floriculture business in Mizoram. For the present research such NGOs serve as crucial key informants as their views and ideas on the floriculture entrepreneurship and their significant contribution towards promoting entrepreneurial activity enrich the research data.

The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) is the pioneer association related with floriculture. It was founded on 14th November 1997. The association was officially registered on October 13, 1998, in accordance with The Mizoram Society Registration Act (Act 3 of 1997). The registration number is SR-10/97/MZ-RFS of 1997. The MFA has its headquarters at Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. MFA

Headquarters currently has 9 office bearers and 83 members as executive committee with blooming Mizoram with flowers as their motto. At present MFA has 27 branches in Mizoram. The association has more than 500 members who comes from different parts of the state. However, members residing in Aizawl who are actually involved in the floriculture business falls down to 170 in number as per 2020 enrollment.

The *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) was formed in 2017 by floriculture entrepreneurs and as per 2020 enrollment, it has 180 members in and around Aizawl, the capital city. The association is not yet registered. The association has 7 office bearers and 20 executive committee members, with ‘uplifting floriculture entrepreneurs’ as their motto. The PPZA does not have branches outside Aizawl city.

Zo-Anthurium Growers’ Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) was formed by Anthurium plant growers in 2002, and in 2020 the society’s total members who are actually active in Anthurium cultivation comes down to 80 in Aizawl. The society is registered under Mizoram Co-operative Society.

The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram Synod is the largest denomination in Mizoram with its headquarters at Mission Veng, Aizawl and this denomination is the dominating one in Aizawl, the capital city. There are 176 Presbyterian churches under Aizawl Presbytery Synod (Source: Synod Bu, 2023) in Aizawl city. In every Presbyterian church in Aizawl localities, there exists a Decoration Committee/*Pangpar* (flower) Committee responsible for the upkeep of flower arrangement within the church for Sunday church service, and such Committees are also in charge of floral decorations on important festivals and conferences within the church and its compound. Such Decoration Committees maintain a list of names and appoint women members of the church from the list as flower arrangers for every Sunday. Such appointed flower arrangers are responsible for buying and arranging fresh or artificial flowers in the church.

The Baptist Church of Mizoram is the second largest denomination in Aizawl, Mizoram. There are 63 Baptist churches (Source: Executive Secretary Office, BCM, Aizawl) in Aizawl city located in different areas. The Baptist Church of Mizoram has

its Aizawl headquarters at Falkland, and its main headquarters at Lunglei which is the district capital of Lunglei. The Baptist Church of Mizoram, established in Aizawl normally do not form a separate decoration committee, the Baptist *Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl* (BKHP) or the Women Fellowship takes up the responsibility of decorating the church on Sundays and on festive occasions and conferences. The BKHP of the Baptist churches in Aizawl do appoint flower arrangers from the women members and in some the BKHP leaders take up the responsibility for every Sunday.

The Salvation Army as a denomination is established in different localities in Aizawl, with its headquarters at Tuikual Veng, Aizawl. There are 74 Salvation Army churches (Source: Disposition of Forces 2023, The Salvation Army: Eastern India Territory) in Aizawl city area. The Salvation Army churches too on the whole, normally do not form decoration committee as a separate body. The women fellowship known as the Home League leaders take up the responsibility of flower arrangement on Sundays and decoration of the church on important festivals and meetings.

The government officials working in the floriculture section of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram comprise of another set of respondents as key informants for the present study. The government plays an important role in developing and promoting floriculture in the state working hand in hand with the NGOs. It is thus pertinent to know their stand on the floriculture business and their contribution towards the advancement and promotion of floriculture entrepreneurs.

Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo Women's Organization is one of the largest Non-Governmental Organizations in Mizoram. It was established on the 6th July 1974 and was registered under Registration No. 5 of 1977, Society Act 1860 (Act XXI of 1960). Its headquarters is located at Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. MHIP is one voluntary organization which is community based with specific objectives based on philanthropic social work. MHIP as an NGO works for the welfare and upliftment of the weaker section of the society focusing on Mizo women and children. The NGO has 7 sub- headquarters, is divided into 16 blocks and has 744 branches and 20 joint MHIP in Mizoram (Vanlaltluangi, PL (2018): Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Welfare of Women: Role of Mizo

Hmeichhia Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) in Mizoram). To delve into the importance given to flowers in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society and their stand on promoting entrepreneurship in floriculture the views and opinions of Central MHIP leaders are of utmost significance and thus, they comprise another set of respondents as key informants for the present study.

Sample design

A sample design is a predetermined strategy for drawing a sample from a particular population that is decided upon before any data are ever gathered. The sample techniques used have an impact on how generalizable the research findings are. A sample refers to a smaller manageable portion of a larger group. It is a subset containing the basic characteristics of the larger population from which it is drawn. Sampling is a technique that enables us to examine a small subset of the large group in order to draw conclusions that are probably applicable to the entire population. Of the two types of sampling namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling, the present study is based on the latter type.

Non-probability sampling used in this study is a sampling technique in which the researcher selects samples based on the subjective judgment of the researcher rather than random selection. It does not claim representativeness and is used for qualitative exploratory analysis. Purposive sampling is adopted to identify the stakeholders from the total population in Aizawl city. Convenience sampling is followed in identifying the floriculturists.

1. Using purposive and convenience sampling, 51 floriculturists that is, 30% have been selected as sample from the total members of Mizoram Florist Association which is 170 as per 2020 enrollment. 54 floriculturists amounting to 30% from *Pangpar Zuar* Association is selected as sample from 180 enrolled members in 2020. From the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, 16 Anthurium growers amounting to 20% have been taken as sample from the total actual producing members which is 80 in 2020. The total

sample decided to be taken for the floriculturists is 125. However, after the completion of fieldwork on the three florist association members, the total selected sample exceeded for all the three associations. From the total members of Mizoram Florist Association, 70 floriculturists which amounts to 41% were interviewed, the selected sample of 51 floriculturists have been exceeded by 19. Similarly, selected sample from *Pangpar Zuar* Association which is 30% of the total members (54) has been exceeded by 4 which comes to 58 in total. The selected sample for Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society too which is 20% of the total members (16) has been exceeded to 23 in total, with 3.9% (6) of the ZAGCS members having dual membership with MFA, and 1.3% (2) of them having dual membership with PPZA. The total sample of floriculturists came to 153.

Florist associations	Frequency	Percentage
Mizoram Florist Association (MFA)	70	45.8
<i>Pangpar Zuar</i> Association (PPZA)	58	37.9
Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS)	15	9.8
ZAGCS & MFA	6	3.9
ZAGCS & PPZA	2	1.3
None	2	1.3
Total	153	100

- Using the same sampling method, out of the 83 localities under Aizawl Municipal Corporation in Mizoram, Two Church Elders/Officers each of ten (10) different churches each namely of Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and Salvation Army from 10 localities each have been selected as sample which comes to 60 in total.

Similarly, two decoration committee members each of the ten same denomination churches selected are further taken as sample which comes to 60 in total.

Further, using the same sampling design, two flower arrangers each of the ten same denomination churches already selected are taken as sample which is 60

in total. The total sample to represent the church elders, decoration committee leaders and flower arrangers is 180, which aims to throw light on the second objective of the study that is, to study the importance of floriculture in the Mizo socio-cultural context.

3. Using convenience sampling, ten (10) floral artists/ floral designers of Aizawl city have been taken as sample.
4. Key Informants Interview is conducted with (a) the Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, (b) leaders of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or Mizo Women's Organisation and (c) leaders of the three Florists' Associations.

3.5 Principle of Inclusion and Exclusion

The present research concentrates on a sociological perspective of floricultural activity in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The study focuses on the growth of floriculture as a means of livelihood, the importance of flowers in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society, the emergence of entrepreneurial activities associated with cut flowers in the state. The research includes the recent trends of floriculture and the constraints among floriculturists in Aizawl as the flower hub of the state. Other districts of the state are excluded in the study.

The study excludes the other aspects of horticultural activity in Mizoram. Due to time constraint, it does not include the nature of floricultural activity in other urban or rural areas. The research does not focus on the technical aspect of floriculture undertaken by other disciplines such as Horticulture.

3.6 Sources of data

The present study is based on the mix method; however, the study focuses more on the qualitative analysis which includes data collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary data are collected through administering interview schedule, non-participant observation, case study and key informants' interview. Face to face interview was conducted with the respondents using interview schedule, and sometimes telephone interviews were also conducted keeping in mind the

convenience of the respondents. During the fieldwork prior consent of the respondents were taken and utmost care was taken to conduct interview according to the convenience of the respondents.

3.7 Interview Schedule

An **interview schedule** is basically a set of structured questions that have been prepared, to serve as a guide for interviewers and researchers in collecting information or data about a specific issue. The schedule is used by the research worker, who fill in the questions with the answers himself/herself and who interpret the questions when necessary. The interview schedule for the present study meant for the main stakeholders was finalized after conducting a pilot survey.

At the outset, a list was made on different important aspects on which questions were to be raised. Insights for the questions were obtained through survey of relevant literature on the problem. The next step taken was the framing of actual set of questions for the schedule. Attention was given to the number of questions to be formulated on an aspect, the language used, the sequence of the questions, and structuring of responses. After the pilot survey was completed, inconsistencies and discrepancies in the structure of the questions formulated and the options for response could be detected. Thus, corrections were made by adding relevant questions and discarding irrelevant ones, some questions which were not clear were improved, more options added in the response category where necessary and the interview schedule for the floriculturists was restructured and finalized for the field work.

The present study also necessitated the construction of other interview schedules for the set of respondents namely the church elders and officers, leaders of decoration committee and flower arrangers belonging to the three large denominations that is, the Mizoram Presbyterian church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army. Further, interview schedule for the floral artists/designers functioning in Aizawl was formulated too. Schedules for the Key Informants such as the Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, leaders of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm* Pawl (MHIP) or the Mizo Women's

Organization and leaders of the three large florist associations namely, the Mizoram Florist Association, *Pangpar Zuar* Association and the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society were also constructed. Questions were also constructed for the two case studies carried out at Zopar Export Pvt Limited, Ailawng and Laltei Nursery at Ramthar Veng.

The interview schedule for the floriculturists on entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options through floriculture consists of 144 structured questions and 24 open ended questions, and two tables on family/household particulars and land possessed. Structured questions have been designed to obtain one of the pre-defined sets of answer options fitted to the questions. The interview schedule consists of mainly structured type of questions to enable easy transfer to computer. The structured questions have been divided into five major heads: (1) Personal information and socio-economic profile (2) Importance of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context (3) Floriculture as livelihood option in Mizoram (4) Growth of floriculture as a form of women entrepreneurship (5) The constraints faced. Questions have been arranged in serial order under each of the mentioned subject heads. Open ended questions seeking opinions and views related to the research problem have also been made.

The interview schedule meant for the church elders and officers of the three denominations that experiences, the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army consists of structured and open-ended questions. There are 8 questions on personal information, 21 structured questions and 8 open-ended questions. The structured and unstructured questions are categorized into four heads: personal information, church related questions, questions related to marriage and funerals on the importance of flowers.

Similarly, the schedule for the leaders of the different decoration committee of the above-mentioned churches contains structured and unstructured questions. The schedule consists of 9 questions on personal information, 29 structured questions and 7 open-ended questions. The questions are divided into four heads: personal

information, decoration committee activities, socio-cultural context related to marriage and funeral which seeks opinions on the importance of flowers.

The schedule meant for the flower arrangers belonging to the different churches contains both structured and unstructured questions. There are 7 questions on personal information, 38 structured questions and 10 open-ended questions. The questions are categorized into five heads: personal information, flower arrangement in the church, socio-cultural context relating to marriage and funeral, and social events which seeks views on the importance of flowers.

The schedule formulated for the floriculturists/designers consists mainly of 7 questions on personal information, 55 open-ended questions and 3 structured questions to gain information on the entrepreneurial activity offered by floriculture and the importance flowers have in the society.

Key Informants for the present study are the government officials working in the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram and leaders of the Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm* Pawl Headquarters (MHIP) or Mizo Women's Organization, an NGO in Mizoram. Key informants also include the leaders of the florist associations in Mizoram namely, the Mizoram Florist Association, *Pangpar Zuar* association and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society.

Interview schedule for Government officials as key informants consists of 6 questions on personal information, 23 structured questions and 19 open-ended questions, such questions are not categorized but they focus on the government's actions and role in floriculture.

The interview schedule for Key informants that is, the MHIP leaders consists of structured and unstructured questions, 7 questions on personal information, 36 structured questions and 11 open-ended questions. The schedule is divided into five heads: Funeral, marriage, church, gift giving and social events which seeks information on MHIP's views on importance given to flowers on the subject heads.

The interview schedule formulated for office bearers or leaders of florist associations contains both structured and unstructured questions. The schedule consists of 9

questions on personal information, 46 structured questions, 22 open-ended questions. The questions are categorized into different heads: association's role in floriculture, opinions on importance of flowers in the socio-cultural context in such areas as funeral, marriage, church, gift giving and social events.

Case study was done during the field work; field observation is a pertinent part of the field work. Key informants' interviews were also done making use of unstructured questions to obtain relevant information from Government officials and NGOs.

The study relies on secondary sources like existing literature like books, journals, newspaper clippings, published and unpublished thesis, research articles, Reports of Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, Mizoram Florists Association reports, journals and souvenir publications of florists associations, reports of Decoration Committee of churches, vlogs of florists, you tube channels on floriculture which provides relevant insight into the research topic.

3.8 Pilot study

After constructing questions for the interview schedule, a pilot study was conducted which is a specific pre-testing of the schedule before a full- scale investigation is done. This pilot study was conducted to test the relevance of the structured and unstructured questions formulated for the research, and for the finalization of the interview schedule for the main stakeholders that is, the floriculturists and the schedule for the different church leaders, decoration committee leaders and flower arrangers functioning under the churches under study. The pilot study is the preliminary small-scale investigation undertaken prior to the major research to assess feasibility or refine the research design. Pilot studies are crucial prior to executing a comprehensive research study. They assist in identifying design flaws and assessing a study's feasibility, practicality, resources, duration, and expenses prior to the execution of the primary research. The pilot study helped in better understanding of the topic under study. Interacting with the respondents who were more aware of the problem gave better insight in understanding the objectives of the study. The pilot study helped to determine if the study is feasible and helped identify the weakness

and areas that needed refinement in the interview schedule. After the pilot study, it became clear that some relevant questions were missing, answer options provided in the schedule were limited, irrelevant questions and repetitive questions were identified. Such issues were rectified after the pilot study with new relevant questions added, new answer options added and refined, structure of some of the questions were reframed and repetitive questions omitted.

3.9 Operationalization of concepts

For the purpose of this study the following concepts have been taken and operationalised as follows:

(a) Livelihood

Livelihood as a concept has been defined by scholars in various ways. For the purpose of this research livelihood refers to what people do, given their resources and assets and what they achieve by doing it to provide for the basic necessities of life. The social sustainability of people's livelihood is also considered which includes the ability to withstand and recover from pressure, and respond to new opportunities and changes to sustain themselves.

(b) Entrepreneurial activity

Entrepreneurial activity in the present study refers to those activities which aim at generating profit through creativity, identifying new processes and products, and innovative use of resources, opportunities and capabilities.

(c) Floriculture

Floriculture in the present study refers to the commercial cultivation of flowers and ornamental plants, potted plants imported and home grown, planting of crops through seeds, marketing of seedlings and plant lings, micro-propagation and marketing of flowers. The present work is conducted in the context of Aizawl city, on urban floriculture mostly carried out in people's available home spaces and field cultivation.

(d) Floriculturist

In the context of the present study floriculturists refer to those entrepreneurs residing in Aizawl city engaged in the cultivation of flowering and non-flowering plants as their main source of livelihood, and those engaged in the business as their hobby, at the same time generating additional income through the activity. The term floriculturist also encompasses florists engaged in the art of floristry and floral craft such as flower arranging, bouquet making, wreath making, decorations and the like.

3.10 Research experience and data collection procedure

Dearth of literature on floriculture in Mizoram except a few research articles and studies which focused on Anthurium cultivation is one big problem faced at the time of collecting and reviewing of literature. However, collection, classification and consolidation of literatures on floriculture made possible the writing of the rationale of the study, preparation of interview schedule and conducting pilot survey and finalizing the tools for data collection. Field work on floriculture entrepreneurs and other set of respondents started from March 2023 till December 2023. Field work on floral artists began from February 2024 till March 2024.

Before approaching the potential respondents, informed consent was taken. Contacting unknown floriculture entrepreneurs requesting them for an interview was not fruitful many times. Being self- employed with their household chores, some floriculture entrepreneurs were cautious and reluctant to be interviewed and many declined the researcher's request for interview. Some agreed but could not be contacted again and so were not approachable for interview. The researcher had to convince them about the purpose of the interview and some reluctantly agreed and were approached. In such cases, interviewees answered open- ended questions briefly and since the schedule had 150 questions, expression of irritation and impatience could be detected, and their answers were cautiously given afraid of revealing too much.

At the same time, some interviewees were much interested and enthusiastic about the research and were very keen on telling stories about their experiences about their small- scale business. They heartily related their experiences and showed the

researcher their nurseries and propagated flowering and non-flowering plants in their greenhouses in and around their home spaces. In such cases, the interview process was usually long and the researcher had to politely intervene when the narrations became irrelevant to the study. Such interviews were interesting and eye-opening for the researcher.

Some of the respondents when approached were working in their greenhouses mixing soil and re-planting their germinated flower seedlings, while some were repotting their propagated plant-lings in their work spaces. The researcher interacted with them without halting their work, and a good opportunity for field observation was opened for the researcher.

The researcher also faced an uneasy and uncomfortable situation during an interview when a spouse of an interviewee complained and forbid the respondent from relating any family details. The researcher reassured the respondent that such information is to be kept confidential and was solely for academic purpose and since the spouse was present nearby during the whole interview session, the researcher had to be content with only the number of family members.

Telephone interviews were also conducted on the insistence of the respondents who could not spare time for an interview session.

Field work on selected church leaders too was challenging at times. Church elders and pastors had busy schedules in their family, work and church related duties. Though informed consent was taken from each, scheduling interview was not successful normally at the first attempt. Re-scheduling appointments at their convenience was done most of the time which slowed down the field work to some extent. However, such interviews were insightful and informative. Similar problems were also faced with the leaders of decoration committee and flower arrangers of the different churches. Some of the respondents were reluctant to be interviewed, while some had health issues and others were out of station at the time of field work. The researcher had to patiently wait for such potential respondents and interviewed them at their convenience slowing down the field work considerably.

Interview session with the key informants such as the leaders of NGOs like the Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) was also challenging. Some of the top leaders who were contacted could not spare their time for an interview, so other office bearers were approached. The leaders of MHIP who were willing to be interviewed could be met after several attempts due to their busy schedule. Interaction with the NGO leaders were interesting and informative and they were supportive of the research.

Interaction with the leaders of florist associations as key informants was enlightening too, though meeting them for an interview session was not easily acquired. Leaders of florist associations too are entrepreneurs having busy schedules and sparing their time for an interview was not easy on their part.

Field work on floral artists was done from February 2024 and continued till end of March 2024. Since entrepreneurship on floristry is entered by skilled artists of both sexes that is male and female, five males and six females of Aizawl city were selected as sample using convenient sampling. Floral artists do have busy schedules and appointments apart from their household and job duties. Scheduling appointment for interaction was smooth for those who had their own flower shops, they were sympathetic about the research and were helpful in providing information about their entrepreneurial venture. Catching hold of other floral artists for an interview was tough due to their tight schedule, the researcher had to wait for their convenient time to interact with them. While others preferred to approach the researcher's residence sacrificing their time, energy and money instead to be interviewed, for which the researcher was grateful. Floral designers had been supportive and good rapport was built with them which enabled the researcher to gain necessary data to enrich the study.

Field work on the whole was a wonderful and enlightening experience. The respondents were normally friendly and helpful and rapport building was not difficult, tea was offered to the researcher in almost all the interview sessions with all the set of respondents. The interviewees helped much in providing necessary inputs and relevant information to the study. The narratives of the respondents and key

informants' ideas were recorded and they have enabled the researcher with the relevant inputs for analysis and interpretation of the data. The daily field work and experiences gained through it have been recorded and maintained in research diary by the researcher.

3.11 Analysis of the data

Completion of data collection through field work utilizing interview schedule and recording interviews initiated the processing of data. The data gathered include the filled in interview schedule used by the researcher during field survey which were information provided by the informants, case study notes and inputs obtained from key informants. Information gathered through the filled in interview schedule was checked and editing was done through careful scrutiny to identify errors and omissions and to make sure that the data were complete and readable. Minor errors detected were rectified and incomplete responses were completed to facilitate coding and tabulation.

The collected data or the raw data was in an unorganized form and needed to be organized and be presented in meaningful and comprehensible form to facilitate further statistical analysis. It was essential for the investigator to condense the volume of data into more comprehensible and assimilable form. This necessitated the twin processes of classification and tabulation of data. The first step in data processing was to work out a detailed system of classification. The raw data was grouped into different categories or classes with homogenous characteristics which is known as classification of data. Classification of data is the process of arranging data in classes on the basis of common characteristics in order to get meaningful relationships and is fundamental to any kind of scientific analysis.

With the completion of data collection, the investigator cross checked and scrutinized all the filled in interview schedules. Necessary coding was done to translate the answers into numerical values or assign numbers to the various categories of a variable to be used in data analysis. The data were disaggregated under three heads: 1) Socio-economic profile, 2) Flowers in Mizo socio-cultural context, 3) Floriculture as livelihood option.

After editing and classification, the next step was tabulation where the data were presented in a clear and organized manner through tables and charts. Tabulation focused on presenting the data in a structured format for an overall view of the findings in a simpler way. Data have been systematically arranged into rows and columns in a table. This facilitates the data to be read easily, understandable and make comparisons.

The ordering of data into constituent parts in order to gain answers to research questions is data analysis. Data analysis is the process of transforming the gathered raw data into meaningful concepts and facts that can be understood either qualitatively or quantitatively. It involves analyzing the tabulated data to find underlying truths or meanings. To facilitate interpretation, it entails disassembling existing complex aspects into smaller, more manageable components and rearranging the parts.

The present study uses both qualitative and quantitative methods focusing more on qualitative data as its analytical framework. This is to facilitate a complete and synergistic use of the collected data during data analysis. The raw data were codified for quantitative analysis. Each of the questions was assigned a separate code and all responses were entered into the computer. The process of giving responses a number or other symbol so that they can be categorised into a finite number of classes or categories is termed as coding.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) has been used for analysis of statistical data or quantitative analysis. Open-ended questions were analyzed separately. Calculations on percentages of responses were done and inferences have been drawn from the analysis.

The method of 'lived experiences' has been adopted for the qualitative data analysis of the present research. Phenomenology, a field rooted in philosophy, offers a means of capturing participants lived experiences. In fact, this paradigm makes it possible to uncover phenomena from the standpoint of how individuals understand and provide meaning to their existence. A lived experience is characterised as a unique, continuous process that comes "from within". Lived experiences are the primary

focus of phenomenological research, but its objective is to ascertain the meaningful significance of these experiences rather than comprehending people's lived experiences as facts. Furthermore, lived experience is recollective, meaning that a particular experience is thought back on after it has been lived through, rather than reflecting on an event as it is happening. The present study focuses on the experiences that has been lived through by the research participants to understand the meanings that they attach to their daily activities in their entrepreneurship endeavour.

For the qualitative data analysis of the research, narrative analysis method is also adopted to understand the stakeholders' narratives of their stories. An in-depth examination of the stories people tells in a given setting is the main goal of narrative analysis, that aims to understand human experiences and motives to uncover meanings and themes. Direct access to people's inner lives is possible through narratives. Narrative analysis allows the researcher to understand the individual meanings, motives, and interpretations that influence people's lives by delving into their stories. Employing narrative analysis method as qualitative data analysis allows the researcher to interpret the underlying meanings and implications in the participants' narratives of their experiences in their floriculture businesses, thus generating rich insight for the study.

Further, an intensive study of two cases has been done to enrich the qualitative data of the research on floriculture as livelihood option namely, Zopar Export Pvt Limited at Ailawng village, 23.7kms from Aizawl city and Laltei Nursery at Ramthar Veng, within Aizawl city. Case study on the two floriculture ventures has been carried out obtaining in-depth information within their natural settings through administering unstructured interview schedules. The phenomena studied under the two case studies have been described in their real-world context.

The data on the opinions and views collected from the different key informants have been triangulated for the research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem. The interviews for the key informants were conducted with the help of interview schedules containing structured and unstructured questions, a summary of each interview was prepared.

3.12 Research ethics followed

Research ethics are the set of ethical guidelines that guide researchers on how scientific research should be conducted and disseminated. Such ethics govern the standards of conduct for scientific researchers and is the guideline for responsibly conducting the research.

The study adhered to the prevailing ethical principles and norms in social science research.

1. The researcher adhered to the purpose and objectives of the present study and made sure the participants received information about the nature and aim of the research before conducting field work.
2. Respondents' privacy and anonymity was protected, and confidentiality of information supplied by participants is respected.
3. The researcher made sure that respondents and their family members participated voluntarily in the study without any coercion and prior consent was taken from them.
4. The interview schedule was administered according to the convenience of the participants regarding the time, date and place after obtaining informed consent.
5. The researcher tried to maximise any possible benefits of the research and ensured the well-being of the participants and protected them from any possible harm.
6. Effort was given by the researcher to build good rapport with all the respondents while collecting primary data, and every participant and their family members were thanked for their co-operation and sympathy in responding to the questions asked during the field work.
7. Utmost care was taken by the researcher to avoid misrepresentation and fabrication of research data.
8. The researcher avoided any kind of biasness while conducting field work and further avoided any misleading information and maintained ethical standards.

9. Honesty and transparency on the research study was upheld throughout the research process.
10. Proper acknowledgement has been given to the works of researchers and scholars utilised in the present study to avoid plagiarism.

3.13 Limitations of the study

The present study like any other research work has its limitations.

1. The study is confined to entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options through floriculture, and does not cover the technical aspects involved in horticulture activities. It does not reflect the nature and potential condition of horticultural farming as a means of livelihood in Mizoram.
2. The study is limited to Aizawl city only, and does not represent the present nature of floriculture business of the whole state. Since, floriculture is a popular enterprise in other districts of Mizoram, the complete picture of floriculture and its contribution to community livelihood and entrepreneurial opportunities in the whole state is not reflected. Wider study will have to be undertaken.

The study which is confined to Aizawl city, the capital of Mizoram may not reflect the whole picture of rural and urban settings, as they have their own variations in relation to the study.

CHAPTER IV
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

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CHAPTER IV

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the socio-economic profile of the respondents. Discussion on the socio-economic profile of the informants will give us a clear picture in understanding better the universe or the population of the research study. It provides different information about the participants which proves to be the kind of information required for the study. To truly comprehend the topic under study socio-economic profile data provides the required information on the heterogeneous background characteristics of the respondents.

The socio-economic background of the respondents to a great extent reveals an individual's social behaviour, actions and way of life. The different parameters used help us gain insight into the level of access of the respondents to the various amenities of society in terms of wealth, power, prestige, property, occupation and satisfaction in their everyday life. People's lifestyles and thinking procedure in terms of economic activities are greatly influenced by their socio-economic status. Better understanding of the respondents' socio-economic condition will help in locating their thoughts and orientation towards their livelihood and the difficulties, priorities and the needs of the participants could be identified. The parameters used in collecting information on the socio-economic status also reveals the respondents' household condition, their capabilities and how their entrepreneurial activities determine their income level and economic pursuits. Therefore, in the present work, certain variables which focus on eliciting data on socio-economic background have been used to understand the social differentiation existing among the respondents. This chapter focuses on the socio-economic profile of the floriculturists involved in entrepreneurial activity in floriculture as livelihood options in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The variables used in this chapter include first of all the association they are affiliated to, gender and age, marital status, educational status, occupation,

occupation of spouse, family income, religious denomination, residential status, bank account status, personal savings status and land possessed.

4.2 Gender composition

Gender encompasses the societal constructs of roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities associated with girls, women, boys, men, and individuals who identify as gender diverse. It has an impact on individuals' self-perception and their perception of others, as well as their behavior, interactions, and the allocation of power and resources within society. Gender is a complex concept that varies greatly among individuals and cultures. It encompasses how people perceive and express their gender through their responsibilities, societal expectations, relationships, and the way gender is established in society.

Gender, nevertheless, is a term that is mainly used in relation to humans and has other meanings related to social interactions, behavior in general, and most crucially, one's basic sense of self. Anatomically, as well as cognitively, psychologically, and behaviorally, there has always been an intricate spectrum between male and female; intersex individuals are just one example of this growing awareness. In addition to referring to male and female, the concept of "gender" also includes alternative gender identities including transgender, pansexual, asexual, homosexual, lesbian, and so forth. Knowing their gender is crucial for this study endeavor since it helps to understand the different kinds of issues and discrimination that each gender faces independently. In this present project however, the gender category contains two sections: male and female. Sex pertains to the biological distinction between males and females, whereas gender refers to the characteristics and roles that are typically associated with each sex. Sex pertains to physiological distinctions, while gender pertains to societal distinctions.

Table 4.1

Gender composition

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	8	5.2
Female	145	94.8
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

In the above table, the total number of gender composition, the frequency and percentages of the respondents is presented. Out of the total sample of 153 respondents, females consist of the majority with 145 (94.8%). While on the other hand, the frequency of male is only 8, representing a meagre 5.2% of the total population. The huge disparity in the percentage of the gender composition could be attributed to the fact that floriculture as an entrepreneurial activity and as a livelihood option has long been considered a field of economic activity for females in the society. In the Mizo society, floriculture was considered a stereotypical endeavour of the female category for a long time. Mizo males having no less aesthetic interest in flowers refrained from and avoided indulging in the floriculture activity being carried over by typical patriarchal sentiment and thinking it as a feminine pursuit. However, with increasing urbanization and improved standard of living and outlook in the urban areas, wider opportunities open up for entrepreneurship development with increased aesthetic sense in flowers in both men and women. Men and other members of the family are walking the journey together in certain cases basically as a family enterprise. Floriculture entrepreneurs are fast emerging generating income and establishing commercial individual enterprises. This is illustrated by the fact that not only womenfolk indulge in the activity, males too are slowly drawn to this business venture and are developing entrepreneurial skill in floriculture at their home spaces and beyond. However, only a few males are found indulging in the floriculture venture and these males are found to be accepted more and more into the entrepreneurship.

4.3 Age composition

Age means the length of life or existence of an individual. Age denotes a time span in human existence expressed in years from the moment of birth that is often defined by a certain stage or level of mental or physical development and that includes capacity and legal responsibility. Including an age question in a survey is necessary because of the variations in life experiences among age groups and the ways in which people's preferences and behaviors change as they age. It is possible for the researcher to categorize the different age groups of the respondents experienceh further aid in analyzing how many years the participants have been involved in entrepreneurial business. The age of the respondents has been categorized into those between the age 20 – 30 years, 31- 40 years, 41- 50 years, 51 – 60 years and 60 years above.

Table 4.2

Age composition

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 30 years	9	5.9
31 – 40 years	17	11.1
41- 50 years	55	35.9
51 – 60 years	39	25.5
60 years above	33	21.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

Table 4.2 presents the age composition of the total respondents. The overall picture of the table depicts the fact that majority 127 (83%) of the respondents' age group falls between 41–60 plus years. These respondents pursue floriculture entrepreneurship sincerely to help support their families after their children have grown up. The respondents state that out of sheer interest in flowers and plants, they pursue the business to generate income and sustain the family and some of them being single parent relies heavily on the entrepreneurship with no other regular

source of income. It is seen that the majority of the respondents with 55 (35.9%) age group falls between 41-50 years. This figure indicates that the respondents in their mid-age stage are at liberty to choose their livelihood option as their kids grow older and the household economic condition pressurizes them to pursue entrepreneurial activity for additional income. The second highest percentage consist of those whose age group falls between 51-60 years with the frequency of 39 (25.5%), which is indicative of the fact that healthy women having the entrepreneurial skill and sheer interest pursues floriculture as a small- scale business to generate more income for the household to support their families. 33 (21.6%) of the respondents' age group falls between 60 years and above, and these respondents are deeply involved into the business of growing flowers, the cultivation of plants and flowers is a passion or a hobby cum business venture for them, with the support of their family members. The age group between 31-40 years of age comprise of a mere 17 (11.1%), this figure consists of those women respondents who after getting married are busy with their kids and household duties, which does not permit them to pursue entrepreneurship venture to a large scale. The table shows that the lowest percentage consists of the age group 20-30 years comprising of 9 (5.9%). This indicates that floriculture entrepreneurship is not pursued much by people in their twenties.

It is also to note that one lady respondent who turned 90 years of age in 2024, quite healthy is still physically fit and still participates in florist fairs organized by Mizoram Florist Association, though she is constantly forbidden by her family members and told to abandon her business. She finds it difficult to stop involving because flower business with its aesthetic sense gives her psychological gratification and inner happiness. Another is 86 years though her health has deteriorated, she finds it difficult to abandon her passion for floriculture, while some are in their 70s still very active.

4.4 Marital status

The marital status is the legally defined marital state. It is a state of being either married or not married. The marital status indicates the personal status of an individual in relation to the marriage customs or laws. Knowing the marital status of

the respondents is significant because the behaviour, lifestyle, worldview, opinions may differ amongst the married, unmarried, divorcees or widows. To know the marital status of the respondents, answer options such as married, unmarried, divorced, single, separated and widow have been included.

Table 4.3

Marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	100	65.4
Unmarried	12	7.8
Divorced	12	7.8
Single	3	2.0
Separated	4	2.6
Widow	22	14.4
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above demonstrates the marital status of the respondents. The table shows that 100 (65.4%) of the respondents are married and the rest 53 (34.6%) are without spouses. This shows that self-employed married women with the support of their husbands and family members are pursuing floriculture business to generate income for their livelihood. Those without spouses too with the support of their parents and children are actively indulging in the business to generate income and support the household. Unmarried respondents 12 (7.8%) consists of mainly the male respondents, who are self-employed with floriculture business and are passionate about their indulgence in floriculture on their home spaces and beyond. Divorced respondents 12 (7.8%) too, enter the floriculture business to earn income and support their children. While a mere 3 (2.0%) are single and are pursuing the business as their livelihood. Those separated from their spouses consists of 4 (2.6%) and their main source of livelihood is floriculture. Widows consists of 22 (14.4%) and from the interview conducted they have been forced to enter this floriculture entrepreneurship as conceived by them as viable for self-employment to generate

income and help support their families. Floriculture business has become a domestic enterprise for married people as well as unmarried, single, divorced and widowed respondents where the family members help support the business to earn income for the household.

4.5 Educational status

Education denotes the act or process of gaining or conveying general information, improving one's capacity for logic and judgment, and generally putting oneself or others through intellectual preparation for adulthood. Education can take many different forms, but it is always the transmission of knowledge, abilities, and moral qualities. Within an institutional framework formal education takes place. On the other hand, unstructured learning or informal education is gained from everyday encounters. It is pertinent to know the educational level of the respondents which helps in identifying whether the better educated or the not so highly educated are better performers in their business venture. In the interview schedule, question has been raised on the level of formal education they attended under six major heads such as Primary, Middle school, High school, Higher secondary school, Graduate and Post graduate.

Table 4.4

Educational status

Educational status	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	6	3.9
Middle school	22	14.4
High school	65	42.5
Higher secondary school	32	20.9
Graduate	21	13.7
Post graduate and above	7	4.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above illustrates that high school educated consists of the majority of the respondents with 65 (42.5%). The reason why they stopped their schooling at this stage may vary. While those who reached higher secondary level consists of the second highest in percentage with 32 (20.9%). Those respondents who received middle school level education are 22 (14.4%) in frequency. While 21 (13.7%) have graduate degrees and 7 (4.6%) have post graduate and above degrees. The remaining 6 (3.9%) of the respondents are primary educated who due to various reasons are not able to continue their education beyond this level. The above table demonstrates that majority of the respondents 125 (81.7%) are educated people ranging from high school graduates and high school drop outs to post graduate and above. Such respondents are literate to deal and handle their business on their own. From the interview conducted, respondents agree that being properly educated is most essential in conducting floriculture business smoothly and successfully especially in import and export, understanding seedlings, growth treatment, plant management and market demand. Being a graduate or above is a great advantage in managing the business and language is not a barrier or a hindrance for such educated respondents while importing and exporting goods inside and outside the state and foreign countries too.

4.6 Occupation of respondents and their spouse

A person's job or any type of work performed for pay, is referred to as their occupation. One can support the family and earn a living by working at a job or vocation. The work provides a means of subsistence; on the other hand, it organizes a person's entire life by providing a sense of identity, planning a day, establishing a working network, and, at the end of the day, providing the necessary payment for survival. The respondents are asked whether they are currently employed, self-employed, housewife, or if working in private firms. The present project also asked the respondents whether their spouses have any kind of work or occupation.

Table 4.5**Occupation of respondents and their spouse**

Occupations	Respondents		Spouse of respondents	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Government service	12	7.8	32	20.9
Private firm	3	2.0	7	4.6
Self-employed	101	66.0	29	19.0
Housewife	37	24.2	-	-
Retired	-	-	13	8.5
Unemployed	-	-	32	20.9
Unmarried	-	-	10	6.5
Widow	-	-	22	14.4
Divorced	-	-	8	5.2
Total	153	100	153	100

Source: Field data

The above table illustrates the different occupational category of the respondents and their spouses. It is evident from the table that majority of the respondents and their spouses comprising of 130 (85%) are self-employed. While the respondents are engaged in floriculture enterprise, working on their own small scale business generating income independently and some relying entirely on the business venture for their livelihood, their spouses are self-employed too as taxi drivers, two- wheeler taxi drivers, private car drivers, carpenters, shopkeepers and some of the spouses help and support the floriculture business of the household. The second highest percentage with 37 (24.2%) are housewives. This category though claims to be housewives are actively engaged in floricultural activities in their home spaces for additional income. Out of the total respondents and their spouses, there are 44 (28.7%) employed in the state government service. Those floriculturists in government service though employed full time, are involved in their free time in small scale floriculture business for additional income to help support the family. The table illustrates the scenario that 12 (7.8%) of the respondents and 32 (20.9%) of

the spouse of respondents are employed in the state government. Though they have regular income, these respondents are still engaged in the informal sector establishing their domestic business to generate additional income. Out of the total respondents and their spouses, only 10 (6.6%) comprise of those working in private organizations or firms. Though having regular income, the respondents indulge in the activity to generate more income for the family, and the spouses too actively support the family business on floriculture. Thus, the study reveals that there are altogether 54 (35.3%) of the respondents and their spouses earning regular income being employed in government service and in private organizations. The number of retired spouses who are no longer working but enjoy monthly pension constitute 13 (8.5%) of the total respondents' spouses. Such households too pursue the domestic business on floriculture to help maintain and support the family better, so floriculture is a source of additional income for them. The spouses of the respondents who are unemployed are 32 (20.9%), having no regular job they support fully the business on floriculture which is also a family enterprise. Meanwhile, 40 (26.1%) of the respondents do not have spouses who are unmarried, widowed and divorced. These unmarried and single parents are the sole bread earners indulging in the business with the support of the grandparents and their children. Those self-employed floriculturists indulge in the business full time at home without having to commute every day to far off places to earn income. Being single parent, floriculture business being run from the premises of the house, without neglecting their household chores and kids is much more convenient as a way of earning a living for them.

4.7 Type of family and family size

A family is a biological and social unit consisting of a husband, wife, and their offspring.

A family is a close-knit household consisting of individuals who are connected to each other through biological, sexual, or legal relationships. Family is the smallest and fundamental social unit, which is also the most crucial primary group present in any society. In sociology there are two basic types of family namely nuclear family and joint family. Nuclear family is a two- generation family consisting of husband and wife, and their offsprings. The one parent family divorced or widow or

unmarried parent with their children is also a two- generation family. While joint family is a three-generation or more family, with all the married sons staying together and sharing inheritance and work together. Another type of family is the stem family which consists of husband and wife, one of the sons is chosen to perpetuate their family lineage with his spouse and offsprings. An extended family is a family that extends beyond the immediate parents and their offspring, such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, or other relatives, who reside in close proximity or inside the same household. The type of family has been discerned from the demographic and particulars of household members in the interview schedule.

Table 4.6
Type of family

Type of family	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear family	141	92
Stem family	12	8
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table 4.6 shows the type of family the respondents have. The Mizo society follow the nuclear family structure as depicted in the above table with 141 (92%) having nuclear family type. The nuclear family in Mizo society follows the type of household where husband and wife and their unmarried offsprings reside together under one roof. In the normal Mizo family structure, joint family system is not followed, where three or more generations lives together, with all the married sons with their spouses and offsprings live together sharing property. Extended family system too is not normally practiced in the Mizo society where household members extend beyond the parents and offsprings, where besides the grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins or other relatives reside together under one roof. While a small percentage amounting to 8% of the total respondents follow the stem family system. The stem family system in the Mizo society follows the pattern where besides the husband and wife, one of the sons who may be the youngest or the eldest son is

chosen by the parents to remain in the parental household after marriage along with his children to perpetuate the lineage of the family ensuring the continuation of the family's bloodline from one generation to the next. The other sons soon after marriage follow neolocal residence establishing their own independent household. Three generations usually live together in such stem family in the Mizo family household.

The number of family members depends on the type of family the respondents have. Nuclear family consisting of two generations are normally small in size. While joint family and the stem family consists of three generations or more residing together, so much so that the number of family members are usually large in size.

Table 4.7

Family size

Family size	Frequency	Percentage
2-3 members	29	19
4-5 members	78	51
6-7 members	34	22.2
8-9 members	11	7.1
10-11 members	1	0.7
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The above table exhibits the number of family members of the respondents. The existence of nuclear family in the Mizo society is revealed in the table where majority of the total respondents 107 (70%) have 2-3 members and 4-5 members in their family, indicating a household where husband and wife and their unmarried children live together. There are 34 (22.2%) of the respondents who have 6-7 family members, where in such families besides the parents and children, either of the grandparent tend to live with the family. 11 of the total respondents representing 7.1% have 8 -9 family members with grandparents, husband and wife, unmarried children and married son with his offsprings. Out of the total respondents only one

respondent (0.65%) has 11 family members where three or more generations such as grandparents, husband and wife, aunt or uncle, their married son with unmarried children all reside together. From the table it is seen that majority of the respondents 107 (70%) have a small nuclear family size, and the respondents may or may not be able to expect any help from their spouses or children, thus may hire daily labour in the business. Whereas 46 (30%) have more than 6 members in their family household. These 30% of the respondents are able to have extra help from their family members in the family floriculture business and the floriculturists need all the support they can get from their family members.

A dependent family member refers to an individual who is reliant on another person, typically for financial assistance. This can encompass individuals such as a husband, partner, kid, parent, sibling, or any cohabitant who is considered a member of the person's family. A dependent family member refers to a relative who relies on someone else for financial assistance. This can encompass a grandparent, parents, children, aunts, uncles, or other kins who relies on an individual for financial support. The number of dependent family members is asked through demographic profile in the interview schedule.

Table 4.8

Number of dependent family members

Number of dependent family members	Frequency	Percentage
0-1	61	40
2-3	77	50.3
4-5	12	7.8
6-7	3	1.9
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above reveals the number of dependent family members of the respondents. The table shows that out of the total respondents, 77 (50.3%) which comprises the majority of the respondents have 2-3 dependent family members. Such dependents of the family are mostly the children or the grandchildren who are still

studying. Meanwhile 61 (40%) of the informants have only 0-1 dependent member, which may indicate the children or grandchildren of the family who are students, in this category, 21 of the respondents do not have any dependent family member within the household. 12 (7.8%) of the total respondents have 4-5 dependent members within their families, such dependents consist of the children mostly students and the grandparents living with the family and 3 (1.9%) of the informants have 6-7 dependent family members within their household. Such households are three generation families large in size and as such number of dependents are also high. The dependent family members are grandparents, unmarried uncles or aunts without any jobs residing with the nuclear family, the offsprings and grandchildren who are mostly students. Such dependent members help support the entrepreneurial activity in floriculture and those dependent members excluding the students are very much involved in the business venture of the household.

Knowledge of the number of earning members of the respondents' families is essential to comprehend the level of income of the household, standard of living and the style of living. In this project, the number of earning members is asked and the total number of those who have income is presented below.

Table 4.9
Number of earning members of family

Number of earning family members	Frequency	Percentage
One	42	27.5
Two	69	45.1
Three	19	12.4
Four	18	11.8
None	5	3.3
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above demonstrates the number of earning members in each of the respondent's family. Out of the total 153 sample, there are 5 (3.3%) respondents from the total sample who has no one in the household who can claim to be an earning member except the respondent. For such families, floriculture entrepreneurship is a major source of income and the respondent is the sole bread earner of the family. While on the other hand, 18 (11.8%) of the respondents have four earning members in the family. In such families, the spouse of the respondent as well as their children are earning regular income and are employed in government service. 19 (12.4%) of the respondents have three earning members in their families, here too, the spouse and their grown- up children are employed with regular income. Meanwhile, majority of the respondents constituting 69 (45.1%) have two earning members in the family, in such families, husband and wife are the bread earners, and in some instances, the grown-up children are employed in government service. Lastly, 42 of the respondents representing 27.5% has one earning member in their families. The number of earning members in the family would definitely prove to bring about security and better standard of living. The earning members are those employed in the government service, in the private organisations and those self-employed members earning income through driving taxis, two-wheeler taxis, plumbers, carpenters and so on. Those having more than two earning members in the family are much better off than others and it also indicates that floriculture business is not the sole income.

4.8 Family income

Income is the total sum of money received in return for goods or services. Income is usually described in terms of money, but it can also be expressed in terms of property and other valuable transfers that are received as payment for goods, as payment for services rendered, or as returns on investments. Income refers to monetary return whether received in cash or in kind. Knowing the monthly family income of the respondents is significant in order to understand the standard of living and whether families are able to make ends meet with the family income. In this project, the amount of family income is asked and they are categorized into groups, such as Rs 10000-20000, 20000-30000, 30000-40000, and 40000 and above.

Table 4.10

Family income

Family Income per month (in rupees)	Frequency	Percentage
10000 – 20000	6	3.9
20000 – 30000	19	12.4
30000 – 40000	23	15.0
40000 and above	105	68.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The above table clearly illustrates the family income group of the respondents. It is evident from the table that out of the total sample, 105 (68.6%) of the respondents comprising the majority have monthly income ranging from Rs 40000 and above. This group has at least one or more members earning monthly income and floriculture business is pursued as secondary occupation indicating that the business provides additional income for the family. There are 23 (15%) of the respondents having family income ranging from Rs 30000-40000. The income range reveals that the families depend on the floriculture business as their main source of livelihood. Those families with monthly income ranging from Rs 20000-30000 comprise of 19 (12.4%), and such families entirely depend on the floriculture business for sustenance. The amount of income for such group may vary depending on the sales of floriculture goods within a month. The lowest income group consists of the income ranging from Rs 10000-20000 and they are small in number with 6 (3.9%) respondents. They comprise of those informants who rely heavily on floricultural business for their livelihood and on other odd jobs for their sustenance.

4.9 Religious denomination

A religion is a specific set of practices and beliefs about one or more gods and the practices associated with this belief, such as worshiping or praying in a structure like a church or temple. Religion refers to the belief in and worship of a supernatural power or powers especially a God or gods. It is a particular system of worship and faith. Denomination is a religious group that has slightly different beliefs from other groups that share the same religion. Denomination function as a sub group within a religion that operates under a common name and tradition. With 87.16% Christian population in Mizoram, there exists a number of Christian denominations like the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the United Pentecostal Church, the Roman Catholic, the Salvation Army and so on. Religion plays a significant role in shaping and molding the lives of the members in the Mizo society. Throughout Christian history, flowers have served as strong symbols representing beauty, purity, resurrection, and spiritual growth. Flowers function as reminder of God's presence and love, frequently serving as metaphors for divine qualities or virtues. The passion flower is predominantly used as a reminder to symbolise Jesus' scourging, crucifixion, and resurrection. The white lily or the Easter lily, symbolises Christ's purity and divinity. They have also been associated with the Virgin Mary, representing her purity and innocence. Additionally, lilies are frequently associated with Easter, symbolising Christ's miraculous conception and resurrection. In Christianity, red roses symbolise love or represent the blood of Christ. For Catholics, the rose symbolises the rosary utilised during prayer and to commemorate significant events in Christ's life. Question was framed asking the religious denomination of the respondents in this project.

Table 4.11**Religious denomination**

Religious denomination	Frequency	Percentage
Presbyterian	134	87.6
Baptist	6	3.9
Salvation Army	7	4.6
United Pentecostal Church	4	2.6
Roman Catholic	2	1.3
Seventh Day Adventist	0	0
Isua Krista Kohhran	0	0
Nunna Lalchhungkua	0	0
Rinna Kohhran	0	0
Kohhran Thianghlim	0	0
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above demonstrates the religious denomination of the respondents. The religion of the respondents is Christianity and there are numerous denominations of Christianity in the state. In the present study, the Presbyterian denomination is the largest one with 134 respondents affiliated to the church which accounts for 87.6%. This is indicative of the fact that Presbyterian church members have more aesthetic interest in flowers and are much more prone to indulge in floriculture activity than other denomination members. The Baptist denomination consists of a mere 6 (3.9%) and the Salvation Army constitutes 7 (4.6%), the United Pentecostal Church with 4 (2.6%), the Roman Catholic with 2 (1.3%). The overall category of denominations shows dominance of Presbyterian church members amongst the respondents who pursue floriculture occupation followed by a small number of other denominations. The Presbyterian church gives much importance to landscaping the church premises and surroundings with ornamental plants and flowering plants to add beauty to the church. Besides this, the Presbyterian church being the largest in number and size in the capital city, gives utmost importance to floral decoration of the church on every

Sunday service at the sacred altar. The denomination normally sanctions funds for fresh flower arrangement every Sunday. Hence, the Presbyterian members are much more drawn to the floriculture enterprise having aesthetic taste in flowers.

4.10 Housing status and type of house of respondents

Having the luxury of living in one's own house brings a feeling of belonging and permanency. Owning a house is a symbol of accomplishment and success in one's job and career. Residing in own house people are free from hassles, free from fear and anxiety of untimely termination of lease agreement from the landlord. Residing in own house brings in a sense of security and comfort to the owners.

Rental housing refers to a property occupied by someone other than the owner, for which the tenant pays a periodic mutually agreed rent to the owner. Renting, also referred to as hiring or letting, is a contractual arrangement in which a payment is made for the temporary use of someone else's property, service, or good. This agreement is upheld through the signing of a rental agreement, also known as a lease, which outlines the responsibilities and expectations of both the tenant and landlord. In this research, question was asked whether the respondents are residing in their own house or in rented house.

Two types of houses are identified which are owned and rented by the respondents. They are pucca house/RCC and Assam type house. Pucca housing, also known as reinforced cement concrete (RCC) buildings denotes residences that are constructed to be durable and long-lasting. Pucca dwellings are commonly constructed with materials such as concrete, stone, clay tiles, steel, metal, as opposed to traditional homes that were built with mud and organic substances. On the other hand, the Ikra home, also known as the "Assam type house," is prevalent in the Northeast region of India. The majority of these houses are primarily used for residential purposes. Usually, these dwellings are constructed using lightweight, readily accessible materials such as bamboo, wooden planks, wall tiles and tin roof. These dwellings are constructed with a well-designed framework of bamboo or hardwood beam-columns that meet the seismic safety standards of being rectangular and simple. There is also prevalence of double storied building in this style.

Table 4.12**Housing status and type of house of respondents**

Housing status	Frequency (%)
Residing in own house	111(72.5)
Residing in rented house	42 (27.5)
Total	153(100)
Type of House	Frequency (%)
Pucca house (RCC)	40(26.1%)
Assam type house	113(73.9%)
Total	153(100)

Source: Field data

The table illustrates the housing status and type of house owned by the respondents. From the table, it is clear that out of the total respondents, 111 (72.5%) of the respondents are residing in their own house and 113 (73.9%) of the respondents are residing in Assam type house. The respondents who own houses have been living in their houses for a number of years, in fact more than 15 years for some. Such respondents afford to have their own houses because one or two members of the family have regular source of income being employed in government or private firms in the clerical posts. Majority of those residing in their own houses usually have Assam type houses. Those families having members employed in the government have access to housing loan in the bank easily, thus constructing their own houses and are free from the burden of having to pay rent monthly. Some of those respondents residing in their own house pursue floriculture business as a full-time job, and for some it is pursued as an additional source of income, since they have other regular income. While 42 (27.5%) of the respondents reside in rented house and are yet to construct their own house. In such families, floriculture business is relied heavily upon and also on other odd jobs and such families have been residing in rented houses for a number of years, more than 15 years for some. The table also shows that 40 (26.1%) of the total respondents resides in and own re-inforced cement concrete houses (RCC) or pucca houses. Pucca house owners are few in number

compared to Assam type house owners. Such RCC buildings are owned by families who has two or more members employed in the state government and have regular income, and at the same time, such pucca buildings normally have three/four stories and are being rented by other people. For most of those who own pucca buildings floriculture business is done usually at the roof top and balconies and some of the respondents pursue it as a full- time job, and for some it is a part-time job. Those owning pucca houses and Assam type houses pursue their floriculture business within the compounds of their residences, every available space is utilized for constructing greenhouses to house their nurseries and propagated flowering and non-flowering plants.

4.11 Owner and hired worker floriculturists

A worker refers to an individual who is legally obligated by a contractual arrangement, receives compensation for his labour, or is self-employed. Workers can be categorised into many types based on specific parameters. Hired workers are individuals employed by others and earn a salary or wage as remuneration for the work they do. The second group of workers consists of individuals or owners who are self-employed and operate their own businesses.

Table 4.13
Ownership status of floriculturists

Ownership status of floriculturists	Frequency	Percentage
Owners	143	93.4
Hired workers	10	6.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above shows the division of the total respondents into owners or self-employed floriculturists and hired workers. 143 (93.4%) of the total informants are self-employed owners of the floriculture business, and 10 (6.6 %) of the respondents are hired workers and self -employed floriculturists at the same time. They are hired to work on a daily basis in the flower cultivation related works of other floriculturists which brings in additional wages or income for the household, though they too are

self-employed in their own floriculture enterprise. Hired workers are few in number and as such floriculture, as is evident from the field data, is pursued largely as a family business involving the cooperative venture of family members.

4.12 Possession of bank accounts

Regardless of one's life stage, whether one is a student, working professional, homemaker, businessperson, or senior citizen, having a bank account is essential for achieving financial independence and stability. A bank account serves not only as a means to save money, but also as a secure storage option for other precious items such as jewelry or critical documents. This is made possible through the availability of bank lockers, which can only be accessed by individuals who possess a bank account. Possession of a bank account helps an individual to withdraw and deposit money and keep track of his money. In this project, question was asked whether respondents possess bank accounts.

Table 4.14

Possession of bank account

Possession of bank account	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	146	95.4
No	7	4.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above clearly shows that majority of the respondents 146 representing 95.4% of the total sample possess bank accounts. This indicates that the respondents are aware of the importance of keeping their money safe, achieving financial stability with whatever the amount they deposit and save in the bank. While there are still people who do not possess bank accounts which is clearly seen in this project with 7 (4.6%) of the respondents. These people do not possess bank accounts because though literate they believe that they do not require individual accounts for themselves, sharing the account of their spouses. The respondents who possess bank accounts maintain their savings account and deposit their earnings from their

business through online transfers which is the regular way of modern money transfer and payments.

Having a bank account provides an individual with financial independence and security. It allows people to deposit and withdraw money at their will. In this project, question was asked to know when the respondents as account holders opened their accounts in the bank. Question was framed to know if they opened before marriage, after marriage or after they started their floriculture business.

Table 4.15

The timing of opening bank account

The timing of opening bank account	Frequency	Percentage
Before marriage	32	20.9
After marriage	84	55
After starting floriculture business	30	19.6
No account	7	4.5
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above illustrates the timing of opening bank account by the respondents. It is evident from the table that 84 (55%) of the total sample opened their bank accounts only after marriage. The reason for opening bank accounts only after marriage would be because in the earlier Mizo society people without any regular earnings do not possess bank accounts, the head of the family maintains the family account and all savings were deposited in the head of family's account. The majority of the respondents being either matriculates or high school drop outs were jobless and unemployed without any earnings before marriage. After marriage, they eventually developed aesthetic interest in flowers and plants, learning the technical skill and technique of flower growing, slowly building the floriculture business at their home spaces and beyond. Self-employment results in generating income which eventually leads to opening bank accounts for savings and deposits. From the table it is seen that 32 (20.9%) respondents opened their bank accounts before marriage.

Some of the respondents were able to have individual bank accounts because they had been employed in the government service having regular income before getting married. Similarly, some had been self-employed with earnings before marriage and some of the respondents are still single and unmarried being self-employed generating income through floriculture enterprise. On the other hand, out of the total respondents 30 (19.6%) had opened their bank accounts only after establishing floriculture business. Such respondents felt the necessity of opening bank account only after generating income through their sales of goods, having a bank account was not considered necessary before establishing their business. While 7(4.5%) of the respondents do not have bank account, since their floriculture business is pursued as an additional source of income, they feel individual account is not necessary since they can share the account of their spouses.

Establishing a joint bank account is a favorable choice for those seeking to distribute financial obligations with others. Unlike personal bank accounts, these accounts are jointly owned by two or more individuals, who have access to the account and can conduct transactions. These Accounts are specifically designed for couples, family members, and business partners who wish to jointly manage financial obligations. While on the other hand, an individual account is owned and operated by one person. It is an account in the name of one individual. In the project, respondents were asked to state the kind of bank account they are holding. Whether they have an individual account or a joint account or both.

Table 4.16

Type of bank account

Type of bank account	Frequency	Percentage
Individual account	138	90.1
Joint account	4	2.7
Both	4	2.7
No account	7	4.5
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The kind of bank account opened by respondents is clearly shown in the above table. Out of the total sample, 138 (90.1%) respondents possess individual accounts. Maintaining an individual account is feasible in the business venture where in today's world with technological and financial advancement online and cashless transactions have become popular features of the business. Account holders can keep track of their money, deposit and withdraw at their convenience and will. While a mere 4 (2.7%) of the respondents hold a joint account with their spouse. Possessing a joint account may have dvantage where the spouse helps in financial management. Since it is a family enterprise, normally the account experiences maintained by the head of the household or the prominent member of the family and as such few cases are found having joint accounts. Another 2.7% of the respondents maintain both accounts that is, individual and joint. Meanwhile 7(4.5%) does not possess bank account, because such floriculturists do not feel the need to open individual account to manage their money, since they share their spouse's accounts. This data illustrates the fact that floriculture entrepreneurs do have financial independence and stability.

4.13 Savings and deposits

A savings account is a financial product offered by several banks, where account holders can deposit money and earn a tiny amount of interest on their deposits. There are no restrictions on depositing money, and it can be withdrawn whenever necessary. The primary objective of a savings account is to offer individuals a safe place to store money that they do not plan to use frequently. Question was asked to the respondents having individual accounts whether they deposit and save money monthly. In response to this question, out of the total sample 127 respondents which represents 83% are able to deposit at least some amount of money monthly in their accounts. Whereas 17% of the total sample are not able to deposit money monthly. The respondents who are able to regularly deposit and save some amounts of money are further asked the approximate amount they are able to save every month.

Table 4.17

Savings and deposits

Savings and deposits	Frequency	Percentage
Below Rs 10000	36	23.5
Rs 10000 – 20000	39	25.5
Rs 20000 – 30000	27	17.6
Rs 30000 – 40000	12	7.8
Above Rs 40000	39	25.5
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above clearly shows the amount of money the respondents are able to save and deposit in the bank per month. Out of the total population, 36 (23.5%) of the respondents are able to save below Rs 10000 per month. Such respondents mostly pursue floriculture business as a part time job, as such indicate poor sales of floriculture goods. Whereas 39 (25.5%) of the informants are able to save between Rs 10000 – 20000 monthly, such respondents too, pursue the business for additional income and the amount they are able to save shows good sale of flowers and plants at home and beyond. There are 27 (17.6%) of the respondents who are able to save Rs 20000- 30000. This indicates good sale of their floriculture goods at home and beyond. Whereas 12 (7.8%) of the respondents are able to save and deposit Rs 30000-40000 a month, which shows that they usually have significant sales of their products at home through bulk selling to wholesalers and other sellers. 39 of them which constitutes 25.5% are able to save a good amount of money that is, Rs 40000 and above in a month, indicating that such respondents sell their products in bulk at home to wholesalers and individuals, some sell their goods outside the state, and in the local market at weekends. The amount deposited and saved in the bank per month may vary depending upon the kind of sales the respondents make. If the sales per month is high, the amount saved will definitely be high. The respondents are further asked to know whether the money they deposited in their account is solely the profit they gained from their business. In response to this question, 99 of the total

respondents representing 64.7% says the amount of money saved and deposited is the profit gained from their floriculture business. While on the other hand, the rest 35.3% of the respondents answered that the money saved and deposited in the bank per month is not solely the profit they gained from their business. The money deposited in their account for this category of respondents is the pension pay they receive per month.

Other personal savings that the respondents have besides saving in the bank is another area which is relevant. Post office savings are those that act as any other normal savings account of any bank, and the account is transferable from one post office to another. Post office savings schemes are varied and many. One of the personal savings the respondents have is life insurance. Life insurance provides comprehensive protection against the financial risks associated with the death of the policyholder, ensuring their savings are fully safeguarded. Furthermore, in the event of death, life insurance guarantees the whole sum promised. Personal savings in post office is another area the respondents indulge in. In this project, question is asked to know the other personal savings of the respondents.

Table 4.18

Other personal savings

Other personal savings	Frequency	Percentage
Post office	12	7.8
Life insurance corporation	24	15.7
Household treasury	27	17.6
None	90	58.8
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above indicates the other personal savings the respondents have chosen to invest their money. From the table above it is clearly seen that majority of the respondents 90 (58.8%) do not have other personal savings besides depositing in the bank. This is indicative of the fact that the Mizo people do not indulge so much into personal savings like LIC and post office money saving schemes. The table also

shows that 27 (17.6%) of the respondents prefer to keep their money safe in the household treasury, and keep the money for meeting contingencies and household requirements. In the meanwhile, 24 (15.7%) of the sample, invest their money in Life Insurance Corporation, until the sum assured becomes mature the individual is unable to withdraw the money. Those floriculture entrepreneurs generating regular income are aware of the importance of personal savings, and thus indulge in saving for future expenditure and also for expanding and strengthening their business venture.

4.14 Possession of land

In this project, respondents have been asked if they possess land in their name. Knowledge of the respondents' possession of land in their name would throw light on the respondent's stand and status in the household in terms of possession of immovable property, a position in which women are not found in abundance. Therefore, the respondents are asked if they possess land in their name.

Table 4.19
Possession of land in respondents' name

Possession of land in respondents' name	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	48	31.4
No	105	68.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

Table 4.20 illustrates clearly the division of the total population into those who own land in their name and those who do not. From the table it is clear that out of the total sample only a small portion 48 (31.4%) of the respondents, own land in their name. For some of those who own land, the land in their name is an inheritance and gift from parents and grandparents. Those who possess land utilize the space for constructing houses and are utilized for open field cultivation of annual cut flowers or anthurium flowers. While the majority of the informants interviewed 105 (68.6%)

do not possess land in their name. The reason behind this is that in Mizo society, patriarchy exists and governs the relationship between husband and wife in a family, which is reflected in the possession of immovable property such as landed property. Possession of landed property is considered the right of the male head of the family, though there is no constraint on women to possess land. In case of purchasing extra plot of land, the ownership right is in the name of the prominent member of the family who is the wife. If the plot of land is vast, it may be divided amongst the sons and daughters by the head of the family.

In this project, question is asked to know the time when the respondents possess land in their name. Knowing the situation would help in understanding the position of women respondents in the household and would also throw light on the floriculture entrepreneurship pursued by the respondents.

Table 4.20

The timing of possessing land in their name

The timing	Frequency	Percentage
Before marriage	8	5.2
After marriage	40	26.1
Not possessing any land	105	68.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above clearly indicates that 8 (5.2%) of the total respondents possessed land in their name before getting married. Those who possess land in their name have inherited from their parents or grandparents, and have been gifted to them by their grandparents and parents before marriage. While out of the total population, 40 (26.1%) of the respondents came to possess land in their own name after marriage. Such land possessions have been passed on to them by parents or gifted by parents. In some cases, it is a joint venture of both husband and wife, purchasing land through bank loans utilizing the land for floriculture purposes. While 105 (68.6%) of the total respondents do not own land in their name. The reason behind this is that Mizo society being a patriarchal society, women normally do not own landed property in

their name, it is the prerogative of the head of the family to own such property. Though there is no constraint on women to own land, purchase of land as a family is done normally in the name of the head of the family or the sons. It is also the privilege of the well-to-do families and the elite people to gift their daughters and wives landed property which consist of only a small percentage.

Land possession refers to the specific areas of land that an individual has acquired legal or customary ownership rights over. A hectare, denoted by the symbol ha, is a widely employed metric unit for measuring land and plots worldwide. The term hectare, coined in 1795, is a fusion of the Latin words “area” and “hect”. A hectare is equivalent to 10,000 square meters and 2.471 acres in the British Imperial System. One hundred hectares is equivalent to one square kilometer. The majority of the land in Mizoram was collectively owned and managed by the local government in the early days. Currently, the government registration accurately documents the land owned by individuals. In this project, the respondents are asked the land they possess in hectares.

Table 4.21

Land possessed in hectares

Land in hectares	Frequency	Percentage
0.005 – 0.002	1	.7
0.002 – 0.21	10	6.5
0.21 – 0.41	13	8.5
0.41 – 1.01	16	10.4
1.01 – 2.01	4	2.6
2.01 – 3.01	3	2.0
16.01-17.01	1	.7
Not possessing land	105	68.6
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table shows clearly the land possessed area in hectares of the respondents. Out of the total respondents possessing land, 1 (.7%) respondent's land area in hectares falls between 0.005 – 0.002. While 10 respondents (6.5%) of those who possessed land have land area falling between 0.002- 0.21 hectares. Similarly, 13(8.5%) of the respondents own land between 0.21-0.41hectares. Next, 16 respondents (10.4%) possess land area which falls between 0.41-1.01hectares. While 4 respondents (2.6%) own between 1.01 – 2.01 hectares of land in their name. Next, 3 respondents (2.0%) possess between 2.01-3.01 hectares of land in their name too. Lastly, 1 respondent (.7%) has land area between 16.01-17.01 hectares. The table shows that 48 of the respondents possess land amounting to 31.4%. Such hectares of land are utilized to construct houses and empty lands are used for constructing greenhouses to carry out field cultivation for anthurium flowers and other annual cut flowers. The largest plot of land which is 16.01-17.01 ha is owned by an individual floriculture entrepreneur who utilizes the majority of his land for greenhouse cultivation of perennial flowering plants like anthurium, rose and chrysanthemum flowers. Open field cultivation of flowering and non-flowering plants is also pursued by the particular individual. As mentioned before, 105 respondents constituting 68.6% do not possess land at all in their name. Majority of the respondents do not possess land experiencee the Mizo society being a patriarchal one, possession of landed property is normally considered to a large extent the prerogative right exclusive to the male head of the family and the sons of the family. Though there is no restriction on the women to possess landed property, it is permissible so long as the women can afford to purchase landed property. However, only a few women have the privilege of owning landed property in their name.

4.15 Quantum of land used for floriculture

Commercial floriculture is often associated with greenhouses in temperate and tropical climates, and open field cultivation is also done for many varieties of cut flowers. In the present study, land used for floriculture is asked to know the quantum of land used for growing flowers. Cultivation of flower crops on open field and greenhouses is pursued by a few floriculturists in Mizoram which is shown in the table below.

Table 4.22**Quantum of land used for floriculture**

Quantum of land used for floriculture (Area in hectare)	Frequency	Percentage
0.005 – 0.01	5	3.2
0.01 – 0.05	8	5.2
0.06 – 0.10	5	3.2
0.11 – 0.15	3	2
0.16 – 0.20	2	1.3
0.21 – 0.51	1	0.7
16.01 – 17.01	1	0.7
Not pursuing land cultivation	128	83.7
Total	153	100

Source: Field data

The table above demonstrates the quantum of land used for cultivation of flowers by the floriculturists. The table shows that the land used for floriculture is not vast and that extensive open field cultivation of flower crops is not pursued in Mizoram. 5 of the total respondents representing 3.2% pursue cut flower cultivation in between 0.005 – 0.01 ha of land, where available owned land is utilized for construction of greenhouse. Similarly, 8 (5.2%) of the total respondents pursue flower cultivation on 0.01 – 0.05 ha of land. Another 5(3.2%) of the informants cultivate flower crops on 0.06 – 0.10 ha of land. 4 of the respondents accounting for 2.7% cultivate flowers on 0.11 – 0.15 ha of land. 1.3% of the total respondents pursuing commercial floriculture utilizes 0.16 – 0.20 ha of land. While only 1 (0.7%) of the total informants pursue land cultivation of flower crops on 0.21 – 0.51 ha of land. Meanwhile, 1 (0.7%) of the respondents pursue floriculture production on a vast plot of land amounting to 16.01 -17.01 ha of land. The vast land is covered with 55 greenhouses where different variety of perennial flowers are cultivated and harvested regularly. Open field cultivation of flowering plants is also carried out on this vast plot of land. The total number of those informants pursuing land cultivation of flower

crops is 25 representing 16.3%. These floriculturists mainly pursue anthurium cut flower cultivation under greenhouse and polyhouse facility on land and there are respondents who pursue open field cultivation of annual cut flowers. Majority of the respondents accounting for 83.7% do not pursue land cultivation under greenhouse or open field cultivation. The extra plot of land they have adjacent to their residence is made use of, to house their propagated potted plants and flowers, to germinate flower seeds and keep their flower seedlings under greenhouse or polyhouse. Such small greenhouses or polyhouses are constructed on rooftops and on the available space next to their residences.

An Overview

The current chapter discusses the socio-economic profile of the respondents. In social science research knowledge of the demographic profile of the respondents is of utmost importance in order to have clear picture of the background of the informants. In order to understand the socio-economic profile of the respondents, various variables have been adopted such as the florist association they are affiliated to, gender composition, age composition, marital status, educational status, occupation of respondents, spouse's occupation, type of family and family size, number of dependent family members, earning members of family, family income, religious denomination, housing status and type of house, ownership status of floriculture, length of time staying in rented house and own house, possession of bank accounts, the timing of opening bank accounts, the type of bank account, savings and deposits, amount of money able to deposit and save per month, profit savings, other personal savings, possession of land in respondents name, timing of possessing land in their name, the land possessed in hectares and quantum of land used for floriculture.

1. The study reveals that floriculture as an entrepreneurial activity is still considered to a large extent a stereotypical domain of the female category in the Mizo society. The study illustrates the fact that females still dominate the occupation based on floriculture and its related activities. The reason behind this is that males though having aesthetic interest in flowers guided by

patriarchal sentiments and believing it as feminine work avoid and refrain from indulging in floricultural activity. However, with increasing urbanization, improved standard of living, outlook and worldview of people becomes wider, and with increasing importance gained by flowers in the society, wider opportunities open for males, thus, males too are more and more drawn to this female dominated floriculture entrepreneurship.

2. The age composition of the respondents as revealed in the study is found that floriculture is less pursued by people below 40 years of age. This is because it is the age group of married women with toddlers and small children, where women have to give priority to the upbringing and caring of their children and are unable to pursue the business intensely. However, majority of the age group falls between 41-60 plus age, which indicates that married women pursue the business intensely only after their children have grown up, to generate additional income to help support the family. Such age group state that they pursue the business as a passion, as a hobby, and so out of sheer interest in flowers they work to bring in income for the sustenance of the family. Some of the respondents are 90 years old and some are 80 plus years of age still active and energetic because floriculture activity gives them inner happiness and gratification.
3. Looking at the marital status of the respondents, it varies from being married to unmarried, divorced, single, separated and widowhood. The study shows that majority of the respondents are married, which further indicate that they are being supported by their spouse and family members in their business venture. The unmarried category mostly comprises of the male respondents who are self-employed and immersed in the floriculture business in their home spaces. Similarly, a few of the respondents are divorcees, some are struggling singly in their entrepreneurial activity, while some of the divorcees are supported by their children in their business. The study reveals that widows have been forced to enter the business after their husband's death to support and maintain the family. Single and separated respondents constituting a small percentage too pursue floriculture business as a livelihood option.

4. Regarding the educational status, it is evident that the status ranges from primary school to post graduate and above. Primary school educated are few in number, the percentage of middle school educated is also not high. However, majority of the respondents are matriculates and some are high school drop outs. Such respondents not being highly educated have no option but pursue self-employment in floriculture. Some of the higher secondary educated and graduates are employed in government service and in private firms, while some of them are not employed, so such respondents are pursuing floriculture for additional income and as livelihood option. A small percentage are those post graduates and above who are employed in government service are at the same time pursuing the business as a part time job, as a passion to generate additional income. Being properly educated is advantageous and conducting smoothly the floriculture business in areas such as germinating and care of seedlings, plant management, caring of plants and market demand. Language too is not a hindrance for educated respondents in import and export of goods.
5. Considering the occupation of the respondents and their spouses, the study reveals that majority of the respondents are self-employed entrepreneurs in floriculture, some relying heavily on the business for sustenance, while some pursue it for additional income. A small percentage of the spouses of the respondents too are self-employed as two-wheeler taxi and taxi drivers, carpenters, business and so on. A small percentage of the respondents and a good number of the spouses are employed in the government service; some are employed in private firms too. Though employed and having regular income, the spouses help support and indulge in floriculture enterprise to generate income to sustain the family. A small percentage of the spouses are retired from their government jobs, enjoying pension salary. The study also shows that those without spouses (unmarried, separated, widows and divorced women) are the sole bread earners of the family, with the support of their family members. However, floriculture enterprise is a domestic business and the married and single parents do not commute to far off places to sell

their goods, the business is run without leaving the house, not neglecting their household chores and kids.

6. Looking at the type of family and the size of family, the study clearly indicates that the type of family structure followed by majority of the respondents is the two -generation nuclear family consisting of husband and wife and their unmarried offsprings. Single parents, divorcees, separated or widows with their children is also a nuclear family. The three generation or more family with all the married sons with their children all residing together sharing inheritance also known as joint family is not followed in the Mizo society. Even the extended family is not normally practiced in the society, where besides the parents and offsprings, household members include grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins. However, stem family exists in a small percentage, where the parents choose one of their sons who may be the eldest or the youngest, to remain in the parental household after marriage with his children to perpetuate the family bloodline and lineage. This is practiced generation after generation in the Mizo society. The family size is thus not big in the society as is evident from the study where families have 4-5 members. A small percentage has more than 5 members where two or three generations live together, where the most common feature is the presence of either of the grandparents or an uncle or aunt living with the family. On the whole, two generation nuclear family is a common feature which is small in size and the presence of three generation families is another feature.

Considering the number of dependent family members, a small number of the families does not have any dependent family members which indicates that all the family members are employed and self- employed. Whereas as the study shows a good percentage of the respondents' families have dependents ranging from 2-7 family members. Such dependents are mostly children, students, grandparents, unemployed uncles or aunts residing with the family. Such dependent family members with the exception of children and students, help support the domestic floriculture enterprise as far as possible.

Looking at the number of earning members of the respondents' families, it is seen from the study that nearly all the respondents have earning members

ranging from one to four members. Such earning members are employed in the government service, private firms, and self-employed in various fields. Those self-employed earning members are engaged in the informal sector such as taxi drivers, two-wheeler taxi drivers, delivery persons, and carpenters. Those families having two to four earning members indicates that floriculture business is not the sole source of income, and that for such families, floriculture business is an additional income.

7. Regarding the family income of the respondents the study clearly illustrates the income category of the respondents' families. Majority of the respondents have a monthly income ranging from Rs 40,000 and above as family income. This is indicative of the fact that they have other regular sources of income per month and that floriculture is pursued as additional source of income. While a small percentage of the respondents have income ranging from Rs 20,000-40,000 as family income per month. This shows that these respondents depend on the floriculture enterprise together with other source of income to sustain the family, meeting the household requirements through the business. A small number of respondents have Rs 10,000-20,000 as family income per month, such families depend heavily on floriculture business and other odd jobs for their source of income.
8. The religious denomination of the respondents is an important aspect which reveals the largest denomination which pursues floriculture business as a livelihood option. With 87.16% Christian population in Mizoram, there exists a number of Christian denominations like the Presbyterian, the Baptist, the United Pentecostal Church, the Roman Catholic, the Salvation Army and so on. The study shows that majority of the respondents are Presbyterians and the rest belong to the other denominations. The Presbyterian church members tend to indulge in flower cultivation and earning income through the business more than the other denominations. The presbyterian church being the largest and dominant denomination in the capital city Aizawl gives utmost importance to flower arrangement to adorn the church altar on Sunday service, thus are much more drawn to the aesthetic interest and the business.

9. Regarding the housing status and type of house of respondents, the study illustrates the fact that majority of the respondents possess and reside in their own houses, while a few of them reside in rented houses. Majority of the floriculturists have two or three members earning regular income being employed which makes it possible for them to own a house of their own. For such respondents, floriculture is a secondary source of income, but at the same time, there are respondents who solely depend on floriculture for their livelihood and own a house of their own. The study also reveals that majority of the respondents reside in Assam type houses which they may or may not own. While the rest of the respondents reside in pucca houses (RCC) which they themselves may or may not own. It is discernible that majority of the respondents residing in their own houses have mostly Assam type houses, though a few of them possess pucca houses too. A few of the respondents residing in rented houses rent mostly Assam type houses and a few do rent pucca houses too. Those renting pucca houses have other sources of income besides floriculture venture to afford the monthly rent. Those who own their houses pursue their floriculture business on all available spaces around their houses, constructing greenhouses on the extra spaces, on their roof-tops and making use of balconies and basements. Those renting houses too make full use of the available spaces surrounding the rented houses.
- The study also shows the owner and hired worker floriculturists, where nearly all the respondents are owners of their floriculture enterprise, while the rest are hired workers cum owner floriculturists. Hired workers work for the floriculturists to earn additional income while at the same time are floriculture entrepreneurs themselves too. Hired workers are negligible and are few in number, floriculture is pursued as joint venture as a family enterprise.
10. Most of the respondents possess bank accounts which indicates that the floriculturists are aware of the importance of maintaining bank accounts to attain financial stability and maintain savings and deposits. The respondents maintain their accounts and deposit their earnings and profit through online payments and transfers. The floriculturists opened their account mostly after

marriage, and after establishing their business, they learn how to manage online transfer and deposits. The respondents too opened their bank accounts before marriage too. This situation shows that some of the floriculturists were employed in government service and some were self-employed before marriage with regular income, where bank accounts are mandatory. Another category of respondents opened their bank accounts only after establishing floriculture business, where the sales of goods necessitate the maintenance of bank accounts.

Majority of the respondents maintain individual accounts and is independently maintained, whereas a small percentage maintain joint accounts, and a negligible percentage maintain individual and joint accounts. Modern day transactions are online and cashless transactions which necessitate individual accounts. Few cases of joint accounts are found because the head of the family manages and maintains the account.

11. With regard to the savings and deposits the floriculturists are able to make monthly, it is seen that from the study that they are able to save from below Rs 10000 to above 40000 per month depending on the sales of floriculture goods. The higher the sales, the higher the deposits and savings. The amount saved and deposited are solely from the profit gained from floricultural sales for majority of the respondents, while for some it is not because the amount saved and deposited are from other source like pension pay.

The other personal savings the respondents choose to invest their money are in the different post office schemes offered. While some invest in life insurance policies for themselves and their children. Some save their money in the household treasury for meeting household requirements and other expenditures. Majority of the floriculturist entrepreneurs do not indulge in any other personal savings of the income earned through their sales.

12. Possession of land in respondents' name is another area which is revealed in the study. Only a small percentage possess land in their name. Such respondents are found to have received as gift or has inherited such landed property from their parents or grandparents. Such owned lands are made use

of to construct houses or use for cultivation of perennial cut flowers. Majority of the interviewees do not own land in their name. The reason can be attributed to the Mizo society being a patriarchal society, where possession of landed property involving huge sum of money is considered the prerogative right of the head of the family. However, female members are not restricted to possess land in their name, for instance, in case of extra plot of land or division of land, the right of ownership may be given to the wife or divided amongst the sons and daughters. Female members have independence in purchasing a plot of land if their purchasing power permits.

Regarding the timing of possession of land in respondents' name, the study shows that only a meagre percentage of respondents owned land before getting married, which shows such landed property is a gift or inheritance from parents or grandparents. While a number of respondents came to possess land in their name after marriage, this is indicative of the fact that such land property is passed on to them by their parents as gift, and purchasing new land is also a joint venture of husband and wife through bank loans where ownership right is experienced in the wife's name. Such extra plot of land experiences utilized for floriculture purposes for construction of small greenhouses to house flowering and non-flowering plants. While as mentioned above, majority of the respondents do not own land in their name.

13. The size of land possessed and the quantum of land used for floriculture by the respondents in terms of hectares varies from 0.005 ha to 16.01 ha. Such hectares of land owned by the respondents are utilized for construction of houses and the extra land is used for flower cultivation which is carried out under small greenhouses or polyhouses. The 16.01 ha owned by one individual is utilized for commercial open field cultivation of flowers and greenhouse cultivation of flowering plants.

CHAPTER V
FLOWERS IN MIZO SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

- 5.1 Introduction**
- 5.2 Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context**
- 5.3 Gift giving and extension of sentiments**
- 5.4 Funerary rituals**
- 5.5 Marriage ceremony**
- 5.6 Church occasions**
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CHAPTER V

FLOWERS IN MIZO SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

Throughout history, flowers have always been an integral part of human society, serving a vital role in social, cultural, and religious occasions because of their intrinsic essence and fragrance. Flowers have importance in numerous customs and traditions in the world. The use of flowers has long been a common practice, representing love, sentiments, and spirituality in both traditional rituals and modern events. Flowers serve as both artistic offerings from nature and integral components of society, bearing profound symbolic significance and fulfilling crucial functions in ceremonies and customs. Over the years, flowers have been a part of human civilization because people have appreciated their beauty, scent, and symbolic meaning. Flowers have long been used to mark important occasions and convey feelings. The main objective of this chapter is to analyse the importance of floriculture in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society.

In many different cultures across the world, flowers have long been considered important. These natural beautiful blooms are vital for fostering social cohesion because they have the ability to bridge cultural divides and break down linguistic barriers. Flowers, revered symbols, function as the representation of the fundamental concepts of faith and the historical development of faith. Flowers are powerful instruments for solidifying religious commitment and faithfulness, factors that facilitate the growth and concentration of religion. Furthermore, flowers serve as a means of communication that surpasses the limitations imposed by language, nationality, or culture around the world. Throughout history, flowers have been symbolically represented. The significance and linguistic meaning of flowers may be traced back to the societies of early civilisation and subsequently to Christianity (Anca and Cantor, 2015:78).

The Bible contains a complex amalgamation of symbolism and metaphor with flowers significantly representing the beauty, transience, and God's magnificent creation. The Bible does not enumerate numerous individual flowers, although those

mentioned possess profound theological and symbolic significance. The “lily” is one of the most frequently referenced flowers in the Bible. The lily represents purity and celestial beauty. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus references the lilies of the field, stating, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Matthew 6:28-29, ESV). In this passage, the lily is used to exemplify how God provides and care for his entire creation. The lily’s inherent beauty exemplifies divine creativity and meticulous attention to minute details. The “rose” is a flower referenced in the Bible, frequently symbolising love and beauty. In the Song of Solomon, the beloved proclaims, “I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys” (Song of Solomon 2:1“ESV”. The rose of Sharon symbolises the beauty and appeal of the beloved, frequently understood as an analogy for Christ’s love for the church (<https://biblechat.ai/knowledgebase/religious-events-symbols>).

The “crocus” flower is referenced in Isaiah 35:1, stating, “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus” (Isaiah 35:1, ESV). The crocus, flourishing in the arid desert environment, represents optimism, restoration and the assurance of divine transformational power. It serves as a reminder that even in the most barren conditions, divine grace may manifest beauty and vitality. The “almond blossom” is also significant in biblical literature. In the Book of Numbers, Aaron’s rod magically sprouts, flowers, and yields almonds as a testament to God’s selected priesthood (Numbers 1:8 ESV). The almond blossom, among the earliest to flower in spring, represents new beginnings and the divine assurance of regeneration. It symbolises God’s fidelity and His ability to generate life from what seems lifeless. In another passage in Jeremiah which states, “moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. Then said the Lord unto me, thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it” (Jeremiah 1:11-12, KJV). The almond’s early flowers represent God’s vigilance and the instant fulfillment of his promises (<https://biblechat.ai/knowledgebase/religious-events-symbols>).

The “pomegranate” flower is referenced in relation to the high priest’s vestments in Exodus. God instructs “on its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple

and scarlet yarns, around its hem, with bells of gold between them, a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe” (Exodus 28:33-34 ESV). The pomegranate, characterised by its numerous seeds, represents fertility and abundance. It is regarded as a symbol of the law, with the multitude of seeds signifying the numerous commandments bestowed by God. The use of pomegranate flowers in the priestly robes symbolises the priest's duty to uphold and impart God's commandments

<https://biblechat.ai/knowledgebase/religious-events-symbols>).

The "vine" and its flowers hold considerable importance in biblical iconography. Jesus proclaims, “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser” (John 15:1, ESV). The vine and its branches represent the profound connection between Christ and His disciples. The vine’s flowers, which ultimately yield fruit, represent development, productivity, and the transformative influence of remaining in Christ.

Besides these particular flowers, the Bible frequently use floral imagery to express more extensive spiritual truths. For example, Isaiah 40:6-8 states, “A voice says, “Cry!” And I said, “What shall I cry?” All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass” (Isaiah 40:6-8, ESV). This text employs the fleeting quality of flowers to represent the transitory essence of human existence and the perpetual character of divine scripture. It symbolizes human mortality and the continuous reliability of God’s promises. Similarly, 1 Peter 1: 24-25 states, “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever” (I Peter 1:24-25 ESV) This passage too depicts the brief nature of human beings symbolized by the flowers of the grass which withers and fades easily. In Christian literature, flowers have continued to be powerful symbols. For example, in John Bunyan’s “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” the protagonist Christian encounters the Hill of Difficulty, which is adorned with beautiful flowers. These flowers symbolize the beauty and encouragement that God provides even in the midst of life’s trials.

<https://biblechat.ai/knowledgebase/religious-events-symbols>).

In the Bible, flowers serve as delicate yet significant symbols, themes of beauty, impermanence, and divine providence. Although not as frequently highlighted as other natural components, flowers in the Bible function as potent metaphors, providing insights into God's nature, His creation, and the spiritual truths that pervade human life. In the present study, question was posed to the floriculturists, flower arrangers of churches and the key informants whether in their line of business and action they conform to the Biblical texts on flowers.

Table 5:1 Conforming to Biblical texts on flowers

Conforming	Floriculturists	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants (Florist Associations and MHIP)
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	72 (47.2%)	26 (43.4%)	2 (20%)
No	48 (31.3%)	20 (33.3%)	3 (30%)
When needed	33 (21.5%)	14 (23.3)	5 (50%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table demonstrates the level of conformity of the respondents to the Biblical texts on flowers in their action and line of business. Out of the total respondents, it is evident that 52 (23.3%) of them conform to the biblical texts on flowers when needed. Though there are numerous Biblical verses on flowers symbolizing God's love, the impermanence of human life and the great power and divine nature of God, people who are Christians do not always conform to the Biblical texts and symbolism of flowers. But they do not stray away from the symbolic meanings of flowers mentioned in the Bible. While 71 (31.9%) of all the respondents do not conform to Biblical texts on flowers. They do keep in mind the symbolic meanings flowers have in human life and thus deal with flowers based on their aesthetic taste and interest in flowers. The majority of the respondents comprising 100 (44.8%) inform that they do

conform to the Biblical texts on flowers with their dealings with floricultural business. For instance, flower arrangers usually choose white lilies and white roses to symbolize Christ's love for human beings and also His resurrection from the death. White lilies are also used on New Year's Day and Easter Sunday to represent new beginning and happiness, and also to symbolize Christ's resurrection from the death and divine power.

Flowers have consistently been associated with love and romance, symbolising deep emotions and desires exchanged between two individuals. Flowers significantly influence the expression of love, romantic attraction, and marriage proposals throughout many cultures and historical eras. Their beauty, enchanting fragrance, and delicate nature render them a perfect emblem of love, allowing individuals to convey their emotions in ways that words sometimes cannot.

Flowers have served as emblems in literature and poetry, frequently symbolizing sentiments, concepts, and moral qualities throughout history. Floriography, widely referred to as the secret language of flowers, enabled writers and poets to express intricate feelings and messages by selecting specific flowers. Flowers have served as a powerful means of communication, embodied with concealed significance and emotional symbolism for centuries. This intriguing language enabled persons to articulate their emotions through the nuanced, non-verbal communication of flower arrangements. The tradition of attributing significance to flowers can be traced back to earliest civilizations worldwide.

The 19th and 20th century pre-colonial, colonial and after independence writers and poets' sentiments and emotions in the context of the Mizo society have been deeply inspired by nature, love for the land and lamentations. Specific use of Mizo indigenous flowers as symbols is often seen in the different genres like poetic genres, love songs, sentimental songs, modern Christian hymns and songs. Pre-colonial period of the early 20th century poetic writings by Awithangpa features Mizo native colourful wild flowers such as *Tuahpui* or *Fartuah*, whose common name is tiger claw or Indian coral tree. Such '*tuahpui*' flower blooms usually cover the hills when the season comes, inspiring poets and writers.

Tuahpui lo par thlanga Vai puan sen angin,
Chengrang phirin chhai ka nuam e,
Chungah kulva lo fu rawh. (Chhuanvawra, 2011:139)
Tiger claw blooms below like a huge red carpet
How I long to hunt with my shotgun,
Drongos come perch on the branches.

Hausiampa a 20th century popular Mizo poet born in 1901 composed a number of poems and songs. Hausiampa composed on the beauty of nature, his love for nature is often seen in his poems and writings. Here in this nature poem, Mizo native flower *Tuahpui* (Indian coral tree/tiger claw flowers) is mentioned as nature's symbol of beauty.

Vawiin chuan sirva ka hmatiangah,
Lungrual takin chhai lai di nen an leng e,
Tuahpui par an tlan e, nui hiauvin(Ibid, 2011:169).
Birds are flying in my sight,
Happily soaring with their loved ones,
Pecking joyfully on the tiger claw blooms.

Hausiampa also composed a number of love songs where in some of the songs he uses indigenous Mizo flowers such as *lawhlei* (blue vanda) and *phunchawng* (bombax ceiba) to symbolize the beauty of his beloved and of his love for the maiden.

Ka nu ram tuanin mi tir lul suh,
Bawngva lawhlei Lalngo ka awm rih dawn e,
Duh leh mual lian pui chu tul rawh se.
Ding dun se eng zawk hi mawi ang maw?

Phaiah phunchawng a par ka hmu Hausiampan,

Ka tehkhin thin Lalngovi hmel nen hian. (Chhuanvawra,2011:171)

Do not tell me to work in the field O mother,

Am going to date my Bawngva blue vanda like beauty,

Let the work in the jhum field wait.

Which would be more beautiful if they stand together?

Hausiampa sees the cotton tree blooms in the valley,

Which I compare with my beloved's looks.

Vankhama (1906-1970), a renowned poet, songwriter of the 20th century composed a number of poems and songs. In one of his love songs, he uses Mizo indigenous flowers like woodfordia and red vanda flowers to symbolize his sweet love who fulfills his longing desire and like these flowers her beauty fills the whole town of Aizawl.

Kei zawng ka tan Aitenawn suihlungnemi'

Chhak senhripar ianga leng Zawlkhawmawii. (B.Lalthangliana, 2004:244)

But for me, like woodfordia blooms she appease my longing desire,

Like a red vanda her beauty fills Aizawl town.

The popular Mizo poet and songwriter, Liandala's song on *Par mawi Thang Vulna* shows his outstanding technique of poetic diction, depicting the beauty and his deep appreciation of the variety of Mizo indigenous flowers, his love for nature and the land in one song. It is a very popular and melancholic song and its lyrics touches the sentiments of a Mizo when sung. The chorus of the song *Par Mawi Thang Vulna* (Land where flowers bloom) goes-

Phunchawng, nauban, ainawn par

Tuah, vau, chhawkhle, senhri par;

Chawnpui, pang, samtlang, dingdi,

Par mawi thang vulna, Zoram hmun zauvah (Chhuanvawra,
2011:231)

Bombax ceiba (cotton tree), orchid, woodfordia (fire flame bush)

Coral flower, bauhinia, rhododendron, red vanda,

Queen crape myrtle, silk cotton tree, siamweed, scarlett milkweed,

Flowers bloom beautifully, in Mizoram's vast land.

Another popular poem is on the native flower '*Chhawkhlei par*' (Rododendron bloom) by a popular poet, H. Lalringa depicting the beauty of the flower. The poet yearns to walk on the peaks of the Phawngpui mountain where the beautiful red *Chhawkhlei* (rhododendron) flowers bloom all over, nothing compares to the natural beauty of the flowers, adding exquisiteness and serenity to the native land.

Zobawm thing tin par vul chhing chheng,

Chhaktiang ram thiang bawmtu par,

A vul leh ta, chhing zo awm maw,

Zobawmtu chhawkhlei par (Ibid, 2011:234).

Every tree in the hill slope blooms beautifully,

Rhododendron flowers which blankets the eastern land,

Are blooming again, what can compare to,

The Rododendron flowers covering the slopes.

Romani (1910-1972) a popular songwriter of the 20th century composed a number of popular songs, one of her popular songs depicts beautifully the autumn period in Mizoram, where in autumn every hill is covered with the blooms of tiger's claw and bauhinia variegata amidst the hazy clouds she fears to gaze, the birds above gather gleefully savouring the blooms, she is filled with a longing at this time of the year.

Tlang tin tuahpui leh vau vul lai khua thal,

Ka hawi ngam lo raltiang romei zing riai karah,

Suihlung rual sirva leng an nui hiau ve par an tlan,

Khawtlang sirva hnehin,

Aw, rianghlei nau ang ka tlei thei lo. . (B. Lalthangliana, 2004:296)

Tiger's claw and bauhinia blossoms cover the hills in autumn,

Amidst the far -off hazy clouds, I fear to gaze,

The birds gather gleefully savouring the blooms,

Birds of the village too,

Oh! Poor me, I am filled with a longing.

In the early 20th century, during the colonial rule in Mizoram, Prince Edward VIII who was about to be crowned King of England due to the death of his father, stepped down and forfeited his crown and chose to marry his love Miss Wallis, a divorcee. This incident shocked the world and impacted even the Mizo people so much so that many writers and poets of the time composed beautiful writings on Prince Edward's behalf. Where in one such writing the American rose symbolizes Miss Wallis.

Lung ka chhir chuang lo ka tlawm na a,

America rose par ka han thliah ni chuan,

Ka tan lallukhum a lo ni e,

Aw, ka tan lallukhum lo ni e. (Thanmawia, 2012:528)

Though humbled I don't regret,

The day I plucked the American rose,

For me it was a crowning moment,

Oh, yes, it was a crowning moment.

One of the famous Mizo writers was Vankhama, who had written a nature poem on the cherry blossom flower symbolizing the beauty of a maiden, and how bees, birds and insects joyfully nibble and play on the petals and enjoy the nectar. Such a scene is a feast for the eyes and they are in full bloom during the winter season in Mizoram.

Lal pian hun champha a lo ni a,

Chawrin a lo vul tan leh ta e,

Sikni eng leh zan daifim chawmin,

Tuk chhuakin mawi te'n a lo vul tial e;

Tleitir sakhmel iang a Tlaizawng par,

"Vulmawi" ka ti ang che, hming lema'n;

Theih chang se, kumtluangin vul reng la,

An sawi chuailopar ni mai experience la (Khangte, 2002: 39).

Christmas comes to mark the Lord's birthday,

Cherry blossoms begin to sprout and bloom;

Nursed by winter's light and night's clear dew,

Every morn it blooms more prettily;

Cherry blossom flower beautiful as a young maiden,

I'll call you 'fair bloom' as your nickname,

Wish you could bloom for ages

And be called never fading bloom.

Modern Christian songs too utilize flowers to symbolize Jesus Christ, the saviour as evident in the popular church song composed by C.Z. Huala in the early 20th century. The writer uses the beautiful Lily flower to symbolize Jesus Christ who is his lord and saviour.

Lili par mawi Lal Isua ka nei,

Ka tan a par, chatuan ram mawiah,

Hreawmah pawh aman min awmpui fo vang,

Lili par mawi Lal Isua ka nei (Chhuanvawra, 2011:198).

I have Lord Jesus my beautiful lily,

He blooms for me in the heaven forever,

He will comfort me in times of adversity,

I have Lord Jesus my beautiful lily.

Flowers hold great significance in the hearts of the Mizo traditional and modern writers and poets as it is evident in the traditional sentimental poems and love songs and modern hymns. Traditional poems and songs often depicted indigenous flowers to symbolize deep emotions and desires and also romantic attraction between individuals. Specific indigenous flowers frequently featured and often served as symbols of beauty, love, sentiments and feelings in the love songs, sentimental songs, nature poems and also in the modern Christian hymns to symbolize Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

1.2 Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

The state flower of Mizoram is the orchid known as red vanda; it is called *senhri* in the Mizo language. It is an endangered species found in the Himalayan region. The forefathers of the Mizos had aesthetic interest in a variety of indigenous flowers as it is apparent from the presence of vivid blooms of marigold, zinnia, balsam flowers, globe amaranth and cockscomb around the thatched huts of the jhum fields. Such vibrant colour flowers covers the area surrounding the jhum hut, a colourful scene to

feast their eyes on which brings positive and happy emotions to Mizo women while toiling hard on the jhum field. Mizo women seemed to have had deep interest in flowers dating back to the pre-colonial Lushai Hills where evidences showed that Mizo women after a day's hard work in the jhum fields bring home cut flowers such as zinnia, marigold, cockscomb or globe amaranth which they themselves had grown and arranged them in whatever container they had (The Florists, 2007:51).

Mizoram's indigenous flowers hold significant place in the hearts of the people and cultural tradition of the state and flowers feature in the Mizo folklore very often. One popular folklore on two types of native flowers goes like this-

Vaube (mountain ebony/bauhinia variegata) and Fartuah par (Indian coral flower) are significant indigenous flowers in Mizo Folklore. The story goes that there were two brothers Thangsira and Thangzaia who fell in love with two sisters in the sky, Lasiri and Lasari. Like the western story Rapunzel, the two brothers had a daily rendezvous with the sisters by singing a song which the sisters immediately recognised and let down ropes for the brothers to climb. When Bakvawmte Pu (Man bear) heard of this he deceived the sisters by singing the brothers' song and visited them. This resulted in the break-up of the two pairs of lovers, with a tragic ending for the two sisters. The heartbroken brothers couldn't bear to be humans without the sisters, so decided to turn into the above flowers (bauhinia variegata and coral flower), to bloom together eternally. For the traditional Mizos, the break of Spring season with the two flowers stirs up poignant feelings associated with the story- love, tragedy and sibling bond (<https://www.instagram.com/mizoraminsta/p/Cpuay1DodtR/?hl=en>).

In **Mizo folktales**, non-human creatures like *bakvawmtepu*, *keimi*, *khuavang lasi* features a lot, existing and living among humans, fairies often mingling in the affairs of human beings in the ancient times. Such creatures often conversed and interacted with the humans freely. In another folktale on *Mauruangi*, a girl whose mother was pushed off from a bridge by her husband. After her mother's death, her father remarried their neighbour who mistreated *Mauruangi* and was cruel to her, often

starving Mauruangi, not giving her enough good food to eat. One day, Mauruangi went to a stream and met her mother who had turned into a catfish. Seeing her daughter thin and very frail, she told her daughter to come to the stream whenever she is hungry. Mauruangi and her mother would have daily conversations, nurturing her daughter even though she is no longer a human. However, Mauruangi's stepmother came to find out that her mother had turned into a catfish, and was nurturing and serving fish and other food to Mauruangi daily. Mauruangi's stepmother called the men of the village to catch the catfish. Mauruangi tried her best to save her mother, but in the end the catfish was caught by the men and the catfish was killed and the meat distributed amongst the men. Mauruangi collected the bones and placed them in an earthen pot, she buried her mother's heart in a white ant hill. It became alive and grew into a beautiful *phunchawng* (bombax ceiba) tree and soon blossomed and produced nectar. Mauruangi sang to the tree –

Mother lean gently

Mother *phunchawng darhniangi*

Mother lean gently.

The tree then leaned low and enabled Mauruangi to feed on the sweet nectar. As the story goes, her stepmother found out and ordered the men of the village to cut down the tree, though Mauruangi cried to her mother to stand ground and be strong, the tree was cut down (Ralte,2023: 83).

The pre-Christian Mizos held a belief in an afterlife. Upon the departure of a man's spirit from the body, it ascended a hill known as *Hringlang Tlang*, from which human people might be observed. From the summit of the hill, he cast a final, lingering gaze at the world in which he had resided, laboured, and hunted. Subsequently, he would descend the opposite slope of the hill to a small stream where the "*Hawilopar*" (flower of no return) flourished. He would select a flower and place it in his hair, therefore relinquishing the desire to return to the green world he had previously inhabited, and depending on his status, proceed to *pialral* (paradise) or *mitthi khua* (Village of the Dead) (Lalrinkima et al.,2021:94).

In early Mizo society, omens, superstition, and blind faith were mostly prevalent. The early Mizo people held a belief in the existence of *Pathian* (God) manifested as *Sakhua*. *Sakhua* is a fusion of the terms *Sa* and *Khua*. *Sakhua* denotes a manifestation of a Supreme Being who exerted dominion over nature and humanity in traditional Mizo society (Lalremruata, 2019: 146). Sacrifices to *Sa* were conducted with pigs, whereas offerings to *Khua* involved mithun. These sacrifices may only be conducted by the *Sadawt* (Priest). It is essential to recognise that these sacrifices were performed to appease the creator, ensuring agricultural prosperity and favourable fortune throughout the year. During the pre-British era, sacrifices held significant importance in the religious beliefs of the Mizo. Sacrifices were regarded as the primary origins of all varieties of blessings, bountiful harvest, and well-being from *Pathian* (God). The Mizos thought that their offerings to *Pathian* would protect them from misfortune and adversity (*Ibid*, 2019: 146). The Mizos believed in the existence of numerous spirits known as *Ram Huais*, which inhabit natural objects such as high mountains, caves, underwater, earth cavities, waterfalls, and springs. The Mizos ascribe misfortune and illness to these spirits; in order to please them, numerous animal sacrifices were performed, and the shaman, or *Puithiam*, played a crucial role in mediating between the spirits and the community (Gangte, 2010: 22). The pre-Christian Mizo belief system and religious rituals involved sacrifices with various animals and offerings to appease the multifarious spirits inhabiting the forests and water springs of the land. In these religious offerings and rituals, unlike other religions, flowers or plants were not a part of the offerings made to God or the numerous *ramhuais* (spirits) to appease them.

Flowers have always played a symbolic role in Mizo culture representing feelings, emotions and beliefs in life. Mizo textiles are known for their intricate designs and vibrant colours. Among the many motifs that adorn these fabrics, floral motifs hold a significant place representing deep reverence for nature and its beauty reflecting Mizo women's love for nature and aesthetic interest in flowers. Handloom weaving is a traditional and prevalent handicraft within Mizo culture and communities. The paramount handloom product is the traditional fabric referred to as *puan*. The *puan* remains worn and specific designs are used in significant festivals and celebrations.

Historically, the *puan* was donned by both genders; however, it is still primarily worn by women.

Common motifs on *puans* feature designs derived from indigenous flora and fauna including *kawkpuzikzial* (intertwined leafy plants), *sawhthing par* (ginger flower), *kawkpuiapar*, *naya sawm par* (10 paise flower), *par-zam* (flower vine), *arsi par* (star flower), *fanghma mu* (cucumber seed) and various other designs featuring geometric diamond, triangles or zig-zag patterns. “*Kawkpuzikzial*” is perhaps the oldest textile design produced by the Mizos, and was created in the pattern of “curly leafy vegetable.” “*Sawhthing Par*” is a Puan with simple yet beautiful pattern and has been appropriately termed so as the design somehow resembles the flowers of the ginger plant, where the ginger flowers are arranged intricately. “*Kawkpuiapar*” denotes the semi-traditional variant of the *Puan*, representing an adaptation of the ancient traditional *Kawkpuzikzial*. Their initial fern leaves have been rearranged into a circular form like a flower. The flowers are systematically arranged in orderly rows and lines, traversing the fabric horizontally at consistent intervals, encompassing the entire expanse of the *Puan*. “*Naya Sawm Par*” is another *Puan* decorated with floral motifs. The flowers are those of the 10 paise coin of the earlier days, where the flowers are arranged experiencing straight lines running across the *Puan*. “*Par-zam*” is a type of *Puan* that has mostly floral designs, where the design consists of different types of floral motifs, with leaves and buds trailing vertically or horizontally. Such designs are also woven on shawls and stoles. “*Arsi*” implies star and “*Par*” refers to flower, the name of the *Puan* has been derived from its design that resembles flower like stars. Small white flowers cover the entire lower half of this type of Puan. “*Fanghma Mu*” is a simple yet aesthetically pleasing *Puan*, denoting cucumber seeds. The component units that encompass the entire *Puan* resemble cucumber seeds. (https://www.indianetzone.com/other_puans_mizo_kukis)

Contemporary floral motifs on Mizo *puan* are rendered with meticulous attention to detail and artistic finesse. Traditional floral motifs like *naya sawm par* (10 paise flower) and *arsi par* (star flower) have continued to feature in modern *puans* with modern version and design. Modern floral motifs such as dahlias, peonies, rose, lilies, cosmos and other flowers on Mizo *puans* are woven intricately, with vivid

colours and is valued more by older generations of women in the society and also costs more than other patterns or motifs if woven by hand in traditional handloom. The traditional way of weaving floral motif is time-consuming and strenuous, thus, handwoven *puans* are much more expensive than the machine-made ones.

The advent of Christianity in the then, Lushai Hills now Mizoram started with the pioneers James Herbert Lorrain named Pu Buanga and F.W Savidge named Sap *Upa* by the native Mizos, who were sent by the Arthington Aborigines Mission in London in 1894, the year has been venerated in Mizoram as the “advent of the gospel”. The new religion had tremendous impact on the socio-cultural life of the Mizo people and the church suppressed the traditions and practices related to indigenous animistic beliefs, and many of the customs of the pre-Christian Mizo society were opposed by the new religion and were classified as unchristian. The early Christian converts began to believe to have negative attitude towards many of the social customs and traditions and the animistic beliefs. Colonialism and the Christian values both contributed to providing the Mizos a changed outlook and way of life. Christianity was immensely effective at overturning the traditional culture and customs. Christianity became a new culture and ethnic identity for the people of Mizoram.

Consequently, in Mizoram, as per 2011 Census 87.16% of the population are Christians. Several denominations exist in Mizoram, in which the largest denomination is the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, followed by the Baptist Church of Mizoram, and then comes the Salvation Army. There exist 1130 Presbyterian churches, 651 Baptist churches and 288 Salvation Army churches in the whole state (Statistical Handbook Mizoram, 2022). For the purpose of the present study, the three prominent denominations namely Presbyterian church, Baptist church and the Salvation Army churches in Aizawl, the capital city have been selected purposively as sample. There are 176 Presbyterian churches under Aizawl Presbytery Synod (Source: Synod Bu, 2023), 63 Baptist churches (Source: Executive Secretary Office, BCM, Aizawl) and 74 Salvation Army churches (Source: Disposition of Forces 2023, The Salvation Army: Eastern India Territory) in Aizawl city area located in different localities. In the urban area, almost every church has a separate committee responsible for upkeeping the Church decorations. Church altars

are adorned with arranged flowers every Sunday, the responsibility of which is bestowed upon the decoration committee of the church or the women's wing of the church. Extra efforts are particularly given on important religious festivals such as Christmas, New year, Easter, Good Friday, Palm Sunday, and conferences. For the purpose of the chapter on significance of floriculture in the Mizo socio-cultural context, such church elders and salvation officers of the three churches that is, the Presbyterian, the Baptist and the Salvation Army have been selected through purposive sampling and interviewed, the leaders of the decoration committee of these churches, the flower arrangers appointed by these churches have also been selected using purposive sampling and were interviewed too.

With advancement in urbanization and standard of living in the urban areas, demand for cut flowers have increased for social events like payment of bride price ceremony, marriage, birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's Day, funerals and *lungphun ni* (laying of gravestone day) in the Mizo society. Floral arrangements within the church and the wedding reception venue are becoming more and more lavish and expensive. Floral decorations are an indispensable part of such occasions in Mizoram. With both native and modern flowers having a high demand in the hospitality and wedding industry, floriculture wave is being said to have been boosted in the socio-cultural and religious context in Mizoram.

Question was posed on the occasions needing use of flowers in the Mizo society to all the different categories of respondents namely, the floriculturists, the Church Elders/Officers of the three churches, namely the Presbyterian Church, the Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army, leaders of decoration committee of the three churches, flower arrangers of the churches and key informants comprising of the NGOs such as the florist association leaders and Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo women's Organization.

Table 5.2. Occasions needing use of flowers

Occasion	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants	Total	
						Fr	%
Christmas	153(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	10(100%)	343	100
New Year's Day	153(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	10(100%)	343	100
Good Friday	153(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	10(100%)	343	100
Easter Sunday	153(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	60(100%)	10(100%)	343	100
Payment of Bride price	120(78.4%)	38(63.3%)	50(83.3%)	54(90%)	8(80%)	270	78.7
Wedding/Marriage	150(98%)	58(96.6%)	56(93.3%)	58(96.6%)	10(100%)	332	96.7
Anniversaries	108(70.5%)	26(43.3%)	37(61.6%)	47(78.3%)	8(80%)	226	65.8
Birthdays	88 (57.5%)	18(30%)	38(63.3%)	38(63.3%)	9(90%)	191	55.6
Funeral rituals	140(91.5%)	54(90%)	58(96.6%)	56(93.3%)	7(70%)	315	91.8
Gravestone Day	78 (50.9%)	20(33.3%)	26(43.3%)	27 (45%)	6(60%)	157	45.7
Mother's Day	98 (64%)	12 (20%)	46(76.6%)	40(66.6%)	5(50%)	201	58.6
Valentine's Day	99 (64.7%)	10(16.6%)	28(46.6%)	34(56.6%)	7(70%)	178	51.8
Government functions	102(66.6%)	32(53.3%)	45(75%)	35(58.3%)	8(80%)	222	64.7

The table above depicts the occasions needing use of flowers in the Mizo society. The table clearly illustrate that on such important Christian festivals such as Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday and Easter Sunday all the different categories of respondents agree cent per cent that flowers are needed to help commemorate these important occasions in the churches in Mizoram. Another occasion needing huge expenditure on flower arrangements is the occasion of church marriage, 332 (96.7%) of the different categories of respondents agree that floral arrangement and decoration in the church on a wedding day and in wedding reception venue are necessary and important. 315 (91.8%) of the total respondents believe that flowers are indispensable in funeral rituals, people give importance to giving floral bouquets and floral wreaths, and floral basket as a mark of condolence to their near and loved ones and to bereaved families, and also to bid farewell to the departed. Out of the total respondents, 270 (78.7%) agree that floral arrangement and decoration is needed on payment of bride price ritual and distribution of bride price experienceh goes together. Church halls and other venues are hired to conduct such pre-nuptial rituals by the bride's family. Floral arrangement and floral backdrop are normally the scene in modern day pre-wedding bride price payment ceremony. With increased urbanization and development in electronic media and internet facilities, occasions like wedding anniversary celebrations and floral decoration are becoming popular. 226 (65.8%) of the total respondents opine that flowers are necessary to add beauty to the house and also to boost up the mood of the couple. The next occasion which requires use of flowers is the state government formal functions held every now and then. 222 (64.7%) of the respondents agree that flowers are very much a part of the state government's functions, be experiencet political or other departments. Mother's Day is another occasion which has begun to have a great meaning for the Mizo people over the years. 201 (58.6%) of the respondents agree that flowers are important means to honour their mothers by gifting bouquets to symbolize their love and show their gratitude towards them. Another occasion which has become popular is celebrating birthdays of not only children but adult members 'f the family of parents and grandparents. 191 (55.6%) of the total respondents opine that birthdays are important occasions needing floral arrangements and gifting of floral bouquets. An important occasion in the Mizo society which is a traditional

practice is erecting of gravestone to be planted on the grave of a loved one, and it is an event observed by families to honour the deceased. On such occasions people organize a community gathering to observe the day in their residences in the early days, but in modern society people organize the event by hiring halls and venues to accommodate more people. In such events, flowers are needed to adorn the stage, as such 157 (45.7%) of the respondents feels that flowers are necessary items to add beauty to the stage on gravestone day. Meanwhile, 178 (51.8%) of the total respondents agree that Valentine's Day is an occasion where gifting of flowers is needed between married couples and between those unmarried ones to symbolize their love and emotions. Celebrating Valentine's Day is of recent development in Mizoram, and has become more and more popular and is being slowly incorporated in youth culture as well as among married couples in the Mizo society. According to one of the respondents, recently, there has been a huge sale of flowers on Valentine's Day where several flower stalls dealing with fresh and artificial flowers are opened mainly at the entrance of the only shopping mall known as Millenium Centre in Aizawl city. In fact, field observation shows that in one flower stall, there is more than Rs 6 lakhs worth of fresh flowers sale in just a few hours on Valentine's Day, other smaller flower stall dealing with artificial flowers sale ranges from Rs 3 lakhs to 5 lakhs. Field observation and survey reveals that other fresh flower shops such as the Aizawl Greenroom, Nunthar Florals and Zopar Flower shop sales of Aizawl city too on this single day rose extremely high ranging from Rs 6 lakhs to 12 lakhs. One of the florists at Zopar flower shop informs that different flower shops sale increases tremendously on this day in terms of fresh or artificial flower bouquets, basket of flowers and single flower stalk. She also informs that sale of fresh flowers on Valentine's Day of especially red roses amongst youths and even married couples is becoming a good business for florists, and that the normal price of a bunch of rose flowers rose up from Rs 400 to Rs 600 on Valentine's Day. People rush to buy flowers to show their love and personal feelings to their partners. When demonstrating of emotions and sentiments to loved ones rule the quantum of expenditure made on flowers becomes insignificant, people do not bother how much they spent to show their love and emotions through different flowers to their loved ones.

1.3 Gift giving

Gift giving, a universal practice deeply ingrained in human culture, occupies a significant place in the social fabric of human society. Gifting often built and reinforces relationships with family members and loved ones. Gifts are given to establish connection with others and gifts are a reflection of the giver and recipient, of the kind of relationship they have. Communicating one's feelings, emotions and appreciation is possible through gifting. The act of gift giving on special occasions, birthdays, Valentine's Day, anniversaries, Mother's Day or Father's Day, is a symbolic gesture that surpasses boundaries and time. Gifts are used to symbolize love, feelings and sentiments between two partners, enabling both partners to convey love, appreciation, gratitude, or even regret. Gift giving represents a desire to cement a relationship. On the other hand, reciprocity is pivotal in the practice of gift-giving. Human beings possess an inherent inclination to return compassion and generosity. The receipt of a gift creates a social duty, compelling the recipient to repay in some manner. This exchange of goods strengthens social connections and establishes equilibrium in relationships (<https://www.activitysuperstore.com/blog/psychology-of-gift-giving>).

Marcel Mauss (1966:9-11) in his famous essay *The Gift* says friendship last the longest when friends give and receive gifts. He argues that giving creates a social bond between the giver and the receiver, with the recipient having an obligation to reciprocate. Mauss further says that there are rights and responsibilities for consuming and repaying that exist alongside rights and obligations for giving and receiving. He argues that not giving a gift or rejecting it is essentially a dismissal of the relationship. Mauss argues that the giver does not simply provide an object but also a portion of himself, as the object is intrinsically linked to the giver. He believes that the connection between the giver and the gift establishes a social link that imposes an obligation to reciprocate on the recipient. Failing to reciprocate results in a loss of dignity and prestige, but the spiritual consequences may be far more severe (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Mauss).

The act of gift giving, while appearing to be a simple act, possesses substantial sociological importance, revealing complex social processes that influence our relationships, identity, and cultural conventions. The act transcends the mere exchange of a material product. It acts as a medium of symbolic communication, expressing emotions, values, and connections. For instance, a flower bouquet gifted on Mother's Day and Valentine's Day would convey different forms of symbolism. The flower bouquet expresses and symbolizes love for both recipients, where one represents familial love, the other signifies romantic love. Understanding the underlying symbolic meanings attached to gifts is essential to discover the messages and maintain social cohesion.

Flowers have played an integral role throughout human history, though the meanings attached to flowers and traditions may vary and change, they still play a universal role of connecting human beings through their symbolism. Flower gifting is an act which conveys different meanings and symbolism. Throughout history, flowers have been considered as important objects which expresses emotions, convey messages and communicate thoughts and personal feelings. Gifting of flowers is a beautiful and perfect way of expressing one's deepest emotions and is an extension of sentiments to those near and dear ones and bring a smile to their faces. The very presence of flowers with their vivid colours and fragrance can instantly activate happy and positive emotions and impact mood too. The universal act of gifting flowers renders the ability to communicate the sentiments and emotions of the giver, thereby creating bonds and connection with the recipient.

Using purposive and convenience sampling method, out of the 83 localities under Aizawl Municipal Corporation in Mizoram, two Church Elders/Officers each of ten (10) different churches each namely Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and Salvation Army from 10 localities each have been selected as sample which comes to 60 in total. Similarly, two decoration committee members from each of the ten same denomination churches selected are further taken as sample which comes to 60 in total. Further, using the same sampling design, two flower arrangers each of the ten same denomination churches already selected are taken as sample which is 60 in total. The total sample to represent the church elders,

decoration committee leaders and flower arrangers is 180, which aims to throw light on the first objective of the study that is, to study the importance of floriculture in the Mizo socio-cultural context.

Question on whether the respondents give potted plants and flowers to friends was posed to the main stakeholders, that is, the floriculturists and flower arrangers appointed by churches and the key informants consisting of the NGO leaders such as the three florist association leaders in Aizawl city and Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo Women Organization, and presented in the following table.

Table 5:3 Gifting potted plants and flowers to friends

Gifting potted plants or flowers	Floriculturists	Flower Arrangers of churches	Key Informants (Florist Associations and MHIP)
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	134 (87.6%)	38 (63.3%)	10 (100%)
No	19 (12.4%)	22 (36.7%)	0
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

Table 5:1 shows whether the main stakeholders, that is, the floriculturists and the flower arrangers of different churches and key informants ever gifted potted flowers and potted plants to their friends. It is apparent that majority of the respondents are in the habit of gifting flowers, flowering plants or house plants to their friends. Thus, taken all together 182 (81.6%) of the total respondents are in the habit of gifting flowers or potted plants to friends and dear ones. It is seen that 134 (87.6%) of the floriculturists have been gifting potted flowers and plants to their friends and relatives, so are 38 (63.3%) of the appointed flower arrangers of churches and 100% of the key informants. Floriculturists collect different varieties of flowering plants and house plants from different parts of the country and abroad, propagating and

multiplying such variety of floricultural goods. They inform that some of the rare propagated products are often being exchanged among the floriculturists as gifts, gift giving in the form of potted plants and flowers is reciprocated by the recipients who usually are florists themselves. According to one of the leaders of florist association, this mutual exchange of floricultural goods serves as an extension of sentiments and as a way of expressing deep emotions and feelings towards each other creating a strong bond and deeper connection and maintaining relationship among the Mizo florist members manifested in times of *chhiatni/thatni* (Day of mourning/joy). One of the floriculturists informs that floriculturists also make use of their floricultural products as gift item to their close friends as '*ralna*', a tradition existing in the Mizo society where people give money to bereaved families as a mark of condolence. Instead of giving money as '*ralna*', florists sometimes give potted house plants or flowering plants as condolence gift to bid farewell to the departed and to remember the departed soul, which is a manifestation of ties and relationship between the giver and receiver. She further adds that such condolence gift is instrumental in creating trust and the recipient may not reciprocate the gift in the same value as it is an expression of benevolence on the part of the giver as '*ralna*'. The table shows that 12.4% of the floriculturists and 36.7% of the flower arrangers are not in the habit of giving as gifts their potted flowers or plants to their friends. The respondents who do not indulge in gift giving are 41 (49.1%) altogether, and they themselves hardly receive gifts from their friends.

The study also shows that 121 (79.1%) of the floriculturists and 41(68.3%) of the flower arrangers of churches and 10 (100%) of the key informants, that is, altogether 172 (77.0%) inform that they receive similar gifts from their friends. Altruistic form of behaviour is witnessed in terms of exchange of gifts in the form of live plants and flowers among the people. The satisfaction of the respondents as a giver is determined when the gift, they receive from their friends is considered as equivalent to what is initially given to their friends. In this way, there is mutual exchange and dependence between the actors. Reciprocity between the concerned individuals implies that the exchange of gifts is acceptable to both the actors. Gift giving normally implies reciprocity which puts an individual into an obligation to

reciprocate to the giver of gift, because reciprocity has its roots in justice and fairness. Those who do not receive similar gifts are 51(23.9%) and comprise of a small percentage. 32(20.9%) of the floriculturists and 19(31.7%) of flower arrangers of churches however, state that they do not receive similar gifts that they have gifted to their friends. In such a situation, only one of the parties that is, the respondents' friends benefit from such exchange and only one is at advantage, thus the respondents are dissatisfied with the unequal exchange process. Failure to reciprocate has negative impact on the relationship between friends and colleagues than on close relatives. Therefore, the reciprocity and relationship in order to be stable and consistent, and at the same time to keep it balanced the concerned actors are under an obligation to give and take equally.

Question on the occasion in which flower bouquets and potted plants are received as gifts was posed to the floriculturists, flower arrangers of the churches and the key informants and presented in the following table.

Table 5:4 Occasions in which floral gifts are received

Occasion	Floriculturists	Flower arrangers of churches	Key Informants (Florist Associations&MHIP)
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Mother's Day	8 (5.2%)	25 (41.7%)	1 (10%)
Birthday	25 (16.3%)	15 (25%)	1 (10%)
Achievements	10 (6.5%)	8 (13.3%)	1 (10%)
Anniversary	11 (7.2%)	6 (10%)	-
Valentine's Day	42 (27.5%)	4 (6.7%)	-
On all the above occasions	50 (32.7%)	-	-
None	7 (4.6%)	2 (3.3%)	-
Mother's day & Birthday	-	-	1 (10%)
Birthday & Anniversary	-	-	3 (30%)
Birthday, anniversary & achievements	-	-	3 (30%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table illustrates the occasions in which the respondents receive flower bouquets and potted plants as gifts from others. The table shows that out of the total floriculturists 50 (32.7%) inform that they receive floral bouquets and potted plants as gifts on all the important occasions such as Mother's Day, birthday, achievements, anniversaries, Valentine's Day from their near ones, friends and colleagues. On their birthdays, 41 (18.3%) of all the categories of respondents are gifted flowers in the form of potted flowers or bouquets on their special day that is, on their birthdays. According to one of the leaders of florist association, birthday is an important occasion where one receives special gifts which represent another year of growth and it is an opportunity to express gratitude and celebrate life. It is an event where loved ones in order to build deeper connection and show appreciation, love and sentiments give gifts to each other. Another occasion where the respondents receive floral bouquets or potted plants is at the time of achievements they have in their life. Achievements may refer to the accomplishments or success one has through hard work and great effort, through ability or heroism in any field. From the above table, it is seen that from all the categories of respondents, 19 (8.5%) inform that they receive floral gifts on the occasion of them attaining achievements in life, when they achieve success or accomplish better positions in their lives from their family members, friends or colleagues. Mother's Day is an occasion celebrated in various parts of the world on the second Sunday of the month of May to express honour, love and respect towards mothers. It is an event to show honour and respect towards the contribution of mothers, acknowledging their efforts in creating maternal bonds and their important roles in the society. People remember the significance mothers have in their lives and so gives special emphasis to their motherly figures on this day. On this important Mother's Day, 34 (15.2%) of the total categories of respondents receive gifts in the form of floral bouquet and potted flowers on their Mother's Day. The other important occasion in which gift giving occurs is Valentine's Day, which is celebrated on the 14th February every year. Valentine's day is a romantic occasion where people express love and affection with greetings and floral gifts. This is a day people celebrate love and friendship exchanging gifts like flowers, cards and chocolates or candy. 46 (20.6%) of floriculturists and flower arrangers receive floral gifts on Valentine's Day from their loved ones. This indicates that spouses and loved

ones of the respondents celebrate the important day by expressing their emotions and sentiments by gifting bouquet of flowers especially red roses to them. On the recurrence of wedding anniversaries, people celebrate and remember the special day by giving their spouses and close friends special gifts, gifting of flower bouquets to mark the event is a regular act in modern society. 17 (7.6%) of the floriculturists and flower arrangers are gifted floral bouquets or potted plants on their wedding anniversaries by their loved ones and close ties. This act of gift giving symbolizes the love and support the respondents and their spouses have for each other, thus reinforcing their commitment and love for each other. On the other hand, 9 (4%) of the floriculturists and flower arrangers express that they do not ever receive any gifts in the form of flower bouquets or potted plants on such important occasions. While 3 (30%) of the key informants inform that they are normally given floral gifts on their birthdays and wedding anniversaries by their spouses and family members and friends. Another 3 (30%) of the key informants receive floral gifts on such occasions like their birthdays, anniversaries and achievements usually. While only 1 (10%) of the key informants shares that she receives floral gifts on Mother's Day and on her birthday from her loved ones. Gifting of flowers on these important events indicates the amount of significance flowers have gained in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society. Gift giving in the form of floral bouquets symbolizes love, emotions and deep feelings on the part of the giver, and this act is normally reciprocated by the recipient maintaining the relationship and keeping it balanced and sustained.

Success in life is an important phase in a person's life. Achievement attained in any sphere is celebrated with cheers and laughter. In such happy moment, congratulation flowers are wonderful items to gift irrespective of gender and position. Congratulating loved ones like family members who have achieved success or promotion in work with flower bouquet would be an appropriate gift. One of the respondents narrates that flowers symbolize our attitude and emotion towards our family members, loved ones, friends, acquaintances or colleagues when they achieve success in their life, and that flowers express our loving attitude and extend our sentiments toward others when they are gifted as bouquets or basket of flowers.

Showing appreciation and kind gesture through gift giving can boost the energy and motivate and inspire the recipient to work harder and achieve more.

Table 5:5 Felicitating achievement of friends by gifting fresh flowers

Felicitating achievements of friends by gifting fresh flowers	Floriculturists	Flower Arrangers of churches	Key Informants (Florist Associations and MHIP)
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Yes	151 (98.7%)	56 (93.3%)	10 (100%)
No	2 (1.3%)	4 (6.7%)	0
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table demonstrates the opinion of the respondents with regard to gifting fresh flowers or plants to felicitate friends on their achievements. The overall picture is evident where out of the total respondents, 217 (97.3%) support giving floral gifts as a mark of felicitation to friends on their success or achievements. The study shows that 151 (98.7%) of the floriculturists support the gifting of fresh flowers and plants as a mark of felicitation to friends on their achievements. Similarly, majority of the flower arrangers 56 (93.3%) too supports the gifting of fresh flowers and plants on such occasion of success to friends. 10 (100%) of the KI consisting of the NGOs (leaders of the florist associations and MHIP leaders) fully support gifting of flowers and plants as a mark of appreciation to friends on their success in life. While a meagre 2 (1.3%) of the floriculturists and 4 (6.7%) of the flower arrangers of churches do not support the gifting of flower bouquet to friends on their achievements. The table shows the level of importance flowers have gained in people's hearts and in the society as a whole. One of the key informants says that flower giving has become a popular act to felicitate and congratulate success and achievements of close friends and colleagues. The trend amongst the floriculturists as informed by them is that potted flowering plants or potted indoor plants are given as housewarming gifts very often to those friends who have newly constructed houses or those shifting to new houses. The floriculturists are of the view that flowers are

important symbolism of emotions and feelings and show our appreciation of people's success in different spheres of life. According to one of the flower arrangers, flowers evoke positive emotions and changes people's moods and feelings and flower bouquet makes the recipient feel cherished and loved. Celebrating big milestones in different sphere of life and paired with the right kind of flower bouquet is able to convey heartfelt congratulations to family members, close friends and colleagues.

The present study also asks the respondents' opinion on whether they think flowers should continue to be used as gift item to express feelings to loved ones and friends. The study reveals that out of the total respondents of floriculturists, flower arrangers and key informants, 215 (96.4%) states that flowers and plants should continue to be given as gifts to friends and relatives. Out of the 153 floriculturists interviewed, 150 (98%) believe that flowers are important gift items to express feelings and emotions to near and loved ones and should be continued. Similarly, 55(91.7%) of the flower arrangers opine that flowers should continue to be used as gift item to express sentiments and feelings to loved ones and friends. 100% of the key informants fully support the continued use of flowers as gift item. Flowers are used in different cultures as a means of communicating feelings since ancient period. According to one of the floriculturists, flower giving has become an important means of expressing love, emotion, sentiments, gratitude and show appreciation to near and loved ones. She further adds that in modern society, flowers fresh or artificial remain and will continue to be a favourite gift item for many people in the Mizo society. One of the key informants shares that unlike other material gifts that become outdated in course of time and go out of fashion, flowers however, will never lose their appeal and beauty, their fragrance and elegance will always be in style. A single stem of flower, a bouquet or a basket of flowers given as gift will never fail to impress and make a statement and evoke positive emotions and feelings. According to one of the respondents, gifting of fresh flowers to convey messages of love, affection, gratitude or appreciation on different occasions will remain to be a thoughtful gesture because flowers have the power to bring a smile, happiness and joy to a person's life. She further adds that gifting of flowers will continue to be used as a gift item in the society because flowers will not only make near and loved ones feel special and

remembered but they will have positive impact on their emotional well-being. On the other hand, a mere 3(2%) of the floriculturists do not think flowers should continue to be used as gift item, and similarly a meagre 5 (8.3%) of the flower arrangers too argue that flowers should not continue to be used as gift item in the society. Those who disagree state that fresh flowers are expensive and does not last long withering in a few days and is not appropriate as an item of gift.

Gift giving is deeply rooted in human culture and is a practice that builds and strengthens relationships with family members, friends and dear ones. It provides communication of feelings, emotions, and sentiments to the recipient. Gifts symbolize love, appreciation, gratitude, or regret, reinforcing relationships and promoting reciprocity. Gift giving is a complex social process that influences inter-relationships, identity, and cultural traditions. It transcends material exchange and acts as a medium of symbolic communication, expressing sentiments, values, and contacts. Understanding the underlying symbolic meanings is crucial for maintaining social cohesion and solidarity. Flower gifting conveys different meanings and emotions, expressing thoughts and personal feelings. The presence of flowers, with their colors and fragrance, can activate happy emotions and create bonds with the recipient, thereby fostering a connection between the giver and the recipient. The study reveals that the Mizo people often engage in gift giving in the form of potted flowers and potted live plants. Floriculturists indulge in propagating and multiplying the floriculture products procured from other states and abroad. Such propagated goods are exchanged and gifted to their friends and relatives, which builds strong relationships and establishes order and cohesion. Gifting of flower plants are often reciprocated by the recipients. The study also shows that flowers have become important gift item to express love and gratitude and personal feelings on such important occasions such as Mother's Day, birthdays, anniversaries or Valentine's Day. Flower bouquet and potted plants are also being used as gift items to felicitate a friend's achievement. The study also reveals that flower giving is much supported as gift item because flowers express emotions and deep sentiments and a single stem of flower can bring a happy smile and bring positive emotions.

1.4 Funerary rituals

Societies exhibit significant variation in their approaches to death and the commemoration of the deceased. A prevalent theme uniting these varied customs is the intention to commemorate and pay tribute to the deceased. The essential principles of burial, funeral, and cremation, elucidating the importance of each ceremony. Burial, a primordial and ubiquitous funerary custom, entails interring the deceased body in the earth. This ancient ritual is deeply embedded in several cultures and religions globally, with considerable variation in the intricacies of the ceremony.

Diverse religions possess unique funeral customs. In Christianity, a conventional burial entails placing the deceased in a coffin and burying them in a cemetery, but Muslim burials are conducted expeditiously, with the body placed straight in the ground without a casket. Cultural subtleties also affect funeral customs. Certain cultures prioritise intricate funeral rites and gravestones, whilst others choose simplicity and natural burials, allowing the dead to disintegrate organically and promote environmental sustainability.

The funeral ritual serves as a public, traditional, and symbolic expression of our beliefs, ideas, and emotions upon the loss of a beloved individual. The funeral ceremony, steeped in history and laden with symbolism, facilitates the recognition of death, commemorates the deceased's life, fosters culturally appropriate expressions of grief, supports mourners, accommodates faith and beliefs regarding life and death, and provides continuity and hope for the living

(<https://www.centerforloss.com/2023>).

Flowers are utilized at funerals in the Mizo society to pay respect to the departed and console the bereaved. They are frequently used as condolence gift to the deceased's family, floral arrangements in the form of basket, bouquet and wreath, and adorn the coffin. Question on the relevance and presence of flowers in funerary practice of the Mizo society was posed to the all informants such as the main stakeholders the floriculturists, the Elders/Officers of the three churches that is, the Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army church, leaders of the decoration committee of the three churches and flower arrangers appointed in the

churches, and the key informants comprising of leaders of the Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP), leaders of the three florist associations.

Table 5:6 Preference of giving flower bouquet or puan as a mark of condolence

Preference of giving flowers and puan as a mark of condolence	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee Leaders	Flower Arranger	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Flower bouquet/wreath	75 (49%)	13 (21.7%)	11 (18.4%)	10 (16.7%)	4 (40%)
Traditional puan	55 (36%)	36 (60%)	17 (28.3%)	24 (40.0%)	3 (30%)
Both alternately	23 (15%)	11 (18.3%)	32 (53.3%)	26 (43.3%)	3 (30%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table depicts the preference of the main stakeholders, that is the floriculturists and also the other categories of respondents such as the church elders, leaders of decoration committee of the churches and flower arrangers of the churches, and also the key informants. From the table it is evident that the overall situation presents the fact that 113 (33%) of all the total informants prefer giving flower bouquet/wreath as a mark of condolence when death occurs in a locality. This act on the part of the respondents shows the level of importance gained by flower bouquets as a mark of condolence in the Mizo culture. This act of giving flowers whether in the form of wreath, bouquet or basket is an influence of the practice of the Western societies. According to one of the decoration committee leaders, with rapid advancement and development in information technology and internet facilities, people are much aware and conscious of what is happening on the other side of the world, and their

practices and habits are quickly imitated all over the world and Mizo people are not far behind, in fact with their aesthetic interest and tastes, Mizo women are developing high skills experienced floristry and are deft with floral arrangement. One of the floriculturists opines that people give fresh flower bouquets normally to their near and loved ones to bid farewell to the departed, artificial flower bouquets/wreaths are also used popularly as a mark of condolence which have become an indispensable part of the funerary ritual of Mizo culture. On the other hand, the study reveals that the tradition of giving *puan* when somebody dies in a locality or when a near one die is still kept intact by people. This is shown in the table where 135 (39.3%) of the total respondents still prefer giving *puan* which is a lungi worn by Mizo women mostly. The Mizo people practice *puana tuam* meaning giving *puan* to cover the dead body, when someone near or a loved one dies, and also on the occurrence of death in a locality. This is the age-old tradition of the Mizo people and is an important part of the funerary ritual of the society. Meanwhile, 95 (27.7%) of the total sample are in favour of giving either flower bouquet or traditional *puan* alternately when death of a near one or somebody in the locality occurs. Such respondents opine that as an expression of empathy, depending on the status or living standard of the family, there are bereaved families who needs to be given flower bouquets and there are families who needs to be given *puan*. They believe that poor bereaved families normally do not receive much flower bouquets or wreaths, so in such cases flower bouquets are given as a condolence gift to bid farewell to the departed. Besides this, if somebody who is dear and near die, people prefer giving big floral wreath or bouquet believing that fresh flowers symbolize their love and affinity with the deceased and the family. If the bereaved families are not so poor then giving *puan* is the normal practice and is considered more useful by the older generations. Meanwhile still others opine that they prefer giving *ralna* (giving money to bereaved family) rather than giving flowers or *puan* to bereaved families. According to one of the respondents, “*pawisaa ral ka duh zawk thin, pangpar chu a hnawk mai mai a, puan lah an sem zo mai mai bawk a, pawisa pek a hlu ber*” (I prefer giving money *ralna* to bereaved families, because flowers become a burden after some time, and *puan* received are distributed amongst relatives, giving money is the best and most valued).

In Mizoram, cut flowers arranged in the form of wreath and bouquets are given as a mark of condolence and respect, as an expression of empathy and sympathy at the time of death. People especially younger generations are willing to show their compassion and pay their last respect to the departed by offering flower bouquets and wreaths. Giving fresh and artificial floral bouquet, wreath and basket is a modern trend and is more and more incorporated into the Mizo culture and becoming an indispensable part of the funeral ritual. According to one of the respondents, flowerless funerary ritual would be odd and would be considered not normal in contemporary urban society. Further, she adds that floral bouquets or wreaths are given not only by individuals, but are given in the name of institutions, offices, NGOs, various groups to which the deceased and the family are members, church groups and friends circle. Question on why they prefer giving floral bouquet or wreath to bereaved families was posed to the floriculturists, church elders, leaders of decoration committee and flower arrangers of churches and the key informants, and presented in the following table.

Table 5: 7 Reason for giving floral bouquet/wreath to bereaved families

Reason for preferring to give floral bouquet	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee Leaders	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Flowers are the right gifts to bid farewell	45 (29.4%)	8 (13.3%)	12 (21.1%)	7 (11.7%)	1 (10%)
Flowers symbolize love and affection	28 (18.3%)	16 (26.7%)	23 (40.4%)	19 (31.7%)	4 (40%)
Flowers are given as a mark of condolence for a long time	16 (10.5%)	14 (23.3%)	5 (8.8%)	10 (16.7%)	3 (30%)
Prefers traditional puan	64 (41.8%)	22 (36.7%)	17 (29.8%)	24 (40.0%)	2 (20%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The main reason for giving floral bouquet and wreath is demonstrated in the table above. The overall picture is seen from the table with 90 (26.5%) of the totally different categories of respondents who believe that giving flowers to the departed symbolize love and affection for the deceased person and also his/her family members. People believe that flowers symbolize extension of sentiments and sympathy and compassion towards those who are grieving. According to one of the key informants, words may not be uttered and sympathetic words may not be conveyed on such sorrowful situations, but flowers of different variety can bring positive emotions and a smile even in the midst of sorrow and sadness. Flowers thus, symbolize emotions and personal feelings and create a close bond between the giver and recipient on such sad circumstance. Out of the total sample of the different categories of respondents, 73 (21.5%) opine that flowers are the right gifts to bid farewell to the departed. Such respondents support giving floral bouquets as a mark of condolence to the deceased family. According to one of the church elders, giving flowers fresh or artificial is an influence of the Western culture and has become a contemporary trend in the society, and many people tend to believe that flowers are great as condolence gifts just as the Western people do. Meanwhile the table shows that 48 (14%) of the total sample of the different respondents opine that flowers have been given as a mark of condolence for a long time. This may be the practice of the advanced Western countries for a long time. However, in the Mizo society, as mentioned earlier, *puana tuam* or giving *puan* to cover the deceased body is the traditional practice which is still kept intact today on the occasion of death in a village or urban locality. One of the church elders says, gifting of flowers to bid farewell to a dead person or as a mark of condolence to the bereaved family is a practice imitated from the Western countries. Thus, the practice of giving funeral flowers is of recent development in the Mizo society. On the other hand, there are 129 (38%) which comprises of the majority of the total respondents who still follow the traditional practice and prefers to give *puan* as a condolence gift to grieving families. On the occasion of death in a locality, people who are close to the bereaved family feel the need to give condolence gift, so they do not go empty handed to the residence of the deceased for the funeral service. In modern Mizo society, ready-made *Puans* are available in local stores, some *puans* are woven meant specially for

condolence matter, in fact there are different varieties of *puan* which also varies in quality. One of the floriculturists opines, depending on the type of relationship one has with the deceased and the family, people normally select the type of quality and design of *puan* to be given for condolence gift. For a good number of floriculturists 64 (41.8%), who are self-employed entrepreneurs giving *puan* as condolence gift is the best option because *puan* costs less than flower bouquets. Moreover, for many of the respondents, *puan* symbolizes their affinity with the deceased family and they believe that since it is the traditional practice of the Mizo people, one should continue to follow and practice the custom of the society.

Historically, flowers have served as a universally recognised medium for conveying sadness and consolation when words fail to articulate genuine feelings. Flowers have consistently played a significant role in expressing personal feelings at times of grieving and transcending cultures. With the advancement in mass media and information technology, with better connectivity in modern society, the Mizo people's artistic skill and aesthetic taste and interest in floriculture and floristry are influenced and enhanced through their skillful access and use of the internet facilities. Flowers and floristry have gained tremendous importance in every social event and important festivals and celebrations, religious rituals and funeral rituals are incomplete without flowers.

Question was posed to the different categories of respondents on whether they believe replacing traditional *puan* as condolence gift with floral wreath and bouquet would endanger the age long traditional practice of the Mizo people. The study reveals that out of the total sample (343) of the different categories of respondents 295 (86%) that is, the majority responded that it would not endanger the funeral tradition and custom of the people. Though flowers have gained tremendous popularity and people have developed interest in floriculture and are indulging in the cultivation and sale of flowers and plants, they are tradition bound and feel the need to follow custom on such occasions. One of the key informants says since giving *puan* or *puana tuam* to the deceased and the mourning family as a mark of condolence is an age-old tradition handed down from generation to generation of the Mizo people, floral bouquet or wreath will not replace *puan* in the days to come. At

this point of time, the study reveals that the age-long tradition of the Mizo people is not in danger of being replaced by flowers in funerary practices, because the tradition is still kept intact. Whereas out of the total sample of respondents 47 (13.7%) believe otherwise and opine that replacing traditional puan with floral bouquets would endanger the traditional practices of the Mizo people. According to one decoration committee leader, since flowers have gained rapid popularity amongst all the generation of people, flowers whether fresh or artificial are being arranged in bouquet or wreath or basket form ready to be bought, people are opting more and more as condolence gift. She further adds that it is a new trend, which is not a part of the traditional practice but an influence of the advanced modern Western societies. The study shows that only a small percentage believe that replacing traditional puan with flowers will endanger the tradition of the Mizo people. While majority of the respondents does not feel threatened and believe that flowers will not replace traditional puan as a mark of condolence on the occasion of death in a locality.

The different views and opinions narrated by the different set of respondents have been collected on whether replacing traditional puan with flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos in times of death in a locality.

The president of Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, aged 56, a resident of Durtlang Leitan locality says-

“Pangparin mitthi puana tuam a luahlan lo ang. Pangpar man a to a, bouquet te, wreath te, a man a to a. Puan man a zia zawk a, puan inpek hi chu a reh lovang”

“Flowers will not replace giving traditional puan. Flowers are expensive, bouquets and wreaths are expensive. Puan is much cheaper than flowers, giving puan will not diminish.”

The general secretary of Mizoram Florist Association, aged 54, a resident of Chaltlang Dawr Kawn locality also opines-

Pangparin a luahlan lo ang. Puana intuam hi Mizo dan a ni miao a, hmun a la luah reng ang. Luahlan tur chuan hun a la duh rei viau ang.

Traditional puan will not be replaced by flowers because giving puan is the traditional culture of the Mizos. It will take ages to replace puan with flowers.

A floriculturist, aged 58, a resident of Tlangnuam locality too says-

Kan thian tha leh chhungkhat hnaivai boral te hi puana tuam ngei ngei turah kan ngai. Mizo kan nih chuan kan tih turah ka ngai.

If the deceased is a close friend or relative, I believe we should give traditional puan as condolence gift. As a Mizo, it is expected of us to follow the tradition.

One floriculturist aged 64, a resident of Khatla locality too opines in the following way-

Luahlan mai chu ka ring lo a. Amaherawhchu, kuang thlalakpuinaah pangpar chu a langsar a, tin, a petu hming te ziah lan ani a, puan inpek chuan hming a tarlan ve theih loh a. Hun lo kal zelah chuan pangpar hian a luahlan thei mai ang.

I think flower bouquets will not replace traditional puan in the near future. However, in funeral service photographs are taken where flower bouquets are put prominently with the giver's name written, while it is not possible to write the giver's name on traditional puan. I believe flowers will be able to replace puan as time goes on.

While the vice-president of Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), aged 77, a resident of Chaltlang Dingdi Veng has a different opinion who says-

Zawi zawiin pangparin puana intuam hi a la luahlan ang ka ring. Pangpar hi kan uar tawh a, a to deuh zawk na a.

I think flowers will slowly replace giving puan as condolence gift. Flowers are popular now though they are a bit expensive than puan.

The secretary of the Decoration Committee, aged 55, Chawlhmun Presbyterian Church too opines-

Kan ngaih pawimawh deuhah chuan puan hi kan la pe a, mahse thangthar zawkte hi chuan puan hlutna tak hi an pawh pha vak tawh lo a, sap ho tih danin pangpar pek te an uar ta deuh a. Puan chu kan dah reng thei a, pangpar tak phe chu a vuai thuai a. Pangpar hi hun reiah chuan an la uar zawk ang ka ring.

We still give traditional puan as condolence gift to those close to us. However, today's generation do not value or understand the significance of the tradition of giving puan, they emulate the practice of giving flower bouquets by the Western people. Puan can be kept for a long time, while fresh flowers wilt and wither in no time. I believe flowers will slowly become more and more popular as condolence gifts.

The Chairman of the Decoration Committee, aged 58, Chawnpui Baptist Church of Mizoram too narrates-

Thangtharah chuan a tiderthawng in a hlauhawm viau anga, puan aiin pangpar an hlut zawk avangin. Mahse kan Mizo dan anih miao avangin puana intuam hi chu a ral mai chu a rinawm loh.

Replacing traditional puan with flower bouquets could endanger the traditional practice of the Mizos amongst the younger generations because they value flowers more than puan as condolence gift. However, since giving traditional puan is a custom of the Mizos, it will not diminish soon.

A flower arranger, aged 48, who belongs to the Baptist Church of Mizoram, Upper Republic locality too opines-

Puana intuam hi Mizo tih dan phung ania. Puana tuam ngei ngei chi an awm a, chhung leh khat hnaivai leh thiantha te hi. Pangpar hi chuan kan Mizo dan hi a luahlan mai lo ang.

Giving traditional puan as condolence gift is a Mizo culture. Close relatives and close friends are always given traditional puan. Flowers will not replace giving puan as condolence gift.

Majority of the respondents opine that gifting flower bouquets will not replace the traditional practice of giving *puan* at the occasion of death in a locality. Some of the respondents believe that gifting of flowers which is becoming popular is a waste of money and is not necessary. Majority of the respondents do not think that gifting of flowers endangers the traditional practice because flowers fresh or artificial are expensive and *puan* is much cheaper which everybody can afford to give as condolence gift. According to them, the traditional practice will not diminish because it is the custom of the Mizo people which will remain intact.

Flowers and funerals are considered to be the most ancient human customs. Their non-verbal yet powerful depictions of our emotions can provide solace, convey affection and sympathy for the deceased's family. They can also serve as a striking focal point to divert the attention from the physical nature of a casket. The various types of flowers, their vibrant hues, and their aromatic scents are frequently intertwined with our feelings and associations with individuals and locations (<https://www.flowersfromthefarm.co.uk/why-flowers-for-funerals/>).

In the Mizo context, on the occasion of death, to decorate a coffin, flowers are to the best possible way chosen carefully depending on the sex of the deceased. Certain flowers and their colour, for instance peach and red colour roses symbolizes masculinity and are used to adorn a male coffin. While other colours like pink, mauve and white goes well with the female sex. Bereaved families normally decide to decorate the coffin of their loved one with fresh cut flowers and are open to beautiful arrangement and expense on the flowers to bid farewell to the departed.

Question on whether they believe decoration of coffin with flowers is necessary was posed to all the different categories of respondents, that is, the floriculturists, the Church Elders, leaders of decoration committee of churches, flower arrangers and the key informants, and presented in the following table.

Table 5:8 Decoration of coffin with fresh flowers

Decoration of coffin with flowers	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Yes	133 (86.9%)	21 (35%)	31 (51.7%)	40 (66.7%)	6 (60%)
No	20 (13.1%)	39 (65%)	29 (48.3%)	20 (33.3%)	4 (40%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table illustrates the opinion of all the respondents on decoration of coffin with flowers. Out of the total 343 respondents, 231 (67.3%) support decoration of coffin with fresh flowers, and believe decorating a coffin is a good practice. Such respondents opine that decorating with flowers the coffin of a near and loved one is the last best gesture the deceased's family members could do to show their love and bid farewell to the departed soul. Arranging flowers on a coffin gives the bereaved family members inner satisfaction and a feeling of gratification of doing the right thing. The family members are normally open to spend money on flowers for arrangement on a coffin, in some cases relatives and friends contribute and bear the expense on flowers. According to one of the respondents, floral arrangement on a coffin symbolizes love, affection, sentiments, emotions and feelings of the family members towards the deceased. The respondents believe that a coffin not decorated with flowers looks dull and bare, in the Mizo tradition, when the funeral rites are over, family members and relatives, friends and others take pictures with the coffin to make the sad occasion memorable. In such cases, pictures of a coffin without floral arrangement looks odd and bare; to avoid such a situation, the respondents prefer and opt for decoration of coffin with flowers. However, in many of the localities in Aizawl, at the time of death, floral decoration of coffins is permissible and also not

permissible depending upon the decision taken by the local Young Mizo Association (YMA), the biggest Non-Governmental Organization in Mizoram. YMA, founded in 1935 is open to any Mizo person who is 18 years and above to become a member and functions in every locality as branches and is involved in community service and social work. Local YMA branches take care of all the funerary necessities except the religious rituals in a locality. According to one of the church elders who is also active in YMA, some local YMA branches in an attempt to bring people on equal footing in the society forbids decoration of coffins with flowers. However, one of the key informants opines that if the YMA branch permits, family members of the deceased are much willing to spend on flowers to decorate the coffin of their loved ones to show their love, emotions and feelings for the deceased. The table reveals that out of the 153 floriculturists 133 (86.9%) that is, majority of them support and thinks that floral arrangement on a coffin on funeral ritual is a necessity and a good action on the part of the bereaved family. While out of the rest of the other informants 98 (51.6%) are in favour of decorating a coffin with flowers. On the other hand, out of the total respondents, 112 (32.7%) are not in favour of floral arrangement on a coffin and feels that it is not necessary and should not be practiced by bereaved families. Such respondents believe that since flowers are expensive and arranging flowers on a coffin incurs expenditure on the part of the deceased's family, it becomes a burden for poor families. They opine that flowers wither and wilt easily and does not last long, so they feel that there is no point in spending on flowers, and they believe that funeral rituals can be completed without floral decoration of the coffin. Out of the total main stakeholders 20 (13.1%) a small percentage do not feel that it is necessary to decorate a coffin with flowers, since flowers being expensive incurs a lot of expenditures. While 92 (48.4%) of the rest of the other respondents too feel that floral arrangement on a coffin is a waste of money and is not necessary, and thinks it is not a good practice. Some of the respondents being church elders opine that decorating a coffin with flowers is not a traditional culture of the Mizo people, it is a practice imitated from the Western culture and has become popular with the advancement and rapid development of information technology. The internet facilities facilitating network and connecting every part of the world has enabled

florists and others with aesthetic interest in flowers to emulate the Western funeral and other practices.

The different opinions and perspectives have been collected from the different set of respondents on the issue of decoration of a coffin with flowers.

The vice-president of *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA), aged 43, opines that-

An hun hnuhnunga mawi taka kuang cheia kal tir chu tha ka ti.

I believe decorating coffin with flowers to bid farewell is a good gesture.

The president of Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, aged 56 has her own opinion saying-

Ka chhungte kuang chei ngai ta se, theihtawpa chei ka duh ang. Rilru damna hi a pawimawh.

Suppose my close relative's coffin needs to be decorated, I would want it to be decorated with utmost beauty with flowers. A mind at ease and contentment of the heart is important to me.

The president of Mizoram Florist Association, aged 67, opines that-

Kuang chung pangpara chei ngei hi a tha ka ti.

I support decorating coffins with flowers.

The Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) headquarters, the largest women association in Mizoram does not have provisions to contribute for the decoration of coffin on the occasion of death in a locality. Some of the local branches of the association do contribute by preparing ready-made artificial floral arrangement which could be borrowed by poor bereaved families, thus saving money. The association cater to the needs of all categories of people especially women. The floral arrangement is kept in the office of the local branch, which is maintained by the members.

The vice-president of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) headquarters, aged 77 who supports decorating coffin narrates-

Kuang pangpara chei hi a tha ka ti. Rilru damna mitthi chhungte tan ani a.

I support decorating coffin with flowers. It gives peace and contentment of heart to the bereaved family.

One of the floriculturists, aged 46, a resident of Dawrpui Vengthar locality interviewed gives her opinion on the issue and says-

Kuang chei hi a tha, kan hmangaihna kan lantir theih hnahnung ber ani. Kan pa bulah ka thih hunah pawh rose sendukin ka kuang chung in rawn chei dawn nia ka ti.

Decorating coffin looks nice and it is the last good gesture we could do to show our love to the departed. I told my husband to decorate my coffin with red roses when I depart from this world.

Another floriculturist, aged 36, a resident of Bethlehem Veng locality too narrates her view-

Kuang chei hian a ti mawi a, kan uizia kan lantir na a ni. Pangpar tak ngeia chei phei chu a hlu lehzual, in ngaih hlutna ani.

Decorated coffin looks beautiful, it shows how we miss the deceased. Decorating with fresh flowers is valued more and flowers shows how we respect the deceased.

Church elders/Salvation Officers and pastors, leaders of decoration committee/women wing and flower arrangers of the three large denominations that is, Mizoram Presbyterian, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army of different localities voiced their opinions and views too on the issue.

A pastor, aged 59, also chairman of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church of ITI locality church supports decoration of coffin and opines-

Kuang chung pangpara chei hi kan hmangaih kal te tana kan thiltih sak theih hnunung ber te a ni a, tha ka ti.

Decorating coffin with flowers indicates how much we love the deceased and it also shows the last gesture that the grieving family could do for their loved one.

One Salvation Army Corp, aged 60 secretary of Chanmari West locality church voice his opinion saying-

Mihring huntawp a ni a, kuang chung pangpara chei mawi ngeia thlah chu a awm ka ti.

Since it is the final moment of the human life, decorating a coffin with flowers to bid farewell is appropriate.

The secretary of the Baptist Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl, aged 53 of Tlangnuam locality Baptist church who is in charge of decoration opines-

Kuang pangpara chei hian kan hmangaihna leh kan uizia a lantir a, kan tih sak theih hnunung ber ani.

Decoration of coffin shows and symbolizes our love and how much we miss the deceased; it is also the last kind gesture we could do.

The secretary of the Home League, ITI locality Salvation Army Church, shares her view on the issue and says-

Kuang chei hi chu mitthi chhungte lungdamna ang ang kha a tha maiin ka hria.

I believe decoration of coffin depends on the wish of the bereaved families.

A flower arranger, aged 49 belonging to the Salvation Army denomination, Ramhlun North locality church too narrates-

*Kan hmangaihte thlah nana kuang chung pangpar tak ngeia chei hian
mitthi chhungte rilru a ti dam a, an lung a awi thin.*

*Decorating coffin with fresh flowers beautifully to bid farewell
symbolizes love and affection for their loved one, the gesture gives a
peace of mind and inner satisfaction to the bereaved family.*

Majority of the total respondents that is 67% supports decoration of coffin with flowers opining that it is the last good gesture to show their love and sentiments on the part of the bereaved family and that decorated coffins look much better than an undecorated one. However, the remaining 33% has different views and ideas believing that coffins are now made of good quality material and looks smart, additional decoration is unnecessary and that the kind of floral decoration of coffins divides society, creating a gap between the rich and the poor. The rich could afford the expensive decoration while the poor will not be able to follow the trend making them miserable. The respondents feel that floral decoration of coffin is just a waste of money.

With rapid changes in the living standard and worldview brought in by recent developments in urbanization and modernization in the city, with rapid development in technological advancements impacting each and every corner of the state, the Mizo society emulates the Western practices on the occasion of death in a locality. Decoration of coffin with flowers and giving flower bouquets and wreaths as condolence gifts has gained popularity with the turn of the 21st century in the society. Question on whether the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family was posed to all the different categories of respondents that is, the floriculturists, the Church Elders, leaders of decoration committee of churches, flower arrangers and the key informants, and presented in the following table.

Table: 5:9 Decoration of coffins and amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the family.

Decoration of coffins and amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the family	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Yes	141(92.2%)	51(85%)	52 (86.7%)	53 (88.3%)	10(100%)
No	12 (7.8%)	9 (15%)	8 (13.3%)	7 (11.7%)	0
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The above table depicts the opinion on whether decoration of coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family. Out of the total 343 set of respondents, it is seen that 307 (89.6%) believe that the kind of decoration on the coffin and the amount of flower bouquets received reveal the social status of the deceased and the family.

According to one of the church elders, in the Mizo context, funerary practices in terms of floral arrangements on coffins, flower bouquets and basket of flowers as condolence gifts are not a part of Mizo traditional culture, such practices are an influence of Western cultures. Flowers whether fresh or artificial have become increasingly popular and have become an indispensable part of Mizo funeral rituals and practices. One of the key informants, a member of the voluntary association MHIP shares her view and says, in the Mizo context, the amount and number of bouquet of flowers and wreaths received as condolence gifts can be said to be manifestation of social hierarchy in the society. She further says, the kind of flower arrangement on coffins and the amount of floral condolence gifts manifests the existence of social stratification in the society, revealing the social standing or status of the deceased and the bereaved families. One of the key informants, a leader of the florist association shares her view and says, if the deceased in a locality is a

prominent citizen and is well-to-do, and comes from a respected family the bereaved family normally receives a huge amount of flower bouquets, wreaths and basket of flowers as condolence gifts from friends, relatives and colleagues. The coffin is usually decorated with expensive fresh flowers at the expense of the grieving families. The key informant further narrates that such manifestation of funerary practice in the Mizo society shows the unequal distribution of wealth, prestige and privilege in the society. On the other hand, she says that if the deceased hails from a low-income family and is not a prominent citizen, the number of flowers received is usually small and the coffin decoration is normally a simple one if at all it is decorated. However, if the deceased even though comes from a low-income family, if he or she used to be active in the local community work, active in the church and active in the non-governmental associations of the locality, the funeral gathering is usually huge and flowers received are in great amount in such a case. According to one of the church elders, the amount of bouquet of flowers received and the kind of decorations on coffins depicts a huge gap between well-to-do families and poor families. He further shares that to bridge this gap in the society and bring people on equal footing in funerals, some local branches of the Young Mizo Association (YMA) of the state, dealing with all the requirements on the occasion of death in a locality, and the funerary necessities there on, prohibit floral decorations on coffins. He also says that the leaders of the association strictly follow the rules laid down by YMA at the local level, and limits the number of flower bouquets to be displayed near the coffin during the photograph session held after the funeral ritual. 36 (10.4%) of the total respondents have the opposite perspective, and they do not think the kind of decoration on coffins and the number of floral bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the family. Gifting traditional *puan* as condolence gift is the traditional custom of the Mizos which is kept intact and the present study reveals that this traditional practice will be continued in the society and is not in danger of diminishing.

Question was posed to the different set of respondents on whether they believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture. The study reveals that out of the total sample (343) of the different categories of respondents, 323 (94.1%) consisting of the majority of the respondents opine that they believe decoration of coffins with flowers and giving bouquet of flowers and wreaths as condolence gifts have been very much accepted as part of the Mizo culture. As mentioned earlier Mizo society has been engulfed in Western practices through the technological advancements which has enabled the people to emulate the funerary practices of the Western advanced societies to a great extent. Flowers whether fresh or artificial are now popular features of funeral practices in the Mizo society, and coffins looks bare and dull without flowers. Though the Young Mizo Association in some areas of the city prohibits decoration of coffins, and limits the number of flower bouquets to be displayed near the coffin during the photograph session, (in an effort to bring people on equal footing) gifting of flowers continues and is still very much popular and people have accepted it as a part of Mizo culture. On the other hand, a small number 20 (5.9%) do not believe that decorating coffins and gifting flower bouquets have been accepted as a part of Mizo culture.

Another question was posed to all the different categories of respondents on whether they support decorating the grave of loved ones with flowers on festive occasions like Christmas. The study shows that out of the total sample (343) of the different categories of respondents, majority of them that is, 286(83.3%) says they support decorating the grave of loved ones with flowers on Christmas. The respondents opine that such decorations are carried out to show how much they miss their loved ones, to express their love, show respect and reverence to their dear ones. One of the floriculturists shares that placing flowers and decorating the grave can provide a calming and comforting effect, a sense of satisfaction and peace in the midst of sorrow to the surviving relatives and help cope the grief. Placing and arranging the deceased's favourite flowers on the grave would certainly have symbolic meanings and emotions. Decorating the grave of loved ones and arranging flowers on the grave have become very popular in the city especially in the festive season like Christmas, a time when people miss the presence of their loved ones and it is a time when

people are ready to spend on flowers whether fresh or artificial. One of the respondents who is a flower arranger informs that the Young Mizo Association in most localities in Aizawl sets a specific date in the month of December as *Thlan Chei Ni* (Day of decorating graves) and many people who had lost their loved ones set out with flowers and other accessories to the local cemetery to decorate the grave of their loved ones together on the same day. People strive to decorate in the best possible way to their heart's satisfaction, and as such the decoration involves for some who are able to afford huge expenses. While for those who are unable to afford expensive flowers and accessories their decorations are simple and for some the grave of their loved ones are undecorated. On the other hand, 57 (16.7%) are against decorating graves in the cemetery, even though it is the grave of their loved ones. Such respondents are of the view that it is a waste of time and money, for them the best way to show love and respect to their loved ones is by regularly clearing and cleaning their graves, to show that they are remembered and missed.

1.5 Marriage ceremony

Marriage, as a social institution, has persisted for millennia, spanning diverse cultures, faiths, and nations. It is a legally and socially recognised relationship, typically between two individuals, that creates rights and responsibilities among them, their offspring, and their relatives by marriage. Marriage is not solely a human relationship; it is a societal construct that both reflects and influences society norms, beliefs, and expectations (<https://easysociology.com/sociology-of-family-relationships/marriage-an-overview/>). Westermarck defines marriage as “a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognised by custom or law; and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it” (cited in Ruwali, 2018:1). Marriage according to Malinowski is ‘a contract for the production and maintenance of children’. For Malinowski, “Marriage is a contract between two people which implies the community of life under the same roof or shelter, cooperation in the household and in the management of property, but above all the production of legitimate children, whose care, education, and endowment for life is made obligatory on the parents” (Malinowski, 1944:205, cited in Gangte, 2010:62).

Marriage in Christianity is a divine covenant between one man and one woman, instituted by God. This partnership constitutes a lifelong commitment, founded on fidelity and reciprocal affection. Christian marriage transcends a mere legal contract; it is a covenant in which both parties engage in self-sacrifice, embodying Christ's love for His followers and the church's surrender to Christ (<https://www.theorchard.church/the-basics-of-a-fulfilling-christian-marriage>).

Flowers are an indispensable part of wedding ceremonies because they symbolize new beginnings, love and commitment. Flowers brighten the wedding venue with their vivid hues and beautiful colours and their delightful fragrances. Flowers when they adorn the wedding venue can enhance emotion and sentiments, and the importance of the crucial moment. They add beauty and elegance, love and particular flowers symbolize the occasion, making the wedding ceremony feel more special and memorable.

In the pre-Christian Mizo society, marriage functioned solely as a civil contract, despite the execution of a pseudo-religious ceremony. A defining feature of a Mizo marriage is the bride price. No marriage occurs without the payment of at least a portion of the bride price to the bride's family (Angom, 2020:58). Though with the advent of Christianity there was tremendous transformation in the Mizo lifestyle, practices and customs, some of the customary laws continued to be kept intact and stayed on. The Mizo marriage is a blend of Mizo customary law and Christian form of marriage.

In the Mizo context, once marriage between a man and a woman is settled by the two families, there are pre-wedding practices and rituals to be performed by both sides in which payment or settlement of bride price by the groom's family is the most important ritual. A date is fixed usually on the eve of wedding for handing over of bride price to the bride's family. In the past few decades payment of bride price ritual was held at the bride-to-be residence where the specified room was usually decorated more or less simply with a vase full of flowers and a banner. With the turn of the 21st century, increasing advancement in technology, globalization, modernization, and internet facilities have led to wider outlook, increasing aesthetic tastes due to the

influence of Western cultural practices of weddings, people's preferences have changed in terms of bigger venues, better and impressive decoration of venues with flowers and decorated backdrop. Payment of bride price and distribution of bride price is held simultaneously and is organized by the bride-to-be family by hiring a bigger community or church hall to accommodate more people. Contemporary ritual on payment of bride price is normally held in church halls or other available venues where the stage is embellished with floral back drop and flower arrangements adorn the stage.

The narratives of the different categories of respondents on the issue of floral decorations of the venue for payment of bride price ceremony were collected.

One of the floriculturists, aged 49, a resident of Durtlang Leitan locality voiced her opinion saying-

A ti theiin man hlanna hmunhma an chei mawi hi tha ka tiin a mawi ka ti. Pangpara mawi taka chei hi ka ngaihlu.

I support floral decoration of payment of bride price venues, they are beautiful. I personally value the floral decoration.

Another floriculturist aged 66, a resident of Mission Vengthlang locality says-

Man hlanna hmunhma chei hi a mawiin a ropui a, ka thlawp e.

Floral decoration of payment of bride price venue looks elegant and beautiful and I support the practice.

The other categories of respondents consisting of Church elders/Salvation Officers and pastors, leaders of decoration committee/women wing and flower arrangers of the three large denominations that is, Mizoram Presbyterian, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army of different localities, voiced their views on the issue.

The secretary and church elder, aged 58, belonging to Presbyterian Church, Chanmari locality, supports venue decoration and says-

*Man hlanna hmunhma pangpara chei hi a mawiin hmuh a nuam.
Inneih hmunhma te kan kan chei changkang tawh a, a tha ka ti.*

*Venues of bride price ceremony decorated with flowers creates
beautiful ambience and looks impressive. Modern wedding reception
venues are now beautifully decorated and I support it.*

A church elder, aged 65, who is the chairman of the Baptist Church of Mizoram, Upper Republic locality church shares his view-

*Tunlai hian man hlanna hmunhma hi a mawi thei ang berin an chei
tawh a, tunlai dan ani ta. Ka fanu in pasal nei dawn ta se, kan tih ve
ngei a ngai ang.*

*Nowadays venues of payment of bride price are lavishly decorated
with flowers, it is a trend. If my daughter were to get married, it
would be necessary to follow the trend.*

The secretary of the Decoration Committee, aged 39 of the Baptist Church of Mizoram, ITI veng locality church shares her views-

*Hmunhma chei hi tha ka ti. Pangpara mawi tak maia chei hian min ti
hlima hmuh a nuam.*

*I support decoration of venues. Floral decoration looks beautiful and
makes one happy.*

The secretary of Decoration Committee, aged 52, who belongs to the Salvation Army church, Ramhlun North locality supports pre-wedding payment of bride price ceremony venue decoration saying-

*Pangpar hi eng hawi zawnng pawha khawi hian min ti hlima hmuh a
nuam.*

*Flowers arranged in any shape or form brings joy and creates a
beautiful ambience.*

A flower arranger, aged 43, who belongs to the Salvation Army church, Tlangnuam Vengthar locality and says-

Hmunhma pangpara chei hian man hlanna hun hman a ti hlu zual ka ti.

Adorning venue with flowers makes the payment of bride price ceremony more momentous and beautiful.

The above narratives by the different categories of the respondents reveal that in the Mizo context flowers have gained tremendous importance and has become very much indispensable in conducting events and important occasions like pre-wedding payment of bride price ritual ceremony and weddings. Decorations of venues for such occasion have become elaborate and expensive. Some of the respondents however, consider it extravagant and a waste of money and that such decorations show the existence of a wide gap between the rich and the poor. While some consider use of flower in marriage related occasions as elite preference or rich man's boast of heraldry or even emulating the practices and ways of the Western people, others attribute cultural symbolism and a way of extending emotions and sentiments.

Question was posed to all the set of respondents on whether they think floral decoration should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo pre-wedding payment and distribution of bride price. Out of the total (343) of the different categories of respondents, 166 (48.3%) are in favour of incorporating floral decoration in pre-wedding events like payment and distribution of bride price, and also send-off ceremony of the bride -to-be which are held simultaneously by the bride's parents. In order to accommodate more people who are mostly relatives and close friends of the girl's family, the ceremony is usually held in church halls and other big halls on the eve of the wedding. Professional florists are hired to decorate the stage and the backdrop with flowers and other accessories to impress the guests and have a beautiful backdrop for photo session. According to one of the respondents, besides the floral décor of the stage, the trend in the Mizo bride price ceremony especially in the urban area is that the bridegroom to-be and his friend who are invited to the ceremony after the distribution of bride price is complete, comes with fresh floral

bouquets for the bride to-be and bride's maid and hands them over to them. This act of gifting floral bouquet to the bride on the part of the bridegroom to-be indicate the level of importance flowers have gained in the hearts of the people. More than half of the respondents that is, 177 (51.7%) are not in favour of incorporating floral decorations in the pre-wedding handing over of bride price ceremony on the eve of wedding. Such respondents are against the idea of unnecessary huge expenditure on flowers and other things in order to beautify the stage. If at all decoration is necessary, it should be done in a moderate way avoiding extra expenditure. Lavish floral decorations which have become trendy and popular according to the respondents creates a wide gap between the rich and the poor. The poor usually imitate the practices of the rich which push them into debt and some take loans to cover the decoration expenses. So, majority of the respondents are against continuing to incorporate floral decoration in the payment of bride price ceremony.

In terms of decoration in Mizo church wedding, changes have been noticed by most of the respondents. In fact, out of the total respondents 299 (87.1%) of them notice changes in terms of floral decoration in Mizo church marriage. They opine that in the past decades, floral decoration in church marriage was simple and moderate, simple vase arrangement of flowers at the two sides of the altar was a popular feature. Wedding reception venues were also moderately decorated with artificial flowers and some fresh ones. According to one of the floriculturists, significant changes could be observed in the stage decoration in wedding receptions and compared to the past decades flower arrangement at the church altar on weddings too are much more elaborate with modern style of arrangement. On the other hand, 44 (12.9%) of the respondents opine that they have not noticed much change in Mizo church wedding in terms of decoration. They think that flower arrangements in the church weddings have not undergone much change and also at the wedding reception. Changes are not noticed by a few of the respondents in terms of decoration. The majority of the respondents 299 (87.1%) who believe that noticeable changes have occurred in terms of decoration put forth their view on the kind of changes in decoration and is presented in the following table.

Table 5:10 Kind of changes noticed in wedding receptions nowadays

Kind of changes noticed in wedding reception nowadays	Floriculturists	Church elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arranger	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Simple decoration	6 (3.9%)	4 (6.7%)	4 (6.7%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (10%)
Moderate decoration	86 (56.2%)	12 (20%)	17 (28.3%)	21 (35%)	2 (20%)
Lavish decoration	58 (37.9%)	23 (38.3%)	29 (48.3%)	32 (53.3%)	3 (30%)
No changes noticed	3 (2%)	21 (35%)	10 (16.7%)	6 (10%)	4 (40%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The above table depicts the respondents' opinion on the kind of changes noticed in wedding reception nowadays. It is discernible from the table that out of the total respondents 145 (42.2%) opine that lavish decorations are becoming trendy and popular in wedding receptions compared to the past years. The respondents opine that in many of the contemporary Mizo wedding receptions, flower arrangements on the photo backdrop, on steel arches at the stage, vase and pedestal floral arrangements are becoming exquisite and elaborate involving huge expenditure on the lavish decoration. One of the key informants who is one of the leaders of MHIP states that those families whose financial status does not permit them to indulge in such lavish decorations too try to follow the footsteps of the well-to-do families and even borrow loans to cover the expenses. People especially those getting married normally prefer keeping up with modern trend and wants their wedding receptions to be memorable and outstanding. While 138 (40.2%) of the total respondents are of the view that in terms of decoration, wedding receptions are still moderately decorated. As far as their observation is concerned, flowers moderately adorn the stage of the wedding reception. They believe that in modern wedding reception in the Mizo

society, floral decorations are not extravagant though flowers have become significant part of weddings, as such expenditure on flowers and other accessories are still in moderate range. A small percentage that is, 16 (4.6%) are of the view that not much changes has occurred in wedding receptions, based on their observation they believe that decorations are still simple and modest in the society. For these respondents, expenditure on floral decorations is still moderate. Meanwhile 44(41.1%) of the respondents does not notice much change in contemporary Mizo church wedding and reception in terms of decoration.

Question on whether they are willing to spend much on floral decoration for their children's wedding reception was posed to all the categories of respondents. Out of the total respondents 251 (73.1%) responds positively revealing their desire and willingness to spend on floral decoration for their children's wedding reception. They opine that they would have to keep up with the modern trend and fulfill their children's wish of making their wedding memorable and special. But majority of the respondents willing to spend on flowers put forth their desire to keep the reception decorations moderate and elegant. They do not support huge expenditure on floral decorations and would like to avoid unnecessary extra expenditures on the decorations. On the other hand, 92 (26.9%) of the respondents responded negatively and are not willing to spend on unnecessary floral decorations for their children's wedding reception. For them, flower arrangements and decorations are unnecessary expenditures, wedding receptions could be organized and conducted without any decorations. According to them, the marriage rituals performed in the church is the most important which sanctifies and solemnizes the marriage and which seals the marriage contract for life, not the floral decorations and the amount of money spent on the flowers. Another question was posed to those willing to spend on floral decoration for their children's wedding reception on the reason they are willing to spend on floral decoration, and is presented in the following table.

Table 5.11 Reason for willingness to spend on floral decoration for children's wedding reception

Reason for willingness to spend on floral decoration for children's wedding reception	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Signifies social standing	10 (6.5%)	5 (8.3%)	2 (3.3%)	1 (1.7%)	0
It is a trend	77 (50.3%)	15 (25%)	10 (16.7%)	7 (11.7%)	3 (30%)
It is valued by people	26(17%)	10 (16.7%)	7 (11.7%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (20%)
Makes wedding reception memorable and special	13 (8.5%)	4 (6.7%)	21 (35%)	33 (55%)	3 (30%)
Not willing to spend	27 (17.6%)	26 (43.3%)	20 (33.3%)	17 (28.3%)	2 (20%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table demonstrates the opinion put forth by the respondents on the reason for willingness to spend money on the floral decoration for their children's wedding reception. It is seen that majority of the total respondents that is, 112 (32.6%) believe that floral decoration and beautification of wedding reception venues is a modern trend in the society. Flowers have become an important part of wedding reception programmes, because reception venue would look dull, colourless and bare without flowers and other decorative accessories. Weddings and flowers go together during the marriage rituals in the church where each partner takes wedding vows, promises they have to keep for life, and in the wedding reception to celebrate the couple's marriage. Flowers adorning the stage of reception venue in different forms and shapes are popular trends in the society. Out of the total respondents, 74 (21.5%) has a view that the flower arrangements and decoration in wedding reception makes the event memorable and special for the married couple and their families. Venue decoration for wedding reception will linger in the minds and hearts of not only the

newly married couple but in the minds of invited guests and people as many pictures are taken of the event which is memorable and special for the couple and the families. Another 47 (13.8%) of the respondents too opine that they are willing to spend on floral decoration for their children's wedding reception because it is valued by people. They value the flower arrangements adorning the stage for the celebration of weddings, the steel arches and stand decorated with flowers and feel that the vase arrangements on the stage add significance and value to the event. To avoid being criticized by their children and relatives, such respondents would spend on floral decoration for their children's wedding reception to make the event memorable and unforgettable. 18 (5.2%) of the total respondents believe that they would willingly spend on floral decoration for their children's wedding reception because it signifies social standing of the family. According to one of the church elders, the kind of decoration and the number of flowers and other accessories used in a reception venue reveals the financial and social position the family has in the society to a great extent. The floral decoration whether simple, moderate or lavish in wedding receptions depend on the standard and financial status of the married couple and their families and also to a great extent on the aesthetic sense of the couple and their families. Thus, such decorations reveal the social standing of the concerned families. However, 92 (26.9%) are unwilling to spend on floral decoration of their children's wedding reception. People believe that floral decorations are unnecessary and needless expenditures in which many people indulge in.

Flowers whether fresh ones or artificial have come to occupy an indispensable part of weddings and their celebrations in the Mizo society. Not only decorations with flowers and flower arrangements in vases for the church and reception, weddings involve bridal bouquets for the bride and flower arrangements on the bridal cars. Question was posed to all the different categories of respondents on whether they think floral decorations, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are an influence of other cultures. Out of the total respondents 333 (97%) of them believe that floral decorations, bridal bouquets and floral decorations on bridal cars are indeed an influence of other cultures. They were not a part of the Mizo culture and tradition in so far as marriage is concerned. With the increasing development and

advancement in internet facilities and social media the Mizo society does not lag behind, people's outlook has widened and their aesthetic sense have been influenced by other cultures especially the Western societies. However, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are of recent development in the society. One of the key informants opines that bridal bouquets in particular may have been a direct influence of the Christian missionaries who stepped foot in Mizoram in the 19th century. She further adds that with the advent of Christianity in Mizoram from 1894 onwards, Christianity gradually changed the perspectives and world view of the Mizo people and people began to imitate the lifestyle and way of life of the missionaries and a new Christian culture and way of life emerged which affected the everyday life and customs of the Mizo people. According to one of the leaders of decoration committee, bridal bouquet which was not known in the traditional Mizo society is largely an influence of the Western advanced societies from the late 20th century, which has become more and more popular in the Mizo weddings in the 21st century. Decoration of bridal cars too are of recent development and has gained momentum with the turn of the 21st century in the urban areas, and is also trending in the rural areas. On the other hand, 10(3%) of the respondents has the opposite view opining that floral decorations, bridal bouquet and decoration on bridal cars are not an influence of other cultures. They believe that such floral decorations and bouquets are practices which have evolved over the years in the society. Further question was posed to the respondents who feels that floral bouquets and decorations are an influence of other cultures on whether these practices should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo culture. The question was responded by 271 (79%) positively opining that such floral decorations and bouquets should continue to be a part of the culture. Flowers being indispensable has been incorporated as a part of the Mizo culture and as such is supported by 79% of the total respondents. Whereas 62 (18%) of the respondents do not wholly support incorporating the practice of decoration as a part of the Mizo culture. This negative attitude could be attributed to the huge expenditure involved in floral decorations. Meanwhile, 10 (3%) of the respondents are the ones who does not believe that floral decorations, bridal bouquets and flower arrangement on bridal cars are an influence of other cultures.

1.6 Church

‘The term church refers to a large, formal organization with a hierarchy of officials. In theory it ministers to all members of a society. It recruits from all social strata, but in practice, higher status groups are usually over-represented in its congregation’ (Haralambos & Heald, 1980: 467-468). The church as an institution is a structured and organised religious entity characterised by established leadership, dogmas, and practices. It signifies a formal organisation rather than merely a congregation of individual believers; it represents a system of governance and rituals within a religious community, typically featuring a discernible hierarchy and defined regulations for membership and participation. A church typically adheres to societal norms and ideals, frequently serving as the custodian of the established social order.

Christianity in Mizoram started in the 19th century when the British missionaries set foot in the area. The pioneer missionaries were J.H. Lorrain (Pu Buanga as called by the Mizos) and F.W. Savidge (named Sap Upa) who were sent by the Arthington Aborigines Mission in London in 1894. These two first missionaries were of the Baptist church and thus the Baptist Church of Mizoram was established at Lunglei by them. Rev. David Evan Jones from the Welsh Mission established the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram at Aizawl in the 1890s. Other denominations arrived later including Catholic, Salvation Army and others. As Christianity grew and spread across the state, a variety of indigenous denominations also emerged. Christianity is now the largest religion in Mizoram. 87% of Mizoram population are Christians in various denominations predominantly Presbyterian and Baptist. The new religion was immensely effective at transforming the traditional culture of the Mizo people. Christianity turned into a new culture and way of life in Mizoram.

Christian denomination is a specific religious entity within Christianity that includes all congregations of a similar nature, characterised by attributes such as a name, unique history, organisational structure, leadership, theological beliefs, worship practices, and occasionally, a founder. A denomination is typically seen as part of the Christian religious mainstream, as contrast to a cult or sect. Most Christian denominations identify themselves as churches

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_denomination).

The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram Synod is the largest and most dominant in terms of denomination in Mizoram with its main headquarters at Aizawl city. It has 1130 number of local churches in the whole state with the largest number of members in 2021-2022 (Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, 2022: 217). There are 176 Presbyterian churches in different localities of Aizawl Presbytery Synod, Aizawl city (source: Synod Bu, 2023) and is the dominant denomination in the city. The second largest denomination is the Baptist Church of Mizoram in the state with its main headquarters at Lunglei city, the capital city of Lunglei district. It has 651 number of local churches in the whole state with the second largest number of members in 2021-2022 (Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, 2022: 217). There are 63 Baptist Churches in Aizawl city located at different localities (Source: Executive Secretary Office, BCM, Aizawl). The Salvation Army as a denomination is not large in size but it is a prominent denomination in the state, and it is established at different localities with its main headquarters at Tuikual veng, Aizawl. There 282 local Salvation Army churches in the whole state (Statistical Handbook, Mizoram, 2022: 217). There are 74 Salvation Army churches in Aizawl city area (Source: Disposition of Forces 2023, The Salvation Army: Eastern India Territory).

The Presbyterian churches in Aizawl localities normally establishes a decoration committee or *Pangpar* (Flower) Committee as one of the committees of the church. Such committee is responsible for the upkeep of flower arrangement for Sunday church service, conferences and festivals as well as maintenance of flower beds and flower pots within the church premises. Such committees appoint women members to arrange flowers alternately for Sunday service. Such appointed flower arrangers are responsible for buying and arranging flowers at the church altar for Sunday. The decoration committee members are responsible for arranging flowers on meets, conferences and festivals. The Baptist Church of Mizoram established in Aizawl city do not separately form decoration committees as such, but the women wing of the church known as Baptist *Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl* (BKHP) normally take up the responsibility of flower arrangement for Sunday, conferences, festivals and maintenance of flower pots and plants of the church compound. The BKHP leaders

appoint women members to arrange flowers for Sunday church service, and such appointed flower arrangers fulfill their responsibility willingly. The Salvation Army churches in Aizawl localities too normally do not form a separate body for decoration of the church. The women wing known as Home League leaders usually take up the responsibility of arranging flowers for Sunday church service and on conferences, meets and festivals.

For the present study, using purposive and convenience sampling, out of the 83 localities under Aizawl Municipal Corporation in Mizoram, two Church Elders/Officers each, two leaders of Decoration Committee/ women's wing each and two flower arrangers each of the three prominent denominations in Aizawl city namely, The Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army have been selected from 10 different localities each as sample which comes to 60 each. The total sample to represent the Church Elders/Officers, Decoration Committee leaders and flower arrangers is 180, which aims to throw light on the present objective of the importance of flowers in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society.

In the different denomination churches in Mizoram, flower arrangements fresh or artificial adorn the church altar on Sunday service on a regular basis. Question on whether respondents consider flower arrangement at the church altar necessary was posed to all the categories of the respondents and is presented in the following table.

Table 5.12 Necessity of flower arrangement at the church altar

Necessity of flower arrangement at the altar in the church	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Yes	141(92.2%)	45 (75%)	57 (95%)	59 (98.3%)	10 (100%)
No	12 (7.8%)	15 (25%)	3 (5%)	1 (1.7%)	0
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table illustrates the fact that out of the total 343 respondents, majority of the total respondents that is, 312 (91%) considers flower arrangement at the church altar necessary and important on Sunday church service. They believe that arranging flowers at the altar not only beautifies the sacred space but the vibrant flowers symbolize the glory of God, the creator of all things. They also believe that floral designs and shapes enhance the ambience of the sacred space and different flowers symbolizes purity and devotion. One of the respondents opines that floral arrangement at the altar can transform the atmosphere in the church creating beautiful sight and leave a lasting impression on the church attendees. A church worship service without any floral arrangements would be dull and the altar would appear bare and empty. The majority of the respondents support the presence of floral arrangement at the church altar which adds a touch of warmth and elegance to the sacred space. On the other hand, a mere 31 (9%) are not in support of flower arrangement at the church altar, some of them are oblivious of the flower arrangement in the church so much so that they are unaware and unmindful of them. They are of the view that flower arrangement at the church altar is not a necessity for church worship service, of which the congregation can do without.

Question on whether the different denomination churches regularly arrange flowers at the altar on Sundays was posed to the church elders/officers, the decoration committee leaders and the flower arrangers of the three denominations that is, the Presbyterian church, the Baptist church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army church. Out of the total 180 respondents, 156 (86.7%) responded positively because flower arrangements regularly adorn the sacred space in their churches on Sundays. These prominent denominations in the city normally have decoration committee who are responsible for the upkeep of flower arrangement in the church. If any of the denomination churches do not have a decoration committee, then the responsibility falls on the women wing of the churches. Such decoration committees or the women wing prepare a list of names from the women members who would be willing to arrange church flowers for Sunday service. Such flower arrangers are appointed in turns to arrange flowers in the church for a year. As such, arranging flowers at the altar of different churches is a regular feature in the city. On the other hand, 24 (13.3%) responded negatively because their churches do not arrange flowers regularly on Sundays. According to one of the flower arrangers, the reason behind it may be some smaller churches with smaller size members are not able to afford purchasing fresh flowers every week, sanctioning money for flowers becomes a huge burden for such small churches. She also adds that if artificial flowers are not arranged, then flowers do not adorn the church altar and the sacred space is kept bare.

Question was posed to the main stakeholders that is, the floriculturists on whether they have been appointed to arrange flowers in their respective churches. Out of the 153 floriculturists interviewed, 103 (67.3%) responded that they have been frequently appointed to arrange flowers in their churches. They willingly fulfill the responsibility they have been given by purchasing fresh flowers from the florist shops and if they are not able to arrange the flowers themselves, they seek the help of others who are expert or hire professional floral arrangers if they are willing to pay extra money. According to one of the leaders of decoration committee, in Aizawl city, most of the bigger churches sanction money to purchase flowers for Sunday and the smaller churches however, do not sanction regularly for Sunday service except on

festive occasions and conferences. Meanwhile 50 (32.7%) of the floriculturists are never appointed to arrange flowers in their churches. Though they are floriculturists engaged in cultivating flower crops and houseplants, they are not experts in the art of flower arrangement.

Out of the total 60 pastors/church elders/officers who are the chairmen and secretary of the different denominations such as the Presbyterian Church of Mizoram, the Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army churches, 43 (71.7%) informs that their respective churches have a decoration committee/*pangpar* (flower) committee responsible for the upkeep of flower arrangement. They inform that such a decoration committee is normally formed by different churches to beautify the church interior and the church premises with cut flower arrangement near the altar, and also maintain and care for the potted plants and potted flowers. While 17 (28.3%) responded negatively saying that their respective churches do not have a separate decoration committee, and the responsibility of decoration is taken up by the women wing of their churches. Such churches are mostly the Baptist and Salvation Army local churches. While the Presbyterian denomination being the largest in terms of size in Aizawl city normally has a separate decoration committee responsible for the decoration of their respective local churches. Question was posed to the church elders and officers of the different denominations to know the level at which the decoration committee function in the church, and is presented in the following table.

Table 5.13 The level at which the decoration committee functions within the church

Level at which the decoration committee of churches function	Frequency	Percentage
As one of the church committees	0	0
As a sub-committee of the church	24	40 %
As a sub-committee of the church's women wing	19	31.7%
As a sub-committee of the church's youth fellowship	0	0
No decoration committee	17	28.3
Total	60	100%

From the above table it is seen that out of the total 60 church leaders of the three denominations, 24 (40%) of them inform that the decoration committee of their respective churches function as a sub-committee of the main church. Like other sub-committees of the church, the decoration committee is formed by the main church and functions under the chairman of the church elders and financial necessities for decoration purposes are met by the main church. The decoration committee of all the different denominations is normally dominated by women members with a small number of men as members. While 19 (31.7%) of the decoration committees function as a sub-committee of the women wing of the church. Majority of the decoration committees are managed and, in some cases, financed by the church's women wing. In the Presbyterian local churches, there are a few cases where the decoration committee functions as a sub-committee of the *Kohhran Hmeichhia* or the women wing. In such a case, the decoration committee is to a great extent financed by the *Kohhran Hmeichhia*. In Baptist local churches, the Baptist *Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl* (BKHP) or the women wing forms the sub-committee which take up the responsibility of decorating their respective churches. In the Salvation Army local churches too, the decoration committee functions as a sub-committee of the Home League or the women wing. On the other hand, 17 (28.3%) of the church elders and officers inform that their churches do not form a decoration committee separately. The church elders inform that in the absence of a separate decoration committee, similar practice is seen amongst the three different denominations, where the women

wing of the respective churches takes up the responsibility for decoration of the church interior and the church premises. Decoration of church in terms of flower arrangement for Sunday service, in conferences, festive occasions and taking care of the potted flowers and plants falls in the hands of the *Kohhran Hmeichhia* (women wing) in the Presbyterian church. Similarly, the BKHP takes up the role and manages the decoration for Sunday service, conferences and festive occasions in the Baptist local churches. Further, in the absence of a separate decoration committee, the Home League is mostly responsible for decorating the church on Sunday and on festivals in the Salvation Army local churches.

The reason behind the formation of decoration committee in the different denomination churches was asked and the church leaders shared the main reasons why the committee exists in the church.

A church elder, aged 59 of the Presbyterian church, ITI Veng locality opines-

Biak In pangpara chei anih rualin, Pathian Ni ti ropuitu an ni

Decorating the church with flowers and their decoration glorifies Sunday as a worshipping day.

A 63 -year- old church elder and chairman of the Baptist Church Committee of Mission Vengthlang local church also says-

Pangpar mawi tak te hian Pathian ropui zia an tarlang a, chuvangin kan mawhphurhna chu Pathian chawimawi leh fak hi ani a. Pangpar hmanga Pathian kan chawimawi theih nan decoration committee hi siam ani.

Beautiful flowers exalt and glorify God the creator, so it is our duty to glorify and praise God. To glorify God through beautiful flowers, decoration committee is formed in the church.

A Corp Sergeant Major, aged 65 the chairman of the Salvation Army Church Committee of ITI Veng local church opines-

Decoration Committee hi Biak In chhunga pangpar khawia ti mawitu ani a. Inkhawmpui ni khuaah te Biak In an chei a tul avanga din ani. Pangpar hi kan dah pawimawh tawh em avangin ani.

Decoration committee is formed because it fulfills the responsibility of beautifying the church sacred space with flowers. In times of church conferences decoration of church is necessary. Utmost importance is now given to flowers in the church.

The presence and existence of decoration committee as a sub-committee of the main church, or as a sub-committee of the women wing of the church is a result of the necessity of appointing members to handle floral decoration at the church altar every Sunday and for the maintenance of landscaping of the church premises. Even in the absence of a separate decoration committee, the women wing of each of the denomination studied take up the responsibility of handling the decoration purposes. The personal perspective of the church elders/officers of the three denominations towards the existence of a separate body of decoration committee in the church was enquired and their opinions were collected.

A church elder aged 58, who is the secretary of the Presbyterian Church Committee, at Chanmari local church opines-

Kohhran Committee tan Biak In chei leh chawlhni tin pangpar khawi buaipui a buaithlak avangin, decoration committee an awm hian an hna tur a chianga, an tih tur pawh an ti a, a tha e.

It is not practicable for the Church Committee to handle decoration and flower arrangement every Sunday in the church, the existence of a decoration committee is much better who takes up the responsibility of all the necessary actions.

A Baptist church elder, aged 65 who is also the chairman of the Baptist Church of Mission Vengthlang local church puts forth his view-

Decoration committee awm hi ka thlawp a. Pathian anpuia siam kan ni a amah chawimawi tura siam kan ni. Decoration committee te

pawh hi pangpar khawi hmang leh Biak In leh a vel te pangpar phun mawiin Pathian ropui zia an tarlang ani.

I fully support the work of decoration committee in the church. We are created in the image of God to glorify Him. The decorative works of flower arrangement in the church and planting flowers within the premises of the church reflects the glory of God.

A Corps Sergeant Major, aged 74 who is the chairman of the Salvation Army Temple Church Committee at Tuikual locality also shares his view-

Decoration committee te sub-committee anga an ding hi thil tha tak ani. Pathian Ni tina pulpita pangpar an khawi bakah Biak In leh a velah plants mawi tak tak an phun a. Biak In leh a vel an cheimawi renga, he committee hi tangkai tak ani.

Forming decoration committee as a sub-committee of the church serves a good purpose. They manage the arrangement of flowers every Sunday at the altar and takes care for the green foliage plants of the church. The committee indulges in the task of beautifying the church premise all the time.

The decoration committee of the different denomination churches manage and handle the beautification of the church interior and surroundings. Depending on the location and availability of space of the churches, landscaping of the church premises if possible is carried out by the decoration committee members. According to one of the leaders of decoration committee, if the church building has vacant space around the frontage and on the sides, landscaping is done by planting flowers on flower beds and house plants around the church building. She further informs that even if the church building has no space for flower beds, a space is allotted for potted flowers and potted plants which are utilized to beautify the church surrounding, this practice is pursued normally by the different denominations in the city. Question was posed to the church elders, the leaders of the decoration committee and flower arrangers in the church on whether the decoration committee members actively work to beautify the church within and its surrounding areas. Out of the 180 total respondents

interviewed, 153 (85%) that is, the majority of the respondents responded positively saying that the members of the decoration committee work actively to beautify the church surrounding areas. The committees of the different denominations frequently call for *hnatlang* (social work) where the committee members come forward to clean, plant and care for the flowers and foliage planted in pots and flower beds within the church premises. Church surrounding areas are maintained beautifully by the committee members collectively who usually take up the responsibility as their personal ministry. Working collectively at the time of *hnatlang* within the church frequently brings solidarity amongst the members, and members unite for a common cause to beautify the church surrounding area. Whereas 27 (15%) of the total respondents responded negatively because the decoration committee of their respective churches do not work actively to beautify the church surroundings. According to one leader of a decoration committee, the reason behind this inactivity of the decoration committee members may be due to the absence of flowers and foliage plants to be maintained within the church premises. Some churches are under construction where beautification of the church compound is not possible. One of the decoration committee leaders belonging to the Baptist church opines that some of the Baptist and Salvation Army churches in Aizawl city being small in size in terms of members, the church buildings too are normally small. In such small churches activity of the decoration committee is minimal because of the absence of flowers and foliage plants in some cases.

According to one decoration committee leader belonging to a Presbyterian church opines that majority of the bigger churches such as the dominant Presbyterian church in different localities form a separate body or a decoration committee who is in charge of handling the decoration of the church within and outside the church building. Being normally large in size the church building too is usually big in size to accommodate the whole congregation. She further shares that the decoration committees too are usually active in beautifying the church surrounding areas, because the fund requirements put up in the church committee for the purchase of flowers and foliage plants is normally sanctioned. One of the flower arrangers belonging to a Salvation Army church informs that in smaller denominations like the

Baptist and Salvation Army churches, their decoration committees or the women wing of the churches are sanctioned less funds for the beautification of the church surroundings.

Question was posed to all the three categories of the respondents consisting of the church elders, leaders of the decoration committees and flower arrangers of the different churches on whether the church is willing to outsource funds regularly on flowers and potted plants to add beauty to the church's surroundings. Out of the total 180 respondents, 114 (63.3%) of them responded positively because their respective churches are willing to spend funds on flower plants and potted foliage plants to adorn the church premises. The respondents share that budget estimates are made by the decoration committee members for the purchase of flower plants and potted plants, bags of manure which are required often for the flower plants to bloom profusely, and other necessities for the care and maintenance of the flower plants. One decoration committee leader belonging to the Presbyterian church opines that budget estimates or fund requirements are submitted to the church committee who normally sanctions the required amount. She adds that this is a regular practice amongst the decoration committee members of the Presbyterian church in the city, which is also practiced by a few of the other bigger denomination churches such as the Baptist church and the Salvation Army church. She further informs that depending on the blooming season of the seasonal flowers planted, budget estimate is submitted twice or thrice annually to the church committee. The church committee consisting of the church elders is the highest authority in the church who Approves and sanctions the budget estimate submitted by the decoration committee leaders. The church is normally open to the beautification and landscaping of the church surrounding and usually approves the budget estimate for the purchase of flowers and plants and other necessary items made by the decoration committee members. Meanwhile 66 (36.7%) of the total respondents responded negatively due to the fact that their respective churches do not sanction funds for flower plants and potted foliage plants to the decoration committee. One of the church elders belonging to a Baptist church opines that this is a normal condition experienced by the smaller denominations such as the Baptist church and the Salvation Army whose church

premises does not permit beautification because of lack of available space. He further adds that in some cases, the churches are under construction and under repair whose current condition does not permit planting flowers and beautifying the surroundings. In such churches, the decoration committee handles expericenen most cases only flower arrangement at the church sacred altar.

Further question was posed to the church elders and decoration committee leaders on how much in an average does their respective church spent on flowering plants and potted foliage plants annually and presented in the following table.

Table 5.14 Amount of funds spent on flowering plants in the church.

Amount of funds spent on flowering plants	Church Elders	Decoration Committee
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Rs 1000 – Rs 5000	2 (3.3%)	6 (10%)
Rs 5000 – Rs 10000	2 (3.3%)	4 (6.6%)
Rs 10000 – Rs 15000	1 (1.6%)	1 (1.6%)
Rs 15000- Rs 20000	8 (13.3%)	2 (3.3%)
Rs 20000+	33 (55%)	23 (38.3%)
Does not sanction funds	14 (24.1%)	24 (40%)
Total	60 (100%)	60 (100%)

The table above illustrates the amount of funds spent on flower plants and foliage plants annually by the church of different denominations. Out of the total 120 respondents consisting of the church elders and the leaders of the decoration committee of different denominations, 56 (46.7%) responds that their churches spent more than Rs 20,000/- annually for the purchase, maintenance and care of the flowering plants and the potted foliage plants which helps add beauty to the church surroundings. Members of the decoration committee are the ones responsible for the necessary works involved in beautifying the church area. They inform that members

call for *hnatlang* (social work) and they come and work together unitedly and fulfills the task of purchasing flower seedlings, purchasing manure and pots, preparing potting soil with manure, planting the flower seedlings on flower beds or in plastic containers, care for the potted foliage plants, adding manure to the soil and trimming and cutting the foliage plants to look better. A *hnatlang* is called three or four times a year to care and properly maintain the potted flowers and potted plants within the church area. All these activities require funds, which the decoration committee obtain from the church committee. Big churches spent more on the beautification of the church area. While 10 (8.3%) responds that their churches spent between Rs 15000 – Rs 20000 for the beautification of the church surrounding. The dominant denomination that is, the Presbyterian churches are usually the ones spending above Rs 15000 for the landscaping of their church surroundings. One of the Presbyterian church elders informs that most of the Presbyterian churches have decoration committee as a sub-committee of the church and as a sub-committee of the women wing, who are active in their responsibility of beautifying the church premises. Funds are usually obtained from the church committee through budget estimates made by the decoration committee. While 8 (6.7%) of the respondents inform that their churches spent between Rs 1000- Rs 5000 annually for the beautification of the church area. The respondents inform that their churches usually small in terms of membership and building, spent less on flowering plants and foliage plants and other necessities. They also state that the decoration committee or the women wing of such churches usually do not actively work for the beautification of the church surrounding annually except on festive occasion or conferences. 6 (5%) of the respondents also inform that their churches normally spent Rs 5000 – Rs 10000 annually for the maintenance of the church surrounding areas. They also inform that the decoration committee of these churches though they indulge their time in beautifying the church, their works does not require much amount of funds. Meanwhile 2 (1.6%) of the respondents says that their churches spent approximately between Rs 10000 – Rs 15000 annually for the maintenance and care of the flowering plants and foliage around the church surroundings. On the other hand, out of the total 120 respondents 38 (31.7%) responded negatively commenting that their respective churches do not sanction funds for flower plants and potted plants to

beautify the surrounding of their churches. The respondents further inform that their churches do not outsource funds for the beautification of the church area due to the absence of a separate decoration committee within the church to pursue the necessary tasks of planting flowers and foliage plants to add beauty to the church area. They also state that some denominations are small in size in terms of membership and that the church buildings have limited vacant space for landscaping.

Question was posed to the leaders of the decoration committee of the different denomination churches on whether they regularly appoint members to arrange flowers in their churches. Out of the 60 total decoration committee leaders of different denominations interacted upon, 51 (85%) of them responded that they appoint regularly women members of their churches who have been shortlisted to arrange flowers in turns in the church. However, 9 (15%) of the decoration committee leaders responded that they do not appoint members as flower arrangers in the church. One of the Salvation Army officers informs that this is due to the fact that in some of the Salvation Army churches, flower arrangement is carried out on voluntary basis for instance, in the main headquarters of the Salvation Army Aizawl temple corps at Tuikual locality in Aizawl, the decoration committee do not normally appoint individual members to arrange flowers in the temple. It is carried out on a voluntary basis amongst the congregation members. As the Corps Sergeant Major of the Aizawl temple informs, on the wall of the veranda of their church an empty chart is put up to be filled up by members who volunteer to arrange flowers in the church. The chart is filled up by families or individuals who volunteers to bear the expense for flowers and arrange them on particular Sundays to commemorate their birthdays, wedding anniversaries or death anniversaries of family members. If the chart is empty for a particular Sunday, then the decoration committee members take up the responsibility of arranging flowers for the church altar. He states that this is a regular practice every year in the Salvation Army Aizawl temple. According to one Home League member of the Salvation Army, in some of the small local churches of the Salvation Army, fresh flowers are not affordable regularly so the women wing (Home League) takes up the responsibility of arranging whatever artificial flowers they have in their possession for Sunday service. In such local churches the women

wing or the Home League do not appoint flower arrangers in their churches. Similarly, in some local Baptist Church of Mizoram, according to one respondent belonging to the BKHP, due to the absence of decoration committee the Baptist *Kohhran Hmeichhe Pawl* (BKHP) or the women wing are responsible for appointing flower arrangers from among its women members. The Baptist Church of Mizoram being a minority in Aizawl city, in some of the small local Baptist churches, since fresh flowers are expensive, artificial flowers are arranged every now and then on Sundays to save money for festive occasions. So appointing flower arrangers is not a regular affair in some of the Baptist churches too. The decoration committee leaders were further enquired whether they appoint flower arrangers individually or with a partner in their churches. Out of the 60 decoration committee leaders interacted upon, 36 (60%) informs that they do appoint shortlisted members with partners. The appointed flower arrangers purchase fresh flowers if the church sanctions funds for the flowers and arranges the flowers at the church altar for Sunday service. If the church does not sanction funds for flowers appointed members arrange artificial flowers that is made available by the decoration committee leaders. While 15 (25%) informs that they appoint members as flower arrangers individually or singly. Appointed individuals are responsible for the purchase and arrangement of flowers singly for Sunday church service. Members are appointed to arrange flowers twice or thrice a year whether individually or with partners. Whereas 9 (15%) responded that they do not appoint members to arrange flowers for Sunday service, because in such churches like the Salvation Army, flower arrangement is carried out on a voluntary basis where not only individuals but families volunteer at their own expenses to arrange flowers in the church to commemorate birthdays, anniversaries and in remembrance of their loved ones who have departed. Only in the absence of volunteers, the decoration committee leaders appoint members in groups to do the task for Sunday church service.

Question on whether their churches sanction money for the purchase of fresh flowers every Sunday was posed to the totally different respondents consisting of floriculturists, the church elders, leaders of decoration committee, flower arrangers of the church and the key informants. Out of the total 343 different respondents,

majority that is, 279 (81.3%) inform that their respective churches sanction funds for the purchase of flowers for every Sunday. The amount of funds sanctioned may differ among the denominations and the different local churches, and the sanctioned amount may or may not be sufficient for the purchase of fresh flowers. The Presbyterian church which is the dominant denomination and the largest in terms of membership in the city normally sanctions money regularly for Sunday flower arrangements. The other two denominations that is, the Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army too sanctions funds but not all the local churches. On the other hand, 64 (18.7%) of the total respondents inform that their churches do not sanction funds for the purchase of fresh flowers like other local churches do. In such cases, the women wing or the decoration committee members arrange available artificial flowers alternately on Sundays. In such churches, special funds are sanctioned for fresh flowers by the church only on important occasions like conferences and festive events like Easter and Christmas.

Further question was raised to the different categories of respondents such as the floriculturists, the church elders, the leaders of the decoration committee and the flower arrangers, and the key informants as to the quantum of funds sanctioned by their respective churches if money is sanctioned for Sunday flower arrangements and presented in the following table.

Table 5.15 Quantum of money sanctioned by church for flower arrangement

Amount sanctioned on average	Floriculturists	Church Elders	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Rs 500 – 1000	23 (15%)	8 (13.3%)	10 (16.6%)	11 (18.3%)	1 (10%)
Rs 1000 – 1500	35 (22.9%)	17 (28.3%)	18 (30%)	16 (26.7%)	2 (20%)
Rs 1500 – 2000	42 (27.4%)	8 (13.3%)	7 (11.7%)	6 (10%)	3 (30%)
Rs 2000 – 2500	21 (13.8%)	7 (11.7%)	6 (10%)	8 (13.3%)	2 (20%)
Rs 2500+	12 (7.9%)	4 (6.7%)	7 (11.7%)	4 (6.7%)	1 (10%)
Does not sanction	20 (13%)	16 (26.7%)	12 (20%)	15 (25%)	1 (10%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table depicts the amount of funds sanctioned by the different churches for Sunday church flower arrangements. Out of the total 343 different categories of respondents, it is shown that 88 (25.7%) of the respondents' churches sanction funds between Rs 1000- 1500. Majority of the Presbyterian, the Baptist and the Salvation Army churches sanction funds for the purchase of fresh flowers for every Sunday. However, considering the price of fresh flowers in modern market which is expensive, the amount sanctioned by 25.7% of the churches may not be sufficient for the purchase of fresh flowers. 66 (19.2%) of the respondents' churches of different denominations sanction Rs 1500 -2000 per Sunday for the purpose of flower arrangement at the church's sacred space. One of the floriculturists informs that the amount may or may not suffice for the purchase of flowers, so much so that if needed, the appointed members of these churches may willingly contribute the required amount. While 53 (15.4%) of the total respondents' churches sanction Rs 500- 1000 per Sunday for flower arrangement at the church altar. Considering the market price of fresh flowers the sanctioned amount is less and not sufficient to purchase the required number of flowers. According to one flower arranger interviewed, in such a case, the appointed flower arrangers would have to add their individual money to purchase the flowers. She further informs that the appointed

flower arrangers who are appointed singly or with partners do not hesitate to contribute extra money for the purchase of flowers when their turn to arrange flowers comes. Flower arrangers willingly add their personal money believing that such an act is their personal ministry for God, contributing for the glory of God. Meanwhile, 44 (12.9%) of the respondents' churches sanction funds between Rs 2000-2500 every Sunday for flowers. The respondents inform that the amount of funds sanctioned may be sufficient to purchase flowers for regular Sunday church service, and the appointed flower arrangers may not contribute their personal money if they do not wish to, but they can contribute if they want the flower arrangement to be special and beautiful. While a small percentage that is 8.1% (28) of the different churches sanction above Rs 2500 for Sunday church flowers. The sanctioned amount is adequate to purchase flowers even if the appointed flower arrangers do not wish to spend extra money on the flowers. These churches are willing to spend money on flowers to adorn the church's sacred space to add beauty and good ambience on Sunday church service. On the other hand, 64 (18.7%) of the different churches do not sanction money for Sunday flowers. The respondents state that their churches rely on artificial flowers that are in their possession and arrange them alternately on Sundays to adorn the church altar. They further inform that the decoration committee or the women wing of these churches do not leave the flower stands bare and empty, which would look dull without some vivid colours of at least artificial flowers. Fresh flowers being expensive is not affordable to be purchased regularly every Sunday for small churches, they have to resort to arranging artificial flowers on Sundays. It is discernible that in the urban area Christian churches consisting of different denominations are willing to spend funds for flowers and due importance is given to flower arrangement at the altar of the church. According to one of the church elders, in modern churches in rural as well as urban areas, flower stands are very much a part of the altar that absence of floral arrangement looks odd and bare and affects the church atmosphere to a great extent on Sunday service.

The amount of money sanctioned by the different churches of the respondents are not adequate in most cases to beautifully arrange flowers in the church. Thus, question was posed to the floriculturists, the decoration committee leaders, the flower

arrangers and the key informants on whether the money sanctioned by the church for flowers is adequate to purchase required number of flowers for arrangement, and presented in the following table.

Table 5.16 Adequacy of sanctioned money to arrange flowers

Adequacy of sanctioned money	Floriculturists	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Yes	66 (43.1%)	15 (25%)	8 (13.3%)	1 (10%)
No	87 (56.9%)	45(75%)	52 (86.7%)	9 (90%)
Total	153 (100%)	60(100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The table reveals the opinion of the respondents on the adequacy of sanctioned funds to purchase and arrange flowers in the church. From the table we know that out of the total 283 respondents consisting of the floriculturists, decoration committee leaders, flower arrangers and the key informants, 193 (68.1%) responds negatively saying the money sanctioned by the church for Sunday flowers is not adequate. The respondents feel that the amount sanctioned is too less to buy expensive flowers. In almost all the churches, there exists two flower stands near the pulpit on which two floral arrangements adorn the space. The sanctioned money is not sufficient as informed by them when the respondents' turn to arrange flowers in the church comes. The appointed flower arrangers used to contribute the money with their partners if they would like their handiwork to look special and exquisite. While 90 (31.9%) of the respondents feel that the sanctioned amount of money is adequate to purchase fresh flowers. These respondents feel that the money sanctioned is able to purchase the flowers needed to beautifully arrange them without having to contribute extra money by the flower arrangers. However, according to one of the flower arrangers, depending upon the wish of the appointed flower arrangers, adding extra money from their end to purchase more expensive flowers to make their arrangement look impressive and special is also often willingly done by them.

Question on what action is taken if the sanctioned money is not adequate to purchase flowers for Sunday church service was further posed to the respondents consisting of the floriculturists, the leaders of decoration committee, flower arrangers and key informants and presented in the following table.

Table 5.17 Action taken for Expenditure Shortfall

Action taken	Floriculturists	Decoration Committee	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Personal money added	23 (15%)	18 (30%)	19 (31.7%)	2 (20%)
Partners contribute the rest	63 (41.2%)	19 (31.7%)	27 (45%)	7 (70%)
Additional money requested	1(.7%)	8 (13.3%)	6 (10%)	0
Sanctioned money is adequate	66 (43.1%)	15 (25%)	8 (13.3%)	1 (10%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	60(100%)	10 (100%)

The table illustrates the action taken by the respondents when the money sanctioned by the church for Sunday flowers is not adequate. Out of the total 283 respondents, 116 (40.9%) of them resort to contributing the rest of the required money with their partners when the sanctioned amount of fund for fresh flowers is not adequate. For a normal mass arrangement, appointed flower arrangers normally spent Rs 500 – Rs 1000 extra besides the sanctioned amount. However, if the flower arrangers aim to arrange a special and impressive one, they spend more than Rs 1000 extra for flowers. Many of the appointed flower arrangers of the church are willing to spend extra money believing it is one of the ways they can serve and glorify God though it may seem trivial to people. The flower arrangers i– they are appointed with a partner to arrange flowers for one Sunday church service would definitely contribute and

share the extra money spent for flowers. Another 62 (21.9%) of the respondents who are appointed singly or individually as flower arrangers normally add their personal money when their turn to arrange flowers comes, because the sanctioned fund for flowers is inadequate to create two mass arrangements on both sides of the church altar. They inform that individuals willingly spent from their own pocket besides the sanctioned amount and pay for the required number of flowers for a Sunday service. Church members who would be able willing to be appointed as flower arrangers are usually the ones selected to serve as flower arrangers of the church. Meanwhile 15 (5.3%) of the respondents inform that they request additional money from the concerned committee that is, the decoration committee when the sanctioned money is inadequate. Requesting additional money besides the sanctioned amount is not a regular practice of the members who are appointed to arrange flowers. One of the floriculturists informs that members of the congregation prefer to contribute from their own pocket if the sanctioned fund is not sufficient for a regular Sunday service. On the other hand, 90 (31.9%) of the respondents inform that the sanctioned money for flowers is adequate, so the flower arrangers are able to purchase fresh flowers without contributing extra money. The members of those different churches who sanctions between Rs 1500 – Rs 2500+ are mostly the ones who inform that the sanctioned fund for flowers is sufficient and adequate and the flower arrangers need not contribute extra money. Further, question on the willingness to spend extra money besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers was posed to the floriculturists, the decoration committee leaders, flower arrangers and key informants. Out of the total 283 of the different respondents, majority that is, 245 (86.6%) of the informants respond that they are willing to spend extra money for the purchase of flowers when their turn comes. Majority of the respondents who are appointed to arrange flowers in the church are ready to contribute individually or with their partners extra money when the sanctioned fund for fresh flowers is inadequate. These appointees believe that it is an obligation on their part to spend a little extra as a way of serving God. They feel that it is not a burden since they are appointed only once or twice a year to arrange flowers. Whereas 38 (13.4%) of the respondents inform that they are not ready to spend extra money for flowers when their turn comes. They try not to purchase flowers beyond the budget or the sanctioned amount saving their personal

money. If the sanctioned amount is high, the flower arrangers need not spend more than the sanctioned amount. Out of the 60 flower arrangers interviewed, 52 (86.7%) of the respondents inform that it is not a burden on their part to be appointed as flower arranger for their particular churches. Indeed, they are happy to be appointed because they consider it as their personal ministry, showing their devotion and love for God and they feel it is a beautiful way of serving God and glorify Him. Majority of them are willing to spend and contribute extra money for the purchase of church flowers. For 13.3% (8) of the flower arrangers appointed, it is a burden to carry out the required task, for some people purchasing the right kind of flowers and the required number of flowers is a difficult job and further if they lack the skill of arranging flowers, it becomes a tough problem for the appointees.

Further question on whether the church should continue to sanction money for Sunday church flowers was posed to the all the different categories of respondents such as the floriculturists, the church elders, the leaders of decoration committee, the flower arrangers of the church and the key informants. Out of the total 343 respondents interviewed, 301 (87.8%) consisting of the majority opine that the church should continue to have a separate budget and sanction money for Sunday church flower arrangement. This indicates the level of importance floral arrangement at the church's sacred altar every Sunday has gained in the hearts of the congregation members of the different denominations. Not only the church members but the church elders and officers who are in positions of authority over the church's administration and ministry, are the ones who support the presence of flower arrangement and are open to the sanctioning of specific sum of money for Sunday church flowers. The respondents place great importance to flower arrangements adorning the church's sacred space and they believe that the lovely and vivid creations glorify the creator of all things, so placing arranged flowers on both sides of the altar is a necessity. The respondents also believe that floral arrangement signifies a visual representation of the Creator's beautiful creations, and enhance members worship experience creating a beautiful ambience within the church. Thus, majority of the respondents opine that the church should continue to sanction money for the purchase of fresh flowers for Sunday church service so that the church does

not put too much burden on the appointed flower arrangers. Out of the total respondents, on the other hand, 42 (12.2%) have a different opinion and thinks that the church should not continue to sanction money for church flowers. For such respondents, flowers do not have much meaning and importance for the church. For them the church can function without the presence of flowers at the altar and worship of God is possible without flowers adorning the church.

The church elders and officers of the Salvation Army church gives their views and opinions on the issue whether the church should continue to sanction money for the Sunday flower arrangement. The narratives of the church elders and officers of the different denominations namely, the Presbyterian church, the Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army church have been collected on the issue.

Those church leaders who support sanctioning of money for fresh flowers for Sunday church service share their opinions on the issue.

A church elder, aged 51, who is the secretary of the College Veng Presbyterian Church, College Veng locality shares his view-

Pathian Ni a pangpar khawi thin hian ni bik a nihna a lan tir a. Pathian Biak in a chei mawi a, Kohhran rawngbawlina peng pawimawh tak anih avangin pangpar khawi tur leina hi kohhranin a tum zel hi a tha ka ti.

The presence of floral arrangement on Sunday in the church signifies that it is a special day of worship. It adorns the church beautifully, and flower arrangement is an important act of church ministry, so I think the church should continue to sanction money for the purchase of flowers.

A church elder aged 72, belonging to the Baptist Church of Republic Vengthlang locality opines-

Pangpar leina man pawisa Kohhranin a tum hi mipui thawhkhawm vek a ni a. Pangpar khawi mawi tur leina hi chu kohhranin a tum hi a awm reng ani.

The money sanctioned by the church comes from the donation given by the members. It is the duty of the church to sanction money for the purchase of flowers.

A Corp secretary aged 67, who belongs to the Salvation Army church of Tuikual North locality also narrates-

Kohhranin decoration committee a din chuan an mawhphurhna hlen chhuah nan pangpar khawi tur leina a tum ngei a tul ani.

The church forms a decoration committee, so it is necessary on the part of the church to sanction funds to the committee to carry out the task of flower arrangement.

While other church elders and officers have different views stressing on the expensiveness of fresh flowers and that flower arrangement should be carried out on a voluntary basis. Some of the leaders of the different churches take a standpoint emphasizing on the use of artificial flowers for arrangement to save money and which are re-usable.

Question on whether the church respond well to the decoration committee's request for fund for decoration purposes on important festivals like Christmas, New Year, Good Friday, Easter and occasional conferences and Meets was posed to all the different categories of respondents namely the floriculturists, the church leaders, the decoration committee leaders, the flower arrangers and the key informants. Out of the total 343 respondents, majority of the respondents that is, 331 (96.6%) responded that their different churches respond well and sanctions the estimated budget requirement made by the decoration committee for flowers and other necessities on festive occasions and conferences for decoration purposes. The different respondents believe that the different denomination churches are open and willing to sanction more fund on such important festivals and pastorate conferences for flowers and other decorative themes and ideas prepared and estimated by the decoration committee members. A leader of the decoration committee of a Presbyterian church narrates that on such festive occasions like Christmas the church surrounding and the interior of the church are decorated with floral wreaths and Christmas theme flowers

and also other Christmas ornaments adorn the walls of the church. Christmas tree decorated with beautiful ornaments and Christmas flowers adorn the front porch of the Church. She further narrates that flower arrangement at the altar too is usually large in size with special floral design suited for the festive occasion. Expenses for the decoration on Christmas is usually high and the church is willing to spend money to light up the spirit of Christmas amongst the congregation members through the decoration. Such decorations bring joy and happiness and create a beautiful ambience within the church premises. Another leader of decoration committee belonging to a Baptist church informs that on Good Friday and Easter too, the church sanctions more money for flowers since floral arrangements on these festive days are normally elegant and flowers used are symbolic of the occasions. One of the flower arrangers belonging to a Presbyterian church narrates that on Easter Sunday, some Presbyterian churches in Aizawl city as a way of signifying and celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, organize a voluntary display of flower arrangement where interested women members at their own expense buy and arrange flowers of their choice on vases and bring them to the church to be displayed for the whole day. The decoration committee members who are the main organisers take care and organize neatly the donated arranged flowers on the tables and display different designs of floral arrangements to mark the event. She further adds that this is not however, practiced by all the Presbyterian churches. On the other hand, a negligible number of respondents that is, 12 (3.4%) responded negatively believing that their churches do not respond well to the decoration committee's request for more funds for decoration on festive occasions and conferences.

The church elders and leaders of the decoration committee were enquired of their personal feelings and views about the sanctioning of more funds by the church committee at the time of festive occasions and important conferences.

A woman secretary aged 52, of the decoration committee belonging to the Presbyterian church of Chawlhmun locality shares her view-

*Hunpuia Biak In hmunhma chei nan leh pangpar man senso kohhran
puiin hun dang aia a pe chhuak tam hi a hautak ka ti lo. Kum khatah*

vawi li vel chauh Kristian te hunpui kan hmang a. Hunpui kan hlut zia leh ngaihhlut zia a tarlang.

I do not think it is a burden on the part of the church to sanction more funds for decoration on Christian festive occasions. Christians celebrate only four festivals a year. This indicates how the church members value the festivals and gives much importance to the special occasions.

A woman aged 50 who is the chairman of the decoration committee of the Salvation Army church at Venghnuai locality too opines-

Hunpui ah hi chuan Biak In leh a vel theihtawpa a hlutna leh pawimawhna tarlang thei tura chei mawi hi a tha ka ti. Sum senso lo tam deuh pawh ni se a awm ka ti.

On important festivals extra effort should be put in beautifying the church and its surroundings with flowers and other items to reflect the significance and value of the festivals. I feel that spending more fund is a necessity on such festivals.

A church elder, aged 51 who is the secretary of the Presbyterian church, College Veng locality narrates his opinion-

Hunpui leh inkhawmpuia pangpar khawi hian kan hun hman kan dah pawimawh tih a lantir a. Kan hun hman kha ati ropui zual bawk a, a pangai aia khawi buk zel a tha ka ti.

Flowers specially arranged on festive occasions and conferences makes these important days more significant and memorable. Flowers arranged on the festive occasions should always be special and prominent to mark the event.

A Salvation Army officer, aged 71 of Ramhlun North locality also opines-

Hunpui hi chu uar takin kan hmang tur ani. Biak Ina pangpar khawi tur pawh mawi tak ani tur ani, kohhranin a senso a tum tur ani.

Festive occasions are special and should be celebrated as grand as possible. Flower arrangement should also be special and beautiful, the church should therefore sanction more funds.

The decoration committee or in some churches known as *pangpar* (flower) committee of different denomination churches function under the church as a sub-committee of the church and as a sub-committee under the women wing of churches. The decoration committee is funded by the church committee as per requirement. The committee's function is beautifying the church surrounding, landscaping the church area, planting flowers and foliage plants to add beauty to the church compound. Maintaining and caring of the potted flowers and potted plants is in the hands of the decoration committee members. Appointing members to arrange flowers alternately every Sunday is the task of the committee in every church. Decorating the church surrounding on festive occasions like Christmas and New Year is also the task of decoration committee.

The floriculturists, the leaders of decoration committee, the flower arrangers and the florist association leaders as key informants were asked to share their opinion on the beautification and landscaping of their respective churches surrounding area. The respondents shared their different views and ideas and their opinions on the issue as follows-

A floriculturist aged 36, a resident of Bethlehem Veng (locality) in Aizawl shares her view on the beautification of church surrounding-

Pangpar leh hnah mawi phun te hian Biak In a ti lang mawi a, inkhawm te a ti nuam a, rilru a ti thaw veng thin. Hmuh an nuam a, thinrim te a tireh vek zel thei ani.

Landscaping of the church surrounding with flowers and plants makes the church beautiful, makes the worship service pleasant and refreshes the mind. They are a lovely sight so much so that they can even calm frustration and change one's mood.

Another floriculturist aged 47, a resident of Dawrpui Vengthar (locality) shares her opinion-

Biak In tuala pangpar leh hnah mawi phun hi tha ka ti lutuk. Biak In hmunhma a ti mawi a, min ti hahdam sawng sawng thei. Rilru hahna te min ti dam sawng sawng thin.

I fully support planting flowers and foliage plants on the church surrounding. It beautifies the church area and the lovely flowers makes one feel good and relaxed. They can pacify troubled feelings and worries too.

The leaders of decoration committee of different churches too put forth their views on the landscaping of church area.

A lady aged 56, who is the secretary of the decoration committee of the Baptist church in Mission Vengthlang locality put forth her opinion as follows-

Pangpar leh hnah mawi phun hian Biak In leh a vel a chei mawi a. Ka hmuh dan phei chuan decoration committee a nuho te a phuar khawm tha in an in lungrual phah ka ti.

Planting flowers and plants beautify the church surrounding. My personal view is that working together regularly planting flowers and other plants within the church area creates a sense of unity and solidarity amongst the women members of the decoration committee.

Chairman of the decoration committee of the Salvation Army church of Venghnuai locality who is aged 50 shares her view-

Pangpar mawi tak tak leh hnah mawi te Biak In tual han luh a hmuh tur lo awm hian rilru a ti hlima inkhawm pawh min ti phur thin.

The presence of beautiful flowers and plants within the church compound creates a sense of happiness and positive mood, attending the church service too is enjoyable.

The flower arrangers of the different churches too shared their opinions and perspectives on the current landscaping and beautification of the church surroundings. A flower arranger aged 50, a resident of Republic Veng (locality) belonging to the Presbyterian church shares her view-

Biak In hmunhma pangpar phun mawi hi a tha ka ti. Pangpar hmuh hian nun a ti hlim em em a, Pathian engkim siamtu kan chawimawina hmanrua ani.

I support planting flowers and foliage plants within the church surrounding. Flowers with their vivid blooms creates a deep sense of joy and happiness, and further flowers on the church area glorify God, the creator of all things.

Another flower arranger aged 36, a resident of Vaivakawn locality belonging to the Salvation Army church too shares her viewpoint-

Ka mimal ngaihnanah chuan Biak In hmunhma vel theihtawpa pangpar te kan phun mawi hi Pathian hnena lawmthu kan sawina hmanrua angah ka ngai a. Amah biakna hmunhma felfai leh mawi taka chei hi a phu reng ani.

Personally, I think our effort in beautifying the church surrounding with flowers is a way of thanking God and showing our appreciation to Him. The place of worship should be kept clean and beautiful as it deserves the best.

The key informants consisting of the NGOs such as the leaders of the florist associations and Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo Women Organization too shared their standpoint on the beautification and landscaping of church surrounding.

The general secretary of Mizoram Florist Association aged 57, a resident of Chaltlang Dawr kawn locality shares her view-

Biak In kawttuala pangpar phun hi a tha ka ti. Biak In hmunhma a ti nuam a, pangpar leh hnah hring hmuh tur a lo awm hian Biak In a chei.

I support landscaping the church surrounding with flowering plants. It makes the church area look pleasant and the presence of flowers and green plants beautifies the church.

The treasurer of Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA) another florist association who is aged 56 and a resident of Dawrpui Vengthlang locality opines-

Pangpar leh hnah hring Biak In kawta phun mawi hi hmuh a nuam em em a. Hmunhma chei loh khawro tawp ai chuan a tha ka ti.

Planting flowers and green plants within the church surrounding looks pleasing and beautiful. It is far better than a bare undecorated space.

The general secretary of Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society who is 47 years old and a resident of Chaltlang Veng (locality) too shares her viewpoint-

Biak in hmunhma vel pangpar leh hnah hring phun mawi hi a tha ka ti a, rilru an ti hlim.

Planting flowers and green foliage on the church surrounding beautifies the building and I support the landscaping, they generate a deep sense of joy.

A 77-year-old, vice president of the NGO Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) a resident of Chaltlang Dingdi Veng (locality) too voiced her opinion-

Biak In kawta pangpar kan phun thin hi tha ka ti. Biak In hmunhma chei chu a mawi a, pangpar leh hnah hring hmuh tur awm hi min ti hahdam thei thin.

I appreciate planting of flowers and green plants within the church surrounding. The presence of flowers and plants create a beautiful scene and create a relaxed ambience.

The assistant secretary of MHIP, aged 61, a resident of Upper Republic veng (locality) shares her opinion-

Biak In hmunhma pangpar leh hnah mawi tea chei mawi hi pawimawh ka ti lutuk. Kan Pathian kan biakna hmun thianghlim ani a, theihtawpa kan chei mawi hi a tul ka ti.

I think it is important to plant flowers and other green foliage within the church area. It is our sacred and holy place where we worship God, so we must do our best to make the church look beautiful.

While majority of the respondents support the landscaping of their respective churches which beautifies the church surroundings, some of the leaders of the decoration committee feel that it creates a problem for those members who are responsible for maintenance, because flowering plants and foliage plants need care and watering and as such problem arises during the dry season. According to one decoration committee leader, in some churches wage labourers are hired to do the necessary task of regular watering and care of the potted plants and flowers.

The appointed flower arrangers of the church were further enquired if they earn income by decorating venues with flowers for events like weddings, birthdays, anniversaries and other important government functions. Out of the 60 flower arrangers interacted upon, 19 (31.7%) responded that they do earn a bit of income as a venue decorator for photo back drop and arranging flowers for weddings, birthdays and other social events. Flower arrangers if they are professional florists skilled in the art earn income depending on the kind of decoration and the design of floral arrangement the event demands. One of the flower arrangers informs that in the Mizo society, pre-wedding bride price payment and distribution is now a huge affair, involving huge expenditure on flowers be it fresh or artificial the expenses borne by the bride-to-be family, and wedding reception venue is also normally decorated lavishly in some cases, involving huge number and variety of flowers, the expense which is borne by the groom's family. Flower arrangers who are experts in their profession are employed chalking out the budget, kind of decoration, the kind of floral arrangement with individuals who hire them in advance. The respondents also

informs that event decorating however is not a regular job, because for instance weddings depend on the season and birthdays and anniversaries occur only once a year. However, professional flower arrangers do get jobs frequently and earn income from decorating social events venue. On the other hand, 41 (68.3%) of the flower arrangers of the church are not professional and as such do not earn income through event planning. The majority of the flower arrangers are church members who are shortlisted to be appointed as flower arrangers not because they are experts and have the skill to arrange flowers, they are appointed to arrange flowers for Sunday church service as a gesture of their personal ministry. Many of them though appointed to arrange flowers seek help from friends and professionals when their turn comes.

Further, question was posed to the 19 (31.7%) flower arrangers who earn income by decorating events whether event planning and arranging flowers for different events generate good income for florists. Out of the 19 flower arrangers who responded, 13 (68.4%) informs that they think arranging flowers and planning for events generate good income for those involved in the business. As professional florists, they are able to earn good income through their skill at floral designing and event planning. They inform that any kind of event, be it a wedding or a birthday or a small gathering involves the presence of flowers in different forms. Flowers are an indispensable part of any celebration and social event. Floral designing involves a good amount of labour and thus the cost of designing and arranging is not cheap. Thus, the art of floral arrangement generates good amount of income for the florists. However, 6 (31.6%) of the flower arrangers argue that the business of floral designing and event planning for social events do not generate good income and cannot be relied upon by families as a main source of income. Such a business is based on the season (especially weddings) and if the florists are not regularly hired for decorative purposes, the floral designers will have long lean period in their line of business. In such a case, the business activity will not generate much income for the florists.

An open -ended question was posed to the flower arrangers on whether flower arranging for events has become viable for self-employment in our society. They shared their ideas and viewpoints on the issue.

A 65- year- old flower arranger who is a resident of Khatla locality belonging to the Presbyterian church opines-

Pangpar khawi thiam mi engemaw zat an eizawna hna bansanin an tuina pangpar khawia eizawna kawng zawh ka hre nual mai. Sumah harsatna an tawh awm ka hre lo. Chuvangin, thil tih khawmna leh in hmuh khawmnaa pangpar khawi hi mahnia sum lakluhna tha tak a niin ka hria.

I know a few women who gave up their jobs to pursue their passion of event decorating and arranging flowers. I hardly see any of them facing financial constraints. I believe flower arranging for different events has become viable for self-employment.

A male flower arranger aged 32, who is a professional florist and a resident of Ramhlun South locality who belongs to the Baptist Church too shares his view-

Pangpar khawi hi sum lakluhna tha tak ni tawh e. Amaherawh chu, tuichilh tak takna leh tumruhna a awm loh a, pangpar chinchang hre lo leh khawi dan hre lo tan chuan eizawn nan a tlak loh a. Ei zawnnan leh sum lakluh nana hmang tur chuan tuipui tak tak leh inpekna a pawimawh.

Flower arranging is viable for self-employment. However, if one does not have much interest and dedication, or even understand flowers and how to arrange them, I don't think it is viable for generating income. But if one has great interest in flowers and is enthusiastic about arranging them with much dedication, then it is viable for self-employment.

A flower arranger in the church and an event decorator, aged 44 of Ramhlun South locality belonging to the Salvation Army church shares her idea-

Sum dehchhuahna tha tak niin ka hria. Mihring kan changkang chho zela pangpar kan ngaihlu tial tial a, tin, thiltih pui tham tak tak

hmunhma chei ngai a awm zel dawn a. Pangpar khawia che chhuak tan sum lakluhna tha tak ani.

I believe it is a good source of income. With human advancement in every field, we tend to put value on flowers more and more, moreover, big events requiring floral decoration will increasingly occur. It has become viable for self-employment.

1.7 Social events

Social events are assemblies of individuals for enjoyment, to commemorate, or to show support for a cause. Social events are significant as humans are inherently social beings who seek meaningful connections. Social events unite individuals, establishing a sense of belonging within a group. A social event is a gathering where individuals assemble to socialise, connect, celebrate, or participate in shared activities. These gatherings are typically arranged to provide individuals or groups with opportunities to connect, converse, and enjoy one another's company. Social events yield beneficial outcomes. A significant part of a social event is the establishment of meaningful connections and new relationships. An event enhances people's mood, fosters opportunities for significant dialogue, and cultivates a sense of community among participants (<https://blog.eventsmart.com/2023/11/08/types-of-social-events/>).

Flowers are frequently employed as decorative essentials in social events to enhance ambiance, augment beauty, and symbolise specific emotions thereby making the event special and joyful. Flowers are commonly observed at weddings, parties, funerals, government events and corporate events with floral gifts such as bouquets and garlands, flowers arranged as centrepieces, and floral arch displays utilised to establish mood and convey sentiments like love, appreciation, or remembrance, contingent upon the selected kind of flower.

In the Mizo social context, events and social functions are of many kinds ranging from birthdays, weddings, anniversaries to educational events, to political gatherings, business events and government formal functions. In each of such events and gatherings flowers form an integral part of the events. In formal gatherings having

chief guests and other dignitaries, gifting of floral garlands and bouquets to chief guest, guest of honour are becoming popular and venues and stages of such big events and gatherings are decorated with flower arches to create a beautiful and relaxed ambience for the participants.

Question on whether gifting of flower garlands and bouquets to chief guests, guest of honour and dignitaries on social functions are appropriate was posed to the floriculturists, the flower arrangers and the key informants, and presented in the following table.

Table 5. 18 Gifting of floral garlands and bouquets to Dignitaries.

Gifting of floral garland and bouquet	Floriculturists	Flower Arrangers	Key Informants
	Fr (%)	Fr (%)	Fr (%)
Yes	139 (90.8%)	52 (86.7%)	9 (90%)
No	14 (9.2%)	8 (13.3%)	1 (10%)
Total	153 (100%)	60 (100%)	10 (100%)

The above table illustrates if gifting of floral garland and bouquet to chief guest, guest of honour and dignitaries in social functions is appropriate. Out of the 223 total respondents, 200 (89.7%) consisting of the majority opine that it is appropriate to gift garland and bouquet to chief guest, guest of honour and dignitaries in social functions. In any formal events chief guests grace the function to mark the event special and memorable. One of the key informants says, the chief guest and the dignitaries may not be females but in contemporary social events, males are also offered and gifted garlands and bouquet of flowers or basket of flowers too to show appreciation and gratitude for gracing the event. One of the respondents shares that this act on the part of the organisers depicts the significance flowers have gained as symbolic gifts to signify gratitude and thankfulness. Men too on the receiving end in such cases happily accept the floral gifts and deem it appropriate too. While a few of the respondents that is 23 (10.3%) has the opposite view and thinks it inappropriate

to gift garland and floral bouquet to chief guest, guest of honour or dignitaries experience social events. The respondents feel that floral gifts are inappropriate for male chief guest, male guest of honour or male dignitaries. For them, other gifts more appropriate should be given to the male dignitaries in formal events to show gratitude and appreciation.

Question was posed to the floriculturists, flower arrangers and key informants on whether floral decorations in social events and political gatherings are extra expenditures. Out of the total 223 respondents, 105 (47%) responded positively which indicates that they think that floral decorations in social events and political gatherings are extra expenditures on the part of the organisers. They are extra expenditures according to them because fresh flowers are expensive and to adorn the stage of the venue beautifully, a lot of flowers are needed which incur a lot of expenditures for a day's programme. The participants where majority are males in political gatherings do not appreciate the beauty of the flowers and do not understand the underlying symbols. While 118 (53%) of the respondents opine that floral decorations in social events and political gatherings are not extra expenditures on the part of the event organisers. Event decorators and expert floral arrangers are hired to decorate the stage of the venue to create a beautiful atmosphere for the event. The respondents share their view saying a bare and undecorated stage would look odd and empty so, flowers beautify the stage creating a relaxed ambience and an opportunity for the participants to enjoy the aesthetic scene. The respondents support the existence of floral decorations in political gatherings and believe that they are not extra or additional expenditures. The key informants such as the leaders of florist association support floral decoration of event venues and one of the leaders of the Mizoram Florist Association shares her viewpoint that they will continue to promote the use of flowers in events and celebrations. For many florists selling cut flowers these big events and gatherings are an opportunity to sell and promote their cut flowers. Floriculturists too have opportunity to sell their products which serve as decorative items in big events.

Question was again posed to the floriculturists, the flower arrangers and the key informants on whether they think government offices, hotels, restaurants and

institutions are big consumers of cut flowers and green foliage plants. Out of the 223 respondents interacted upon 199 (89.2%) responded positively believing that government offices, hotels, restaurants and big institutions are big consumers of flowers and foliage plants. One of the floriculturists informs that floriculturists supply their annual flowering plants and foliage plants to such institutions and government offices for the landscaping of their office buildings. She further adds that hotels and restaurants are consumers of cut flowers, where flowers are arranged in big vases in the hotel lobbies and flowers adorn restaurants and cafes in the city. Such big institutions and offices regularly purchase flower seedlings and flower plants to beautify their office surroundings, changing and planting flowers according to their season. While 24 (10.8%) of the respondents opine that government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions are not big consumers of flowers and foliage plants. They believe that such offices and institutions do purchase flowering plants but they are not frequent and big consumers. Thus, 89.2% of the respondents believe that they boost floriculture business in the state. The respondents believe that big government offices and educational institutions, picnic spots and resorts in the city are big consumers of flower seedlings and foliage plants. They also inform that landscaping of office surrounding and institution, picnic spots and resorts is a popular trend and for this, seasonal flowers are frequently used and planted to beautify office lawns and front yard, and picnic resorts. Since they are seasonal flowers, as their blooming season ends, new variety of seasonal flowers needs to be planted and the cycle goes on. Another floriculturists opines that this boost the floriculture business for those who are in the business of germinating seasonal flower seeds, and selling flower plant seedlings. She also adds that perennial flowers too are often included and propagated houseplants and foliage plants too are used as a part of the landscaping of office buildings and institutions, and also picnic spots and resorts. Hotels and restaurants are consumers of cut flowers and other floriculture goods. The rest of the respondents that is 10.8% of them do not think government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions boost floriculture business. They believe they are not big enough customers to boost floriculture business.

An open-ended question was posed to the floriculturists, flower arrangers and the key informants on their vision for the floriculture industry in Mizoram ten (10) years from now. The respondents put forth their standpoint and views on the issue as follows-

A 90 -year -old floriculturist and a resident of Mission Venglai locality who is still very much active in her business shares her viewpoint on the issue-

Tun atanga kum sawmah chuan pangpar ching ten hma kan sawn tawh hle ang. Mi ram kan ngai tawh lo ang. Sumdawna chi khat ani a, hlawhtling tur chuan taimak a ngai a, kan taimak chuan pangpar zawrh hi a hlawhtling viau tawh ang.

Ten years from now floriculturists in our state would have developed and progressed immensely. We wouldn't desire floriculture goods of other countries any longer. Floriculture is a business; it requires hard work. If we work hard, floriculture business will thrive and will be successful.

Another floriculturist aged 60, a resident of Bungkawn Venglai locality too shares her vision on the issue-

Tun atanga kum sawmah chuan pangpar kan tih pun loh hi chu hralh loh te tum zel ila, kan tih pun theih hi chu ti pung zel ila. Tichuan, kan ramah pawisa hi lut hnem zawk tawh anga chhuak aiin lut hi tam thei zawk anga, pangpar zawrh hi eizawna tha a ni chho zel ang.

Ten years from now, if we abstain from selling imported propagated goods and increasingly propagate those flowers and plants which are possible to propagate and sell them. This way money will not flow outside the state instead it will circulate within the state and floriculture will increasingly become a thriving business.

Another young floriculturist aged 36, a resident of Bethlehem Veng locality shares her vision-

Tun atanga kum sawmah chuan pangpar chin leh hralh hi a hlawk tawh ngawt ang. Hmahruaitu tha deuh awmin awmze neiin han duang chhuak se, zin veivak pawh kan hip teuhin ka ring. International border-a awm kan nihna hi chhawr tangkai ila, kan hlawkpui ngawt ang. Pangpar chin leh hralh hi kan hlut dawn chauh ani.

Ten years from now floriculture business would be a successful one. With the presence of a good leader and careful planning in floriculture, we would attract tourists from all over. If we take advantage of our international borders, it would be a thriving business. We will increasingly value floriculture business.

The flower arrangers of the church are also enquired of their viewpoints on their vision for the floriculture industry in Mizoram. A flower arranger aged 71 of Chanmari locality, belonging to the Presbyterian church shares her thoughts on the issue-

Tun atanga kum sawmah chuan ka rin dan leh beisei dan chuan pangparah kan in todelh tawh ang. Ram dang atanga lakluh a tlem tawh anga, keimahnin pangpar kan thar ve nasa tawh ang. Ka beisei dan chuan kan ram atang hian kan thawn chhuak ve tawh zawk ang sawrkar tanpuina in.

Ten years from now, I believe and hope that we would be more self-sufficient in flowers. With less import from other parts of the country we would be producing more and propagating more flowers ourselves. I believe we would be able to export floriculture goods with help from the government.

A flower arranger, who is 57 years old, a resident of Upper Republic locality belonging to the Baptist church shares her view-

Pangpar chin leh zawrh hi nasa takin a thang chho in ka ring kum sawm a ral leh chuan. Pangpar mamawhna a sang tawh em a kawng hrang hrangin.

Floriculture business will grow immensely and would be more developed in the next ten years. In today's world, consumption of fresh flowers is huge with different occasions needing the use of flowers.

Another flower arranger aged 62, a resident of Tlangnuam vengthar locality shares her vision-

Tun atanga kum sawmah chuan pangpar chin leh hralh sumdawnna hi a thang nasa in pangparah kan intodelh tawhin ka ring. Keimahni thar leh tihpun ngei kan zuar anga, ram dang ami kan la lut vak vak tawh lo ang.

Floriculture business will flourish in the next ten years. We will be self-sufficient in the variety of flowers. We will grow and sell our own products and not import goods on a large scale.

The key informants consisting of NGOs such as the leaders of florist associations and Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) or the Mizo Women Organization.

The joint secretary of Mizoram Florist Association, aged 68, who is a resident of Mission Vengthlang locality shares her vision on the issue-

Pangpara sumdawnna hi hma kan sawn viau tawhin ka ring. Mahse kan pawl Mizoram Florist Association duhdan hi kan vawn tlat loh chuan phai lam atanga chah chhuah zawrh nghal hian hmun a luah zau ang. Mizorama vih pun kan thar ngei zawrh hian hun a duh rei si a, chah luh ang ang zawrh hi a hralh a lo nuam zawk si a.

I think the floriculture industry would advance a lot 10 years from now. But I am afraid if we do not hold on to our Mizoram Florist Association's prime objective, imported floriculture goods from other mainland states will dominate our floriculture industry, since such goods are easily sold, instead of Mizoram's own products which are propagations and propagations need a lot of time to be saleable.

The vice-president of *Pangpar Zuar* Association, aged 45, a resident of Dinthar Veng locality too narrates her vision-

Pangpar chin leh zawrhah hma kan sawn zel ang, changkanna in a ken tel a ni a, pangpar zuar pawh kan thahnem tulh tulh ang a, tin, pangpar zawrhna dawr te pawh a pung viau ang.

Floriculture business will flourish tremendously ten years from now, it is a part of economic development and advancement. The number of floriculturists involved in the industry will gradually increase and the number of flower shops will also increase.

The secretary of Zo Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, aged 47, a resident of Chaltlang Lily Veng too shares her view-

Tun atanga kum sawmah chuan pangpar chin leh zawrh hi kan uar zel chuan hma kan sawn nasa in ka ring. Ei zawnna atana hmang pawh an pung nasa tawh ang.

Ten years from now if floriculture as a business becomes increasingly popular, I believe it will progress tremendously. Those depending on floriculture as a livelihood will also increase much over the years.

The vice-president of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) general headquarters, aged 77, who is a resident of Chaltlang Dingdi Veng locality says-

Pangpar chin leh hralh hi sumdawnna lian tak leh pawimawh tak ani tawhin ka ring tun atanga kum sawmah chuan.

I believe floriculture business will become a big and important industry in the state ten years from now.

The treasurer of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) general headquarters, aged 72, a resident of Chaltlang Lily veng locality too shares her viewpoint-

Kum sawm a vei leh chuan pangpar ching te an thleng sang tawh ang. Mizo nu te hi taima tak kan ni a, pangpar ching te pawh hma an sawn

viau ang. Sawrkar hian pangpar chingte hi tanpui sela, tih lar sak sela, hma nasa takin an sawn ang.

Floriculture industry will advance extremely ten years from now. Mizo women are hard working so floriculturists will progress and advance. The government should give a helping hand to floriculturists and popularize their business to bring more development in the field.

The majority of the respondents believe that floriculture industry in Mizoram would have advanced and progressed much ten years from now. They feel that floriculture business would flourish and develop much more with the number of floriculturists increasing, earning income through the business engaging in self-employment. The majority of the respondents desire self-sufficiency in floricultural goods, with less import and more export with the help of the state government. They believe that the state would be self-reliant on local products with increasing development in floricultural business, because at this stage there is high demand of cut flowers and other products while the supply is less because the state is not yet self-sufficient in floriculture goods.

1.8 Overview

Flowers are significant in various cultures for their role in fostering social cohesion, bridging cultural divides, and representing faith. They serve as symbols of commitment, faithfulness, and communication, transcending language, nationality, and cultural limitations. Their significance dates back to early civilizations and Christianity.

Flowers hold symbolic significance in numerous societies, frequently employed in rituals, religious events, and festivities. Historically, flowers have been commonly used in societies because they symbolize love, emotions and spirituality in rituals and events. The Bible is a rich tapestry of symbolism and metaphor, with flowers such as the lily, a symbol of purity and beauty, the rose representing love and beauty, the crocus flower symbolizing divine grace, the almond blossom symbolizing new beginning and regeneration and the pomegranate flower representing abundance and the law. The vine and its flowers are significant in biblical iconography, as Jesus

proclaims that he is the true vine and his Father is the vine dresser. The Bible also uses floral imagery to express more extensive spiritual truths, such as the fleeting nature of human existence and the perpetual character of divine scripture. In Christian literature, flowers continue to be powerful symbols, as seen in John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress," where the Hill of Difficulty is adorned with beautiful flowers, symbolizing the beauty and encouragement provided by God even in the midst of life's trials. The Bible uses flowers as significant symbols, symbolizing beauty, impermanence, and God's magnificent creation.

Our respondents conform to the Biblical text on flowers in their dealings with floriculture goods and business. White lilies and white roses are chosen to symbolize Christ's love, resurrection and divine power and are used on Easter Sunday and on weddings, while these flowers are also used specifically to symbolize new beginning on New Year's Day.

Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

Flowers have been used as emblems in Mizo literature and poetry for centuries, symbolizing sentiments, concepts, and moral qualities. Floriography, the secret language of flowers, allows writers and poets to express emotions through non-verbal arrangements. The tradition of attributing significance to flowers dates back to earliest civilizations. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Mizo writers and poets drew inspiration from nature, land, and lamentations. They use indigenous flowers as symbols in various genres, including love songs, sentimental songs and modern Christian hymns and songs.

Mizo textiles and handloom weaving are also known for their intricate designs and vibrant colors, with different floral motifs representing nature's beauty. Traditional floral motifs such as *naya sawm par* and *arsa par* and others have continued to feature in and transcended into modern *puan* with modern version and style still valued high by older and younger generations alike. Continuity of traditional motifs and ideas is seen here. Flowers in Mizo society represent the tradition, culture, identity and indigeneity.

The vitalness of flowers on Christian festivals such as Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday in churches in Mizo society could be understood from the emphatic voice of the respondents in the field. Social construction of symbolism through cultural values, beliefs and practices are brought aloud in this study where flower is construed as a medium. Flowers symbolize deep emotions, beauty, love, sentiments, feelings, and romantic attraction towards each other. Flowers hold great significance in the hearts of Mizos that they do not bother about the cost involved in the use of flowers, no matter rich or poor, during festivities or observance of events.

Gift giving: Gift giving in the form of potted flowers and plants is deeply ingrained among the Mizos as illustrated in the study which build and strengthen relationships and bonds between close relatives and friends. Gift giving is reciprocated and exchange of floral gifts reinforces networks and establishes equilibrium in relationships which is manifested in times of *chhiatni/thatni* (day of sorrow and joy) in the Mizo society. Potted flowers and plants have also become items of *inralna* (condolence gift) instead of cash. Floral gifts are gift items in important events and occasions and used as symbols of emotions, love, friendship and extending sentiments and feelings. Exchange of gifts reinforces order and establishes social cohesion and unity. Floriculturists emphasize the importance of flower giving in expressing love, emotion, and gratitude. In Mizo society, flowers will remain a favorite gift item due to their timeless appeal, beauty, fragrance, and elegance. A single stem, bouquet, or basket of flowers can impress and evoke positive emotions.

Funerary rituals: Flowers are employed extensively at funerals to honour the deceased and provide sympathy to the grieving in the Mizo funerary practices. Though tradition is still maintained in terms of condolence gifts, the study shows that preference is also given to flowers as condolence gift in expressing sympathy and sentiments at funerals. Age-old tradition is kept intact and would not be endangered in funerary practice as evident in the study, but at the same time, flowers too, will continue to be an indispensable part of the funeral custom.

Coffins are embellished with flowers attributing significance to it as symbols of love, affection, emotions and feelings, whereby bereaved families gain inner heart's contentment and peace as a last loving gesture for the deceased.

The study also illustrates the fact that embellishment of coffin with flowers, floral gifts though, are influences of other advanced societies, they will continue to be incorporated as a part of Mizo funerary custom. The study reveals that the kind of floral decoration on the coffins and the number

of floral condolence gifts are manifestations of social status and is an indicator of the existence of social hierarchy in the society. Besides, the study also indicates that despite Young Mizo Association's (YMA) attempt to bring people on equal footing by prohibiting coffin decoration and limiting floral display for photo session, flower bouquets are becoming ever more popular as condolence gifts at funerals symbolizing love, feelings and sentiments.

Decorating graves with flowers on festive occasion symbolises love, feelings and emotion for the deceased, which in turn gives a sense of peace and inner heart's satisfaction to the surviving members.

Marriage ceremony: Use of flowers in pre-wedding rituals in the Mizo society is viewed as making the event memorable and special and significance is ascribed to them, while others perceive them as a display of wealth and superiority, a manifestation of social hierarchy.

Usage of flowers in Mizo church matrimonial event and in wedding receptions are lavish and trendy symbolizing love and emotion. The Mizos in keeping up with the modern usage of flowers are more than willing to spend on flowers for their children's wedding to make the event memorable and momentous, but desires to keep the decorations at the wedding reception moderate but elegant.

The study also reveals the fact that the usage of flowers and other accessories in matrimonial event is an indicator and a manifestation of the social and financial status of the families involved.

While for some it is a display of elitism and superiority. Floral designing in connection with Mizo matrimonial event, bridal cars embellished with flowers emulated from other cultures continue to be incorporated with the Mizo culture on matrimony.

Church Occasions: Churches tend to have a decoration committee/*pangpar* (flower) committee responsible for the upkeep of flower arrangement on Sundays, festivals and conferences, who also maintain and care for the potted plants and potted flowers of the church too and yet in others the responsibility of decoration is seen to be taken up by the women wing of their respective churches. Members including women willingly agree to the task and fulfill the responsibility considering the task as their personal ministry to God. While the significance of flowers in Church events and festivities continues to be recognized some church elders, if not many, tend to raise objections to lavish expenditure and do expect that specific sanction or budgetary provisions be made in connection with expenditure on flowers. While modernity is accepted recognizing its consequent limitations, tradition is held high.

Decoration committee of churches work collectively through *hnatlang* (social work) to beautify the church premises as apparent in the study, bringing solidarity and are united for a common cause. Flowers are regarded as a reflection of God's glory. Churches are willing to bear the expenses on flowering plants to beautify the surrounding area of the church building. Budget estimates on flowers made by decoration committee are usually accepted by church committees attaching significance to the beautification of the church premises.

Decoration committees of churches are responsible for regular upkeep of flower arrangement on Sundays appointing members to do the task. While in some churches it is carried out on a voluntary basis where expense on flowers is borne by volunteers. It is discernible that due importance is given to flower arrangement at the sacred space of the church as churches tend to sanction funds for fresh flowers for every Sunday. Members allotted the task of flower arrangement very often, if need arises, contribute the required amount to purchase flowers willingly considering the task as their personal ministry and way of showing their devotion to God.

The study illustrates the fact that church elders consider flowers adorning the sacred space of the church as important, and believe flowers glorify the creator and enhance worship experience on Sunday. Significance and value are attributed to festive occasions and important conferences which is manifested in the special floral design at the altar involving sanctioning of extra fund by the church. Landscaping of church premises with flowers is well supported by the Mizos, believed to depict the church as a sacred place and flowers as glorifying God, demonstrating at the same time, the collective work and solidarity of the decoration committee of the church.

Skilled flower arrangers of the church generate income as venue decorator in social events and the study demonstrates that floral designing has become viable for self-employment in the Mizo society as illustrated in the study. Festivities and social events need flowers resulting in event decorating turning into an income generating job for flower designers as long as they possess the skill and dedication to the task.

Social events: Flowers are integral part of social events creating a relaxed ambience and adds momentous feeling to the event and irrespective of sex, flowers are used to symbolize gratitude and appreciation to dignitaries and guests. Flowers adorn the stages of political gatherings and formal functions creating a beautiful atmosphere and flowers create positive mood to the participants.

The study reveals that government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions are now big consumers of cut flowers and green foliage plants. They inform that educational institutions and government offices regularly purchase seedlings of annual flowering plants and foliage plants for their landscaping purpose, boosting floriculture business in the state. While hotels and restaurants are regular consumers of cut flowers where flowers are arranged in the hotel lobbies and hallways and flower arrangements adorn restaurants and cafes in the city.

Government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions are big consumers of floriculture goods. Cut flowers adorn hotel lobbies, restaurants and cafes, while flowering plants are popularly used for landscaping purposes by institutions, offices, picnic spots and resorts.

The present study illustrates the vision for floriculture industry in Mizoram where ten years from now it would progress and entrepreneurship in floriculture would be successful one. Self-sufficiency in floriculture goods would have been achieved with less import and more export of goods. The business would flourish and more flower shops would come up opening livelihood opportunities in floriculture.

Sociological significance of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

Flowers have always occupied a significant place in the socio-cultural life of the Mizos as evident from the different genres of writings portraying flowers as symbols of beauty, love and sentiments, indigenous flowers featured in folktales and folklores of the Mizo people too. Different intricate floral motifs adorn traditional as well as modern Mizo textiles and *puan* (lungi) worn by Mizo women on special occasions and in the church, which represents reverence for nature and love for flowers. Traditional floral motifs for instance, *naia sawm par* (ten paise coin flower), *arsa par* (star flower), *sawhthing par* and (ginger flower) which are all reflections of the Mizo culture and identity are being fused with contemporary fashion and designs. Such traditional elements and floral motifs still adorn Mizo *puan* transcending into modern version of the floral motif woven with reishmi yarn and silk. Thus, here is a fusion of tradition and modernity, a harmonious integration of traditional motifs and ideas with contemporary designs and motifs on Mizo textiles which is highly appreciated by the people.

Christianity accelerated the popularity of floriculture and flowers attained importance and became ever more indispensable in the socio-religious context, which in turn boost floriculture in the state. The increasing popularity of the use of flowers in the church, weddings, funerals, birthdays, anniversaries, festive occasions and secular events have all helped boost floriculture business and in turn creates an opportunity to floriculturists for a livelihood generating income and built a network of social relations.

There are several occasions needing use of flowers in the Mizo society. Occasions such as Christian festivals, cultural traditions as pre-wedding, marriage, anniversaries, birthdays, funeral rituals, gravestone laying day, Mother's Day,

Valentine's Day and government functions. Flowers represent and symbolize love, feelings, emotions, tranquility, peace and is an extension of sentiments and love when gifted as a bouquet and as a basket. Relationship close and intimate one and social bond and connection is built with use of flowers in the society.

The church institutions too, play a significant role in supporting the presence of flowers in the church's sacred place. This can be discerned from the fact that churches in the state sanction money for the purchase of fresh flowers for arrangement every weekend for Sunday church service, thereby being the largest consumer of cut flowers on weekends. The church elders believe that the presence of flowers in the church not only creates a beautiful ambience but they exalt the creator and glorifies God the creator of all things. The decoration committee and the church flower arrangers too support the presence of flowers in the church's sacred space; they believe flowers glorify the creator and create a beautiful atmosphere for worship. The decoration committee of the church collectively work planting flowers and foliage plants to beautify the church area thereby resulting in social order and cohesion among the congregation members. Flower arrangers belonging to the different denomination churches too, consider their appointment as flower arrangers on Sundays as their personal ministry and are willing to contribute money for flowers when the sanctioned amount is not adequate.

CHAPTER VI

FLORICULTURE AS LIVELIHOOD OPTION

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CHAPTER VI

FLORICULTURE AS LIVELIHOOD OPTION

6.1 Introduction

Flowers are valuable commodities utilised for decorative reasons in numerous forms, including fresh cut flowers, loose flowers, and dried flowers, as well as for the extraction of essential oils and natural dyes. The production of flowers offers farmers the possibility to achieve greater profits and, due to its labour-intensive nature, has the potential to generate more employment for rural livelihoods. Due to evolving lifestyles and heightened urban influence, floriculture has attained a distinct commercial significance in the last 20 to 30 years (Vision 2030: 1).

Floriculture and landscaping have integrated into contemporary lifestyles, being employed in floral decorations, floral crafts, indoor landscaping, and commercial premises. Floriculture, encompassing cut flowers, loose flowers, bedding plants, potted plants, hedges, and value-added items, has experienced significant expansion as a commercial enterprise during the past three decades. The utilisation of floricultural products is no longer restricted to religious purposes alone. Lifestyle floriculture has now developed into an economic activity that encompasses the cultivation of decorative plants, cut flowers, turf, and leaves, while also providing a variety of services (Malhotra, 2024:1). The advancement of decorative horticulture has created chances for floriculture farming and enhanced livelihoods in comparison to other crops. The development in this industry also presents substantial economic prospects in related areas such as specialised transport services and the production of supplementary products, including nursery bags, pots, potting soil, tools, plant protection equipment, and others (*Ibid*: 2).

Mizoram has experienced a significant transition from the commercial cultivation of food crops to flower crops, driven by women's active involvement in agriculture, heightened demand for flowers, and their substantial export potential. Flowers hold significant importance in Mizo society during funerals, joyous events, and crucial

ceremonies (Vanlalruati et al.2024: 91). In Mizoram, female farmers are the foundation of the floriculture sector, spearheading various floriculture firms and self-help groups. A considerable number of women farmers in Mizoram have enhanced their income and livelihood through the floriculture industry. The floriculture sector provides several positions, including project coordinator, supervisor, plantation expert, and farm manager. Furthermore, with appropriate training, one may pursue a career as a landscape architect or consultant. Moreover, vocations in the service sector, including horticultural therapy, floral design, landscape architecture, and landscape design, are facilitated by floriculture (*Ibid*:92).

Floriculture in Mizoram flourished with the founding of the Mizoram Florists' Association on 16th November 1997 in Aizawl with the motto 'Blooming Mizoram with Flowers'. It has branches in other districts like Lunglei, Champhai, Saiha, Kolasib and Serchhip. The Association was established by a few flower lovers involved in growing ornamental and indigenous flowering plants. The initial objective was to procure ornamental plants and potted plants from outside the state like Kalimpong and Siliguri and propagate them for local consumers. From then onwards, many people have taken up flower and ornamental plants cultivation increasingly for their aesthetic value not only as a hobby but as a family business generating income through their propagations. People now import, procure and propagate new varieties of foliage, indoor plants, flowering plants, perennials and ornamental plants from outside the state to meet the demands of local consumers.

The first commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers was initiated in 2002 under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. Anthurium was then initially cultivated by 24 farmers in 2002, where the horticulture department provided the necessary inputs such as planting materials, shade nets, cocopeat, garden tools and so on free of cost to the farmers. The cultivation of Anthurium has significantly transformed the horticultural landscape of Mizoram, enhanced the living conditions of growers and provided employment and a steady income for both growers and unskilled labourers (Lalbiakthangi, 2020:162).

Anthurium cultivation has shown great market potential in the local market in Aizawl city and other towns, metropolitan cities of the country and across the globe. Anthurium flower is one of the most valuable and popular flowers cultivated in Mizoram due to its long vase life, vibrant colours and high market demand. Anthurium cut flowers are sent to big cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore and exported abroad to the United Arab Emirates, Japan and London.

Mizoram's first ever export of Anthurium flowers to Singapore is a major achievement for the state's horticulture sectors. In a significant advancement to augment India's floriculture export capacity, especially from the North Eastern Region (NER), the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), in collaboration with the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram, effectively organised the export of the first-ever consignment of 1024 Anthurium cut flowers from Aizawl, Mizoram, to Singapore on 28th February 2025. This initiative on export of Anthurium flowers not only indicates Mizoram's growing role in global floriculture and establishing Mizoram as a strong contender in the international flower trade but also strengthens India's agricultural trade connections with Singapore.

Gender substantially impacts the advancement of entrepreneurship in Mizoram, especially with anthurium cultivation. Notably, all anthurium cultivators in Mizoram are women. The results demonstrate that younger female farmers exhibit a greater propensity to initiate entrepreneurial development activities than their older counterparts (Singh & Punitha, 2012:78).

The Anthurium Festival, hosted by the Tourism Department of the Government of Mizoram, is the most prestigious event in Mizoram and functions as a very efficient endeavour to promote tourism and Anthurium flowers. The annual two-day event occurs at the Tourist Resort Reiek, located in the picturesque village of Reiek, around an hour's drive from the state capital, Aizawl. In 2006, the Tourism Department, in partnership with the Horticulture Department, launched the Anthurium Festival to recognise and promote the cultivation of Anthuriums. The objective is to advance agriculture, floriculture, and horticulture within the region.

The festival also highlights the vibrant and rhythmic ethnic dances and games of Mizoram. The Anthurium Festival originated from the extensive cultivation of Anthurium flowers by Mizo women. The widespread appeal of Anthurium flowers is primarily due to the dedicated initiatives of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram. The festival seeks to empower homemakers by equipping them with the resources necessary for financial independence.

Floristry which involves the skill of crafting and arranging bouquets, along with designing floral decorations for several events, including stage performances, mandaps, vehicles, and banquet halls. These skills are employed at various occasions, including weddings, celebrations, and other events. Floral craft and floral designing are a highly profitable floral enterprise that generates significant returns in a comparatively brief period of time.

Floriculture is predominantly conducted as a small-scale venture in the urban regions of Mizoram and is rapidly evolving into a commercial sector that generates cash through cut flowers, ornamental plants, and potted house foliage. This is evidenced by the participation of not only women but also several males who are engaged in this activity within their domestic environments.

6.2 Floriculture as livelihood option

Livelihood pertains to the means of securing one's sustenance, the basic necessities of life. Livelihood refers to a set of activities essential to everyday life that are conducted over one's life span. Floriculture presents a significant livelihood option particularly for farmers and entrepreneurs seeking income diversification and self-employment opportunities. Floriculture can offer higher profit margins than other crops contributing to economic empowerment and a decent standard of living to floriculturists pursuing the business venture.

The development of entrepreneurship through the production of Anthurium has significantly transformed the horticultural landscape of Mizoram and substantially improved the living conditions of the growers. It offers work and a consistent income to the cultivators and other unskilled labourers (Singh & Punitha, 2012:75). Anthurium is a significant flower cultivated in Mizoram, crucial for stimulating local

economic activity and particularly advantageous for farmers, notably women. The cultivation of the flower has provided livelihood and empowerment for local farmers particularly women entrepreneurs.

In Mizoram, besides the commercial cultivation of Anthurium flowers under the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, floriculture in terms of ornamental flowers or potted flowering plants and foliage plants are home grown on roof tops, terraces and in available spaces around residences. Annual and perennial cut flowers are grown under controlled environments in greenhouses. In Mizoram, floriculture is fast emerging as a livelihood option and a commercial individual and family enterprise generating regular income for unemployed homemakers and women entrepreneurs. This is illustrated by the fact that not only womenfolk indulge in the activity, many men too having aesthetic interest are also drawn to this business at their home spaces.

Using purposive and convenience sampling, 30% that is, 51 floriculturists have been selected as sample from the total members of Mizoram Florist Association which is 170 as per 2020 enrollment. 30% amounting to 54 floriculturists from *Pangpar Zuar* Association is selected as sample from 180 enrolled members in 2020. From the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, 16 Anthurium growers amounting to 20% have been taken as sample from the total actual producing members which is 80 in 2020. The total sample taken for the floriculturists is 125. However, after the completion of fieldwork on the three florist association members, the total selected sample exceeded for all the three associations. From the total members of Mizoram Florist Association, 70 floriculturists which amounts to 41% were interviewed, the selected sample of 51 floriculturists have been exceeded by 19. Similarly, selected sample from *Pangpar Zuar* Association which is 30% of the total members (54) has been exceeded by 4 which comes to 58 in total. The selected sample for Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society too which is 20% of the total members (16) has been exceeded to 23 in total. With two of the floriculturists having no affiliation to florist associations, the total sample comes to 153.

Question on what prompted them to take up floriculture as a means of livelihood was posed to the floriculturists and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.1 Motivating factors of opting floriculture as a means of livelihood

Motivating factors	Frequency	Percentage
Due to joblessness	17	11.1
Interest since childhood	104	68
Inherited from parents	9	5.9
Alternative to paid jobs	23	15
Total	153	100

The table illustrates the motivating factors behind the respondents' opting floriculture as a means of livelihood. Out of the total 153 respondents, majority of them that is, 73.9% (113) claim that they have had interest in floriculture since childhood and some had inherited the business from their parents. Their aesthetic interest in flowers drives them to take up floriculture as their means of generating income for the family. Their passion for flowers turns into a small- scale individual and family entrepreneurship and becomes a means of livelihood for them. 23 (15%) of the respondents have taken up floriculture as a means of livelihood because it is an alternative to paid jobs. Majority of the floriculturists being homemakers, have interest in floriculture and are jobless, they eventually develop their passion for flowers into an individual and family enterprise generating income for livelihood. On the other hand, 11.1% (17) of the respondents argue that they are prompted to take up floriculture as a means of livelihood due to lack of paid jobs. Floriculture is pursued by respondents on their available home spaces such as roof tops and backyards and is also a business venture of the respondents with the support of their family members.

Question on how long the respondents have been involved in the floriculture business was posed to the floriculturists and is presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.2 Duration of pursuing floriculture business

Duration	Frequency (%)
30+ years	3 (2%)
20 years	56 (36.6%)
15 years	9 (5.9%)
10 years	44 (28.8%)
5 years	23 (15%)
Less than 5 years	18 (11.8%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table shows the duration of respondents' involvement in floriculture business. Out of the total 153 floriculturists interviewed, the majority 73.2% (112) of them have been indulging in the floriculture business venture for more than 10 years. These floriculturists as informed by them, are involved in the business because of their aesthetic interest in flowers since childhood and have had several years of experience of the technical and social aspect of the floriculture business and have gone through ups and downs and are resilient in shocks and stress. Though for some, the business is supplemented by other source of income to support their families. 3 (2%) of the respondents have been floriculture entrepreneurs for more than 30 years, they have the resilience, the technical knowledge, the experience of running the business and have kept the family business intact and have been self-employed for more than 30 years. While 36.6% (56) have been involved in the business for more than 20 years, 28.8% (44) have been in the business for more than 10 years. Similarly, 5.9% (9) of the floriculturists have floriculture as their source of livelihood for more than 15 years. They are all experienced entrepreneurs in their field and are experts in dealing with floriculture goods and the business as well. While 15% (23) of the respondents have been involved in the business for only 5 years or more. According to them, they are entrepreneurs who have not been involved in the business venture for long and are learning the trade and are on their way to strengthening their source of income. On the other hand, 11.8% (18) of the respondents are new to the floriculture business and have been involved in it for less

than 5 years. These respondents are still learning the trade and how to strengthen and reinforce their source of income day by day.

The study reveals that 94.1% (144) of the total 153 respondents are being supported by their family members in their floriculture entrepreneurship. In the Mizo context, floriculture is mainly carried out as a small-scale individual and family enterprise in the urban areas on available spaces like roof top, backyard and around residences in terms of potted flowering and non-flowering foliage plants and cut flowers. One of the respondents informs that as floriculture is labour intensive business, family members need to support and work collectively for the business to thrive. As evident from the study, majority of the floriculturists are actively supported by their husbands and children and other relatives staying with the family. They inform that floriculture is pursued at their home spaces, regularly making soil mix, germinating seeds, propagating, transplanting, re-potting and care of the seedlings and propagated plants. The respondents' families actively support them in these different kinds of work involved in the business. Not only womenfolk indulge in the activity, but men too are drawn to this business venture at their home spaces. While 5.9% (9) of the total respondents claim that they are not supported by their family members. The respondents single handedly pursue the business and manage the works individually.

Question on whether floriculture business is the main means of livelihood was posed to the respondents and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.3 Floriculture business as main source of livelihood

As main means of livelihood	Frequency (%)
Yes	68 (44.4%)
No	85 (55.6%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above indicates whether floriculture business is the main means of livelihood for the respondents or not. Out of the total 153 respondents, 55.6% (85) claim that they do not entirely depend on the floriculture business for their means of livelihood. They have other sources of income which makes the business a

supplementary source of income for the family, because 9.8% (15) of the respondents have government jobs and some in private organizations thus, they have paid jobs, and besides, 44.4% (68) of the spouses of the respondents have government jobs, some in private firms and some are self-employed generating income, at the same time 8.5% (13) of the spouses are retired from their government jobs having monthly pension. It is thus seen that such respondents have other sources of monthly income, and not solely dependent on the floriculture business for their livelihood. While 44.4% (68) of the respondents depend solely on the floriculture business as their main means of livelihood. Majority of the respondents 66% (101) are self-employed indulging full time in floriculture business. While 24.2% (37) are housewives, who however, are engaged in floriculture business at the same time. Though some of the respondents do have other sources of income, 44.4% (68) of the respondents however, depend entirely on the floriculture entrepreneurship they are indulged in.

Question on approximately how much income the business generates monthly during the peak season was posed to the floriculturists and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.4 Approximate monthly income during the peak season

Approximate monthly income	Frequency (%)
Below 10000	18 (11.8%)
10000 – 20000	20 (13.1%)
20000 – 30000	30 (19.6%)
30000 – 40000	17 (11.1%)
Above 40000	68 (44.4%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above demonstrates the approximate monthly income during the peak season of the respondents. Peak season here refers to the period of the year when demand for perennial flowers and annual seasonal flowers is at its highest which is from October to May. While the lean period falls during the monsoon season when demand for flowers is less. Out of the total 153 respondents, 44.4% (68) of the respondents generate above Rs 40000 monthly. In fact, 44.4% of floriculturists who

solely depend on floriculture for their livelihood generate Rs 2- 4 lakhs a month during the peak season, selling their floricultural goods like potted bougainvillea flowers, geranium flowers and others outside the state to neighbouring states like Manipur, Meghalaya, Assam and to cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore and export to foreign countries such as Myanmar. They also sell their goods to other districts and district capitals of the state. Floriculturists generate income through selling their goods at home, at florist fairs organised by florist associations and also market their goods at local markets on Saturday markets and also making use of social media platform to market their goods. While 30.7% (47) of the respondents generate income between Rs 20000 – 40000 monthly during the peak season. These respondents too, generate income by selling their propagated goods and other floriculture goods at home, florist fairs, local markets and also making use of social media platform to sell their goods, delivering the goods to customers. Meanwhile, 24.8% (38) of the respondents generate below 10000 – 20000 a month during the peak season. These respondents have other sources of income and do not solely depend on floriculture business, and since floriculture is a business venture for an additional source of income, they do not devote their whole time to the business, thus, the income generated is also low monthly.

Question was further posed to the floriculturists on how they market their floriculture goods and is presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.5 Methods employed in marketing products

Methods employed	Frequency (%)
Marketing agency for export, at home and local market	28 (18.3%)
At home	6 (3.9%)
Social media	6 (3.9%)
Bulk selling to wholesalers /resellers	4 (2.6%)
Florist fairs, local market, at home, social media and bulk selling to resellers	109 (71.2%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table illustrates the method employed by respondents to market their floriculture goods. Out of the total 153 respondents, majority of the floriculturists, in fact 89.5% (137) of them make use of several methods to market their products and goods. Floriculture entrepreneurs depending on the business for their livelihood make use of different methods to market their goods and generate income for their households. Florist fairs are organised three to four times each annually by the two popular florist associations in Aizawl city, namely the Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) and *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA). According to one of the respondents belonging to one of the associations, these two associations have active members who are eager to sit and showcase their propagated products and their floricultural goods procured from other states. Florist fairs serve as important medium for showcasing and marketing their products within a couple of days and earn a significant amount of income within a short period of time. She also adds that these two associations organise florist fairs alternately three to four times annually for the benefit of their members. Another respondent informs that another important method adopted is bulk selling to wholesalers and resellers, floriculturists sell their products in bulk whether propagated or procured from outside the state to resellers who in turn sell them outside the city to other districts and other states or neighbouring country such as Myanmar. She further adds that most of the floriculturists though not highly educated are acquainted with modern technology of communication and popularly use social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram to market their floriculture goods. One of the respondents having individual page in social media inform that they create their own WhatsApp and Facebook group and Instagram page, posting and showcasing regularly flowers and plants they would like to sell to customers. For instance, KaBloom-by-Jacob N'Floral is the WhatsApp group, Facebook group and Instagram page created by Jacob, he also has a You Tube channel where he showcases his goods and shares tips on plant care. Another is *Fanai* flowers, the name of the enterprise created by owner who has a You Tube channel called *Fanai* Flowers where they upload their products and share tips on plant care and maintenance, and another is *Ainawn Pangpar Dawr* (Ainawn Flower Shop) the owner has a You Tube channel too where she uploads tips on different plants' care. Another prominent enterprise is *Laltei* Nursery the owner created WhatsApp and

Facebook group to sell their flower seedlings and propagations. She also adds that through social media, they are able to sell their products on a daily basis, and they themselves deliver or request delivery agents to deliver the sold items to customers. According to another respondent, another method adopted is selling floriculture goods on Saturday main market and local markets. Some floriculturists have regular seats in the local markets on Saturdays to showcase their products and make significant sales. Selling floriculture goods at home is another way of making sales and earn while staying at home. She informs that majority of the floriculturists are skilled users of social media like WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram where they upload pictures of their products and goods and customers interested in the products either buy online or approach the residences of the floriculturists to purchase the goods. Those dealing in cut flowers such as Anthurium cultivation make use of marketing agency for transporting their products to other big cities of the country such as Delhi, Kolkata and Bangalore. Currently the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS), formed by Anthurium Growers in Mizoram takes care of the welfare of the growers as well as sending Anthurium flowers to other Metropolitan cities in the country, currently they do not export outside the country as informed by one Anthurium cultivator. There are floriculturists who sell their products and goods only at home consisting of 3.9% (6) and there are 3.9% (6) of the respondents who markets their floriculture goods only through social media, and delivering the sold items to customers. There are 2.6% (4) respondents who indulge in bulk selling of products to wholesalers and resellers.

Majority of the stakeholders market their floricultural goods not only locally but transport them to other districts of the state, export them outside the state to big cities and other states and some even export their goods to neighbouring country such as Myanmar. Out of the 153 respondents, 68% (104) send their floriculture products to other states and more often to nearby neighbouring North East states. Some floriculturists export their goods to neighbouring foreign country. On the other hand, 32% (49) of the respondents do not sell their products outside the city and outside the state. These floriculturists indulge in the business for supplementary income and are content with marketing their products in local markets.

Question was further posed to the floriculturists on where they export their floriculture goods and is presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.6 Export and transportation of floricultural goods

Export and transportation of floricultural goods	Frequency (%)
Other districts of the state	35 (22.9%)
Within North-East India	3 (2%)
Other parts of the country	15 (9.8%)
Foreign countries	2 (1.3%)
All Opportunities	49 (32%)
Do not export	49 (32%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table demonstrates where the respondents export their floricultural products. Majority of the floriculturists interviewed that is, 67.9% (104) of them do regularly transport their floricultural products to different locations and destinations depending on the kind of order received. While 32% (49) of the respondents do not export or transport their floriculture goods outside the city or outside the state. Their floriculture business is pursued as additional source of income, so they sell their products within the city at home through social media or through local markets. Out of the total respondents, it is seen that 49 (32%) of the respondents make use of all opportunities and transport their floricultural products to other parts of the country such as metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore, to the North Eastern parts of India, to other districts of the state and export to foreign countries such as Myanmar. These floriculturists occasionally sent their goods to such locations from where they receive orders. They transport their packaged goods usually by road and by air to their respective destinations as there has been no railway line in the state as of now. Lack of railway line in the state as of now results in price hike and fluctuations as told by entrepreneurs during field work. While 22.9% (35) of the respondents transport their floriculture goods to other district capitals of the state such as Kolasib, Champhai, Saiha, Lawngtlai, Lunglei, Serchhip and others. Floriculturists make use of Maxicab service which ply daily from Aizawl to such district capitals. Whereas 11.7% (18) of the floriculturists export their products to

North East India cities like Guwahati, Kohima, Shillong, Dimapur and Imphal. They make use of Maxicab service and pick-up mini trucks to transport their goods to neighbouring states. Floriculturists also sell their goods to other states in metropolitan cities of the country in Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and even in Kerala. While 1.3% (2) of the respondents export their products to Myanmar by road.

Question on which is more profitable in terms of selling products within or outside the state was posed to the floriculturists and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.7 Level of profit gained by selling products within or outside the state

Level of profit	Frequency (%)
Plants sold within the state	97 (63.4%)
Plants exported outside the state	24 (15.7%)
Income generated is more or less the same	32 (20.9%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table indicates the profitable level of selling products within the state and outside the state. Out of the total respondents, 63.4% (97) of the floriculturists claim that products sold within the state is more profitable than selling and shipping outside the state. Selling floriculture products within the state adopting different mode of marketing at home, using social media, occasional florist fairs, local markets and bulk selling to wholesalers is much more profitable according to these floriculturists. They inform that plants and flowers sold domestically is a regular affair and floriculturists dealing with germinating seeds and with perennial flowers produce seedlings and propagated plant lings which are regularly sold locally and transported to other towns in other districts of the state. While 20.9% (32) argue that income generated from products sold within the state and transported outside is more or less the same. These floriculturists indulge in the activity actively and sell their goods locally and in other districts of the state regularly, at the same time get orders from outside the state and ships their goods in bulk. Goods sold outside the state have good returns and goods sold within the state if sold in bulk have good returns too. If sales are good within and outside the state the level of profit gained would be more

or less equal. Meanwhile 15.7% (24) of the respondents however, claim that plants and flowers sold outside the state is more profitable than plants sold within the state. Floriculturists dealing with perennial flowering plants and foliage plants propagate regularly such plants which are usually shipped outside the state in bulk to other states and exported to foreign country like Myanmar. For these floriculturists making good sales outside the state is more profitable for them.

Question on whether the respondents have greenhouse facility to carry out their floriculture business was posed to the floriculturists. Out of the total 153 respondents, the study shows that 54.2% (83) of the floriculturists make use of greenhouse to carry out their business venture. The floriculturists built their greenhouse on available spaces they have around their residences or elsewhere and on rooftops. They inform that those respondents engaged in Anthurium cultivation and other flowering plants and also those indulging in flower seed germination make use of greenhouse to carry out their business and to control the temperature to suit the needs of the flowering plants. However, such greenhouses are mini greenhouse structures compatible with the available space the floriculturists have. The rest of the respondents that is, 45.8% (70) of the total respondents do not have greenhouse facility in their business venture. One of the respondents inform that the reason would be that the floriculture business they are engaged in does not necessitate the use of greenhouse facility, or they do not afford the greenhouse structure or it could be lack of available space for constructing greenhouse. Those who do not make use of greenhouse in their floriculture business make use of all the available spaces within the residential compound which accommodates their propagated products and flower seedlings.

Question on where the greenhouse is constructed was further posed to the floriculturists and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.8 Location of greenhouse construction

Location of greenhouse	Frequency (%)
Own land	43 (28.1%)
Rooftop	25 (16.3%)
Rented land	12 (7.8%)
Relative's land	3 (2%)
No greenhouse	70 (45.8%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table shows the location where greenhouse is constructed. 54.2% (83) of the total respondents constructs greenhouse to carry out their floriculture business in different locations. Out of the total respondents having greenhouse facility, 28.1% (43) of the floriculturists constructs their greenhouses on their own land adjacent to their residences. Having a greenhouse to house their products and control the temperature is an important requirement of the business for floriculturists dealing with cut flower cultivation and other kinds of potted flowering plants. Greenhouse constructed on their own land makes the business more profitable without having to pay rent. While 16.3% (25) of the respondents construct their greenhouses on their rooftops which is a popular feature in urban areas. Floriculturists needing more space to house their products rent rooftops of neighbours too and construct greenhouses to carry out their business. Rooftop greenhouses are mostly made use of by floriculturists dealing with propagations and seed germinations. Propagations are done in poly pots and after cuttings are rooted, they are planted in small plastic pots and put under controlled environment. Germinated seeds or seedlings are planted in small poly bags and when they reach saleable height, they are re-planted in poly pots or plastic pots, such seedlings need to grow in controlled environment to thrive. 15 (9.8%) of the respondents constructs greenhouses on rented land nearby or elsewhere and some built their greenhouses on relative's land. Renting land to build greenhouse may be due to non-availability of space around their residences to carry out their business venture. Whereas 45.8% (70) of the respondents do not have greenhouse facility in running their floriculture entrepreneurship.

The study reveals that out of the total 153 respondents, 64.7% (99) of the floriculturists consisting of the majority do not receive any aid from the government for the construction of their greenhouses. They did not receive greenhouse structure at a subsidized rate from the government unlike others who are beneficiaries. They claim that they have often requested verbally and in written application requesting to provide greenhouse structure which is usually given out at a subsidized rate to farmers. Some respondents inform that they have given up hope of ever getting greenhouse structure from the government. While, on the other hand, 35.3% (54) of the respondents do receive aid in the form of greenhouse structure at a subsidized rate from the government. Such beneficiaries of greenhouses construct them on available land near their residences, on rooftops and even rent land for their construction. Not all floriculture farmers are able to receive aid from the government for construction of greenhouse to carry out their business. 26.1% (40) of those who claim to have received aid from the government in the form of greenhouse structure inform that the aid they received from the government is sufficient for them to run their business. They are content and satisfied with the greenhouse facility they received from the government at a subsidised rate. While 9.2% (14) of those who received greenhouse structure argue that it is not sufficient for them to run their business. They are not content with one greenhouse to house their products, the aid rendered by the government is not adequate for floriculturists who would like to expand their business. While 64.7% do not receive any aid from the government to run their floriculture business.

Question on whether they think the government should give more aid to floriculturists was posed to the respondents. Out of the total respondents, 88.2% (135) of them consisting of the majority believe that the government should give more aid to floriculturists. Floriculture farmers are small farmers requiring aid in terms of good quality seeds, greenhouse facility, pesticides and insecticides. They are not able to afford expensive greenhouse structures on their own so much so that they expect the government to give out more greenhouse structures at a subsidised rate which is more affordable for small time floriculturists. While 11.8% (18) of the respondents think that the government should not give aid to the floriculturists. These

respondents are able to carry on with their business without the help of the government relying on their own resources. Their family income as a whole is much better and could run their business without the aid of the government.

Question was further posed to those who feels that the government should give more aid to floriculturists on whether the government is equally distributing necessary inputs to all floriculturists. 62.7% (96) of the respondents argue that the government is not equally distributing inputs to all floriculturists. While some floriculturists are fortunate in receiving necessary inputs in the form of greenhouse materials, good quality seeds, fertilizers and insecticides, majority of the floriculture farmers are not beneficiaries of such necessary inputs for their business. Inputs are not equally distributed because requests of all the floriculturists for such inputs are impossible on the part of the government to grant due to lack of fund and specific scheme. On the other hand, 25.5% (39) of the respondents believe that the government is equally distributing inputs to floriculturists. These floriculturists have been beneficiaries of inputs from the government in terms of greenhouse material and other necessary items for floriculture and thus believe that the government is distributing inputs equally. 11.8% (18) of the respondents have no opinion on the issue.

The opinions of those floriculturists who thinks the government is not equally distributing necessary inputs to them have been collected and cited as follows-

A floriculturist 47 years old, resident of Chhinga Veng locality in Aizawl city argues-

Eizawn nana ti tak tak te hian sawrkar puihna dawng hnem se ka ti ngawt mai. Subsidy ni lovin a pekin pe tawp zel se ka ti.

I strongly feel that the government should give more inputs to those self-employed floriculturists who rely on the business. I also think that the government should give such inputs free of cost.

The oldest floriculturist interviewed aged 90 years resident of Mission Veng claims-

Hamthatna hi sawrkar hian rualkhai takin a sem lem lo. Dil zawng zawngin an hmu lem lo.

The government does not distribute necessary inputs equally to floriculturists. Not all floriculturists who requests are beneficiaries.

Another floriculturist aged 66 years resident of Mission Vengthlang, ex-general secretary of Mizoram Florist Association too claims-

Hamthatna hi rualkhai taka sem ani lo. MFA in kan dilpui pawhin min pe hlei thei lo. A har khawp mai.

Inputs are not equally distributed by the government. Our florist association too often requests on behalf of the members to the government. We hardly succeed.

Question on whether the government give awareness to florists about the incentives that could be availed. The inputs and incentives that could be availed from the government may be free of cost or may be at subsidised rate affordable for the floriculturists. Out of the total respondents, 60.1% (92) argue that the government does not give awareness to floriculturists of the incentives that could be availed. The current most important centrally sponsored scheme being implemented by the state Horticulture Department is Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) implemented from 2014 -2015, under which funds and inputs for development of floriculture is included. Under the scheme, incentives for floriculturists are available. However, majority of the respondents either neglect or are not aware of such incentives such as greenhouse material and flower seeds. 39.9% (61) of the respondents however, inform that the government give awareness of the incentives and inputs that could be availed. Such floriculturists relying on the business as their primary source of income are active in their business venture enquiring regularly the benefits that could be acquired and availed by them under the centrally sponsored schemes.

Question on how they came to know about the government's incentives was further posed to those who claim that the government does not give awareness to floriculturists about the incentives available and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.9 Source of knowledge about the government's incentives for florists.

Source of knowledge about government's incentives.	Frequency (%)
Social media	30 (19.6%)
Florist association	35 (22.9%)
Friends and peers	27 (17.6%)
Newspaper Advertisement	61 (39.9%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above indicates the means by which the respondents come to know the government's incentives for floriculturists. Out of the total respondents, 39.9% (61) claim that the government give awareness to florists every now and then about the incentives that could be availed. They are aware of the benefits they could avail through government official notification in newspapers. The table reveals that 40.5% (62) of the respondents rely on leaders of florist associations and their florist friends for important information on the government's incentives for floriculturists. 22.9% (35) of the respondents argue that they come to know about the incentives and inputs which could be availed by the florists from the florist associations that they are enrolled as a member. These associations are Non-Government Organisations working in tandem with the government and are usually aware of the incentives available for florists, they pass on the information to their needy members. Florist associations work and function for the benefit of their members and they often request the government on behalf of their needy members for inputs such as greenhouse material, shade net material, flower seeds or fertilizers free of cost or at subsidised rate. While 19.6% (30) informs that their means of knowing the government's incentives that could be availed by them through social media posts such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram which are popularly made use of by florists in the state. Florists in most cases are made aware of necessary information and of government's incentives in social media very often. 17.6% (27) on the other hand, come to know of the government's incentives for floriculture through their friends. Such respondents may be those senior floriculturists who are unable to make use of social media and modern technology. They are usually ignorant or neglect

about the incentives and inputs that could be availed from the government. They are dependent on their floriculturist friends for such benefits.

Apart from the incentive rendered to develop floriculture, question on whether the government play any role in marketing of products was posed to the floriculturists. Out of the 153 respondents, 51% (78) of the floriculturists informs that the government play a role in the marketing of their products. The respondents narrate that the government even though does not play active role in helping floriculturists to market their products, it plays important role by sponsoring flower shows cum florist fairs organised by florist associations occasionally though not every time. The Horticulture Department sponsors the prizes for the flower show and flower arrangements. The Horticulture Department of the state also organise 'Horticulture Fair' annually where Horticulture products are showcased and vended including flowers. Floriculturists enrolled as members in the florist associations are able to procure a seat in the florist fairs and in the Horti Fair which serves as an outlet for them to market their products and make significant sales in a day. The others 49% (75) argue that the government does not play any role in marketing their floricultural products. One of the respondents narrate that '*inhralhna hmun pawl in kan dil a, mahse sawrkarin min pe thei rih lo*' (florist association has been requesting the government for permanent flower shop, but it is not able to do so yet). Some of the respondents also contend that the government does not do much for floriculturists to help them market their goods.

Question was further posed to the floriculturists on whether they think floriculture business is viable for self-employment and presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.10 Floriculture viable for self-employment

Viability for self-employment	Frequency (%)
Yes	136 (88.9%)
No	17 (11.1%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table demonstrates the view on whether floriculture business is viable for self-employment or not. The table shows that out of the total respondents, majority 88.9% (136) of the respondents believe that floriculture is a business venture viable for self-employment. Any aspect of floriculture generates a good amount of income for the family and for as many as 44.4% (68) of the respondents, floriculture entrepreneurship serves as the primary source of livelihood. Income generated through the business endeavour helps meet the basic household requirements. Thus, floriculturists involved in the entrepreneurship are self-employed entrepreneurs generating income through their hard work and perseverance. More than half of the total respondents that is, 55.6% (85) of them rely on the business for additional income making them self-employed entrepreneurs too. Such respondents too make use of the business as supplementary source of income since there are members in paid jobs in their families. While on the other hand, for 11.1% (17) of the respondents, floriculture business is not viable for self-employment. Such respondents do not seem to indulge heavily into the business, not pursuing the business for livelihood thereby earning less than others, for them it is not viable for self-employment.

Question on whether the respondents would encourage their children or relatives to pursue floriculture as livelihood option was further posed to those who thinks the business is viable for self-employment. Out of the total respondents, 88.9% (136) believe floriculture business is viable for self-employment. Out of these 88.9% (136) of respondents, majority that is, 85% (130) of the respondents would definitely encourage their children or relatives to pursue the floriculture business as livelihood

option. These respondents strongly believe the viability of floriculture business for livelihood so much so that they would advocate floriculture business to their children as a viable livelihood option. While a small portion of the respondents that is, 3.9% (6) however, would not encourage their children or relatives to pursue the business as livelihood option. They argue that floriculture business they are pursuing though is viable for self-employment and for generating income, they are reluctant to encourage their children to follow in their footsteps and rely on floriculture as their livelihood option. As mentioned earlier, 11.1% (17) of the respondents argue that floriculture business is not viable for self-employment.

Question on whether they enjoy a decent standard of living and are able to meet the basic requirements of the household through the floriculture business was posed to the floriculturists and is presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.11

Decent standard of living in meeting basic household needs

Decent standard of living	Frequency (%)
Yes	121 (79.1%)
No	32 (20.9%)
Total	153 (100%)
Meeting basic household requirements	Frequency (%)
Yes	126 (82.3%)
No	27 (17.6%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table demonstrates the respondents' view on whether they enjoy a decent standard of living and whether they meet the basic household requirements through the floriculture business. Out of the total respondents, 79.1% (121) claim that they do enjoy a decent standard of living through their floriculture business. Their business venture generates a decent income for the household which makes ends meet for their families. Floriculturists depending on the business as their primary source of income too do enjoy a decent standard of living. 20.9% (32) of the respondents however, argue that they do not enjoy a decent standard of living through floriculture

business. At the same time, 82.3% (126) of the respondents also claim that they meet the basic household requirements through floriculture entrepreneurship. They mention that they are able to make ends meet for instance, basic food items and children's school fees and other household requirements are met through floriculture business. The study reveals that majority of the stakeholders indulge heavily into the entrepreneurship thus earning significant income which makes them live decently and the income earned makes them meet the requirements of the family household. 17.6% (27) of the respondents argue however, that the income generated by the business does not help them meet the basic household requirements. Such floriculturists usually do not indulge heavily into the floriculture business thus earning less income.

Question on given the chance, whether they would abandon floriculture and chose another livelihood option was posed to the main stakeholders. Out of the total 153 respondents, 78.4% (120) consisting of the majority claim that they would not abandon floriculture business even if given a chance and choose another livelihood option. These respondents argue that floriculture is their passion and hobby, and their means of earning income while staying at home at the same time. They would not give up the business even if better livelihood opportunities come up their way, they have been indulging in the business for many years it would not be easy to abandon it. Whereas 21.6% (33) of the respondents however, informs that they would readily abandon floriculture business if other better livelihood opportunities come their way. For them, floriculture is not profitable enough and making significant sales regularly is difficult and so if given a chance, they would soon abandon and choose other better option for livelihood.

Those respondents who would readily give up floriculture if given a chance and choose another livelihood option shares their opinion-

A floriculturist aged 67, a resident of Tlangnuam Vengthar locality shares her view-

A hlawh a zir ani anga, a that chuan zawk chuan pangpar zawrh hi ka bansan ang.

If another livelihood option offers good amount of income, I would abandon floriculture.

A male floriculturist aged 58, resident of Tlangnuam locality shares-

A hna a zirin ka pangpar zawrh hi ka bansan duh ang.

Depending on the kind of work, I would give up floriculture business.

A 56 years old floriculturist, resident of Khatla East locality too shares her opinion-

Ei zawnna dang tha a awm chuan ka bansan duh ang. A vang chu ka kum a tam tawh a, pot rit tak tak te chawi a ngai renga, a hahthlak ka ti thin.

If given a chance at other livelihood option I would abandon floriculture. In my line of business heavy flower pots need to be carried around frequently which is tiresome for me.

Question on whether membership in florist associations like Mizoram Florist Association, *Pangpar Zuar* Association and Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society benefitted the stakeholders was posed to them. Out of the total 153 respondents, majority that is, 91.5% (140) claim that they have benefitted from being members of their respective florist associations. 98.7% (151) of the respondents have enrolled in florist associations in Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) which are the three largest florist associations in the state. Being members of these associations have advantages for the members in shaping their business and their entrepreneurial skills. While the rest of the respondents that is, 8.5% (13) of the respondents argue that they do not benefit from being members of florist associations. They feel that membership in florist associations does not benefit or bring profit to their business.

Question on what way the florist associations benefit was posed to those who claim that membership in the florist associations benefitted them and is presented in the following table.

Table 6.2.12 Ways florist associations are beneficial.

Ways florist associations are beneficial.	Frequency (%)
Building confidence	6 (4%)
Capacity building	6 (4%)
Strengthening the business	21 (13.7%)
Taking risks	5 (3.2%)
All of the above	68 (44.4%)
Building confidence, Strengthening the business and taking risks	34 (22.2%)
Does not benefit	13 (8.5%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above illustrates the different ways in which florist associations are beneficial for the respondents. As shown in the table, out of the total respondents, majority that is, 44.4% (68) of them claim that the florist associations they affiliated to have been beneficial in terms of building confidence, capacity building, strengthening their business and taking risks. The floriculturists build up their entrepreneurial skill and gain more confidence in their marketing skills leading to more sales and gain more profit. The associations help build up their capacity as an entrepreneur, and help in establishing network of social relations with their fellow members and customers. Similarly, for 22.2% (34) of the respondents, they claim that the florist associations they are enrolled in are beneficial for them in terms of building confidence, strengthening the business and taking risks. This picture illustrates that majority of the floriculturists that is 66.6% (102) gets benefit from their affiliation to and being active members of the florist associations, the respondents gain benefit in terms of building up confidence in their business and entrepreneurship skill gets better thus earning more profit. Their active participation in association's activities help strengthen their business and allows space for more development and extension, their network of relations help them take risks in their business which further brings in more profit. While 13.7% (21) of the floriculturists inform that their membership in florist associations has strengthened their business to

a great extent. The associations help members to establish network of relations; it also provides opportunities for members to develop their skills and widen their knowledge on the art of flower cultivation. At the same time, 8% (12) of the respondents claim to have benefitted their membership in florist associations in terms of building confidence and capacity building. Whereas 3.2% (5) of the respondents benefit membership in florist associations in terms of taking risks and being more creative in the floriculture business. While 8.5% (13) of the respondents claim that membership in florist associations do not benefit them.

Question on whether membership in florist associations helped in establishing network of relations with other floriculturists was posed to the respondents. Out of the total 153 respondents, nearly all the respondents that is, 94.8% (145) argue that their membership in florist associations has helped them in establishing network of relations with other florists. Those active members of the florist associations as such develop strong bond with their fellow members, and each of the floriculturist share the same aesthetic interest in flowers establishing network of social relations with others. Members of association work together, have close face to face relationship frequently developing close affinity with their fellow members. In the Mizo society, such network of close relations and strong ties with other fellow florists is manifested in times of *chhiatni/thatni* (day of mourning and joy), where members support each other in times of grief and sorrow, and also on days of joy like weddings of children and anniversaries. Whereas 5.2% (8) of the respondents argue that membership in florist associations does not help in establishing network of relations with other fellow florist members.

Question on whether respondents have higher goals or aims for the growth of their business was posed to the floriculturists. Out of the total respondents, 70.6% (108) of the respondents have higher aspirations and higher goals for the growth of their business. Majority of the floriculturists would like to expand their floriculture business, and they have higher aims, they would like to fulfil if possible. Whereas, 29.4% (45) of the respondents however, do not have higher goals or aims for the development of their floriculture business. This indicates that such respondents are content with the current condition of their business and have no higher aspirations for

the growth of their business venture. Those respondents who informed that they do have higher goals and aims for the growth of their business put forth their aspirations and the goals they would like to achieve.

A floriculturist aged 48, resident of Durtlang Leitan locality shares her aspiration and the goal she would love to achieve-

Pangpar zawrhna dawr neih ka chak. Nitina ka pangpar chin te thutpui theih ka chak.

I would love to have a flower shop. I would very much like to showcase and sell my flower plants every day.

A male floriculturist aged 32, resident of Armed Veng South locality who deals mostly with perennial flowers shares the goal he would love to achieve-

Seasonal pangpar khawih tan ka chak. Ka greenhouse te hi ka ti zau belh anga.

I would love to start cultivating seasonal flowers. I will then expand my greenhouses to accommodate them.

A floriculturist aged 47, resident of Upper Republic locality shares her aspiration-

Greenhouse tha tak nei ila, pangpar khawi chi chin hi ka chak.

I would love to have good greenhouses and cultivate seasonal cut flowers.

A floriculturist aged 89, resident of Mission Venglai locality too shares her goal and aspiration she narrates-

Kum 30 vel la nih ka chak. Hmunhma nei tha ila pangpar chin vak ka chak.

I would love to be 30 years old again. Had I enough space I would love to expand my flower cultivation.

6.3 Floral Designing as livelihood option

Floral design is the art of arranging plant elements, primarily flowers, to produce aesthetically pleasing and harmonious designs. It entails taking into consideration shape, texture, colour in balanced proportion to attain a harmonious and visually appealing composition. Floral design and event decoration are interconnected fields dedicated to altering spaces and occasions via the artistic composition of flowers and ornamental components. Floral designers utilise flowers, leaves, and various materials to make visually striking and cohesive arrangements that express particular moods and themes. Event decorators concentrate on the whole atmosphere of an event, integrating flower arrangements within a broader concept to generate an unforgettable experience. Floral design is the art of arranging flowers and other materials to create an aesthetically beautiful composition and visually pleasing space. Floral designers utilise a range of floral materials, including cut flowers, preserved specimens, and fake blooms, to create a specific aesthetic and pleasant ambiance.

In the Mizo society, floral designing and event decoration is fast emerging as livelihood option for skilled individuals generating good amount of income not only for women entrepreneurs but men too have entered this field indulging in the business as their means of livelihood. Using purposive sampling, 10 floral designers, five (5) females and five males (5) have been selected who are actually involved in the business.

Majority of the floral designers interviewed inform that floral designing is an inborn talent that they have and that they have had aesthetic interest on flowers since childhood and had been interested in arranging flowers since childhood. Only 20% (2) of the floral designers have undergone training, one under Megha Modi Floral Design School and one under Ferns and Petals Aizawl branch. Majority of the respondents have been indulging in the floristry business for more than a decade 20% (2) of them have their own floral shop who are both males. Though engaged in designing flowers majority of the respondents 90% (9) are not enrolled in any of the florist associations in Mizoram. Whereas one is an executive committee member of Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), and as such is often invited as resource person or trainer in the training sessions on flower arrangement organized by MFA and

horticulture department, government of Mizoram. Floral designers do not have any collaboration with the florist associations in their entrepreneurial endeavour.

The floral designers do not function as an association in the city, however, 70% (7) of the respondents have collaborative work in their business with the government arranging and designing flowers and decorating events in important government events and functions like Republic Day, Independence Day, Chapchar Kut, Remna Ni, G20 Summit, Anthurium Festival and on many minor occasions in different departments of the government. The respondents inform that they hardly work alone in their entrepreneurial activity, they hire a team of workers as helpers and some seek the help of their siblings and children. Depending on the kind of event, helpers are recruited and the number of helpers hired also differs.

Question on whether entrepreneurship on floral designing and arrangement is viable for self-employment was posed to the floral designers. One male floral designer aged 39, resident of Republic Veng narrates his thought on the issue-

Mahnia sum lakluhna tha tak ani tawh. Huaisen erawh a ngai a. Mahni in sawimawi thiam a, hmelhriat neih that a ngai bawk.

Yes, it is viable for self-employment. However, one needs to be courageous. Promoting oneself and having good acquaintances are important in this work.

A floral designer and a working woman aged 44, resident of Mission Veng share her opinion on the issue-

Aw sum lakluhna tha tak ani. Ka hman loh em avangin ka hnar fo a, office a ka thlakhat hlawh aia ka lakluh tam zawk chang a awm. Dawr nei tan pheii chuan a tha tawh lutuk.

Yes, it is a good source of income. I decline many offers due to lack of time. Many a times my entrepreneurial work generates more income than my monthly salary. Those having floral shops are doing far better.

Another male floral designer aged 32, resident of Aizawl Venglai shares his view on the issue-

Sum lakluh nan tha tawh lutuk. Taimak erawh a ngai hle. Nikhatah event pali te ka khawih thei.

It is a good source of income. Hard work is a must. I could decorate four events in a day.

Question was posed to the floral designers as to whether it is encouraging for other youths who have keen interest in this line of business to take up as their source of income. All the respondents claim that it is encouraging to take up the work as a source of income. The floral designer aged 39, resident of Chawnpui share his thought-

Thalai tuipui fuih zel a tha lutuk. A tuipui ho hi mimalin inah tuition angin training ka lo pe fo thin.

Yes, it is encouraging. I conduct personal training to those youths having interest in floral designing very often.

A working woman aged 45, resident of Upper Republic too shares her view-

Tuimi fuih zel chi ani. Tunah chuan mipa tan pawh a tha tawh lutuk, pangpar khawi thiam hi mipa a tam zawk an ni tawh.

It is indeed encouraging. Nowadays, floral designing is pursued by men and majority of the floral designers in the city are males now.

Another male respondent aged 32, resident of Aizawl Venglai too opines-

Infuih chi lutuk. Ka nau te ho pawh ka chher chhuak nual tawh. Kum thum hnuah an kal hrang thei.

It is encouraging. I have trained several of my helpers. They are able to set up their own business after three years.

Question was posed to the respondents on whether it is important on the part of the government to implement policies or introduce some kind of grants in order to help

the entrepreneurs become more sufficient in their line of business and thereby encourage more abled unemployed youths to enter into this kind of entrepreneurial activity. A male respondent aged 35, resident of Durtlang Mual Veng shares his thought on the issue-

Kut themthiamna tih hmasawwna lamah hian sawrkarin hma la se ka ti khawp mai. Mahni kut kawiha eizawwna hi chawi vawng zel se hma kan sawn ang.

I fervently would like the government to take steps in skill development programmes. If the government promotes entrepreneurship more, we would be progressing.

Another respondent a working woman aged 45, resident of Upper Republic opines-

Ka vei lutuk hei hi. Minister te pawh policy siam turin ka sawi hmuh tawh . Horticulture department hotute hnenah pawh thalai hna nei lo te tana che chhuak turin ka rawn thin.

I am very much concerned about this issue. I have informed the ministers of the state about the importance of implementing policies for entrepreneurs. I have urged the horticulture department officials too to take steps in entrepreneurship for unemployed youths.

While others opine that if the government take initiative and take steps in aiding entrepreneurs, for instance, by providing start up loans with small interest would help many of the entrepreneurs and make them self-reliant and independent.

The floral designers in their entrepreneurial endeavour are also very often engaged in decorating coffins with fresh flowers on the occasion of death in their local area and often outside their locality. The floral designers generate some amount of money by arranging coffin flowers when they receive calls from the deceased family to do the work. They earn some amount of income on such occasions and in some cases, they arrange the flowers free of cost too when the budget is low. Coffin decoration and giving flower bouquets on the occasion of death in a locality has been accepted as part of a Mizo culture, flowers have become indispensable part of a funeral

ceremony in the society. Floral designers earn income decorating coffins when requested, and arranging floral bouquet and floral basket for funeral ceremony is also another important source of income for floral designers. Floral designers skilled in designing flowers also earn income often by decorating graves with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas, a popular practice in the Mizo society. People decorate the graves of their loved ones and make use of the services of professional floral designers. The floral designers thus, support the importance placed on flowers on the occasion of death and funeral in the Mizo society.

Before a Mizo Christian marriage, handing over of bride price ritual and send off ceremony of the bride to be is conducted by the girl's family. Such venues are adorned with flowers in different shapes and texture; such venue decorations are a good source of generating income for floral designers and event decorators nowadays. Budgets are made by the bride's family and they hire the services of professional floral designers to make the event more special and memorable and create a pleasing ambience for the gathering. The respondents support the floral decorations and feel that it should continue to be incorporated in the pre-wedding bride price distribution and send off ceremony.

In terms of floral decorations in Mizo church wedding, significant change is noticed compared to the past years. Fresh flowers are now popularly utilized to make the arrangement beautiful and special and adorn the church's sacred space in church weddings. After solemnization of marriage in the church, wedding receptions are held normally in the church halls and are also held outdoors and also in other venues. Wedding reception venues are in some cases, lavishly decorated with flowers and other deco items to make the venue aesthetically pleasing and memorable, and thus, a relaxed ambience is created. Bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars have become an indispensable part of Mizo wedding decorations. Wedding floral arrangement in the church, decoration of wedding venues, bridal bouquets, boutonnieres for the men and bridal car decoration, the whole package is taken up by floral designers as per invitation they receive earning significant amount of income. Question was posed to the respondents on how often they get appointments to

decorate wedding reception venues during the wedding season annually. A male floral designer aged 32, resident of Aizawl Venglai shares his experience-

Vawi sawmriat vel kum khatah inneihna hmunhma cheiin ka che chhuak. Cheng 8000 package ka neih avangin mi sawm ka hlawh.

I have had eighty (80) appointments decorating wedding venues in a year. My package starts from Rs 8000/- which is why I am popularly invited.

Another male respondent aged 39, resident of Republic Veng shares his experience-

Kum khat chhunga inneih thla hun lai chuan vawi 20 vel inneih hmunhma cheiin ka che chhuak. Khawpui pawnah pawh min sawm ve fo thin.

During the wedding season within a year, I have had 20 appointments decorating wedding reception venues. I am frequently invited outside the city too.

Other respondents are invited usually ten to twenty times a year to decorate the church and wedding reception venues. Floral designers depending on the entrepreneurial activity for their livelihood learn to promote themselves through social media and each of them create Instagram and Facebook page advertising their workmanship and creations. The family members of the bridegroom and the floral designers discuss together the budget to be set aside for floral decorations involved in the wedding. The floral designers work on the decorations depending on the budget the family members are willing to spend for the wedding. Out of the total respondents, 50% (5) of the respondents believe that people are ready to spend much on floral decoration for wedding, whereas the other half argue that people are reluctant to spend much on floral decoration for wedding event. The respondents believe that approximately, people are willing to spend from Rs 20,000 – Rs 50,000 for decoration of a wedding event. The floral designers try to be self-sufficient in possessing the necessary tools and accessories needed in their line of entrepreneurial business. They are mostly well equipped with all the tools, if not, they borrow from

friends and rentals. They also try to be creative and innovative in their decorative ideas to create attractive and pleasing visual deco, avoiding repetition of ideas in their work.

Question was posed on the amount of income generated per wedding event to the respondents. The income generated differs greatly because depending on the budget planned for floral decoration by the family, the earnings of the floral designers differ too. The earnings of the floral designers per wedding event ranges from Rs 8000 - Rs 50,000. If the budget planned for the floral decoration per wedding is high, the income for the respondents is also high. The floral designers believe that the practice of decorating wedding venues should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo culture because flowers are necessary ingredients in wedding events and reception venues would be empty and boring without flowers. It is a significant source of income for the designers who are depending on the business for their livelihood. The respondents claim that they would be more than willing to spend much on floral decorations for their children's wedding, believing it is a special day to remember and as such it should be visually pleasing and of delightful ambience. One of the floral designers share his thought on his kids saying '*kum 14 an nih atangin an nupui pasal neihni a pangpar man atan bik budget ka dah tawh*' (I have been saving as a budget for floral decoration for my kids' wedding since they were 14 years of age).

In their pursuit of their entrepreneurial business, the floral designers frequently indulge in the task of arranging Sunday church flowers. In the different denomination churches in Mizoram, flower arrangement fresh or artificial adorn the church's sacred space on Sunday service on a regular basis. The church supports the presence of flowers at the altar on Sunday service because it adds beauty and enhance the ambience of the church sacred space. Special fund is also sanctioned by the church for flowers on festive occasions and conferences, special flower arrangement adorns the altar on these occasions involving the skill of professional floral designers in some of the churches. Such a task of flower arrangement is an important means of generating income for the floral designers. Question was posed to the respondents on whether they arrange flowers for the church on weekends for Sunday service. 90% (9) of the floral designers regularly work on flower arranging

task in different churches on Saturdays. In fact, some of them receive requests to arrange flowers in two to six churches in one Saturday, while some arrange in one or two churches per Saturday. Depending on the amount of money sanctioned by the church for Sunday flowers and additional contributions made by the appointed flower arrangers of the church, the floral designers' earnings differ. On an average the income generated by the floral designers from floral arrangement per church on Saturday ranges from Rs 800 – Rs 2000. The amount of income generated increases depending on the number of floral arrangements works carried out by the respondents in one day that is, on Saturday. The total approximate income generated through floral designing in different events including church annually by the respondents ranges from Rs 3 lakhs – Rs 10 lakhs. The highest income earned is Rs 13 lakhs a year by a male floral designer who is involved in the business full time as his primary source of income. 80% (8) of the respondents depend on their entrepreneurial endeavour on floral designing for their livelihood. The floral designers too believe that entrepreneurship on floral designing and decoration of event is viable for self-employment and that it generates significant income for their families, though the entrepreneurial activity does not involve regular work or on a daily basis.

6.4 Culture of floriculture

Floriculture is a vast field that includes cultivation and production of all types of ornamental plants. Floriculture crops include cut flowers, annuals and perennial flowering plants, houseplants, potted flowering plants and foliage plants. Such plants are cultivated in ground beds, in open fields or in containers in a greenhouse. The respondents in the present study are involved in different aspects of floriculture which for most of the floriculture entrepreneurs are the primary source of income. The floriculturists are involved in seasonal flower seed germination, anthurium cut flowers, perennial flower and plant propagation, importers of perennial flower and foliage plants, seasonal cut flowers and perennial flowers and those engaged in reselling floriculture goods.

Question on the aspect of floriculture the respondents indulge in was posed to them and presented in the following table.

Table 6.4.1 Aspects of floriculture

Aspects of floriculture	Frequency (%)
Seasonal flower seed germination	8 (5.2%)
Anthurium Cut flowers	23 (15%)
Perennial flowers and plant propagations	86 (56.2%)
Importers of perennial flowers and plants	28 (18.3%)
Seasonal cut flowers	5 (3.3%)
Resellers	3 (2.0%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table illustrates the various aspects of floriculture the respondents indulge in their line of business. From the table it is evident that majority of the respondents, that is, 81% (124) are engaged with perennial flowers and plants, which is the most popular floricultural activity amongst the floriculturists. 56.2% (86) of the respondents are involved solely in propagating perennial flowers and plants in their business. They make stem and leaf cuttings from such perennial flowers and plants; such cuttings are propagated frequently. When such propagated cuttings are rooted and becomes a plant-ling, they are re-potted and usually sold in bulk. The process of propagation continues depending on the season. While 18.3% (28) of the respondents indulges in importing perennial flowers and foliage plants. Floriculturists procure their perennial flowering plants and houseplants from other states and also import them from foreign countries mostly from China, Thailand and Indonesia. Such floriculturists import floricultural goods in bulk and sell them in bulk to wholesalers and resellers, and without repotting the flowers and plants, marketing them in the same condition as they arrive. These floriculturists may or may not propagate the imported perennial flowering plants and houseplants. They also export their imported floriculture goods to other districts of the state, to other states like North East India and other states. Whereas 15% (23) of the respondents are engaged in Anthurium

perennial cut flowers. These respondents are cultivating Anthurium cut flowers under greenhouse facility. These respondents normally have available space for greenhouse construction near their residences, or elsewhere on their vacant lands. The Anthurium cut flowers produced by them are exported outside the state to metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Bangalore and was also exported to foreign countries like UAE, London, Japan and Australia and recently Mizoram made history with first Anthurium flower export to Singapore on 28th February, 2025. This first Anthurium flower consignment from Mizoram to Singapore was exported by IVC Agrovat Pvt. Ltd. While 3.3% (5) of the respondents indulge in seasonal cut flowers at the same time. Seasonal cut flowers are usually produced from seeds, where flower seeds are made to germinate in nursery and seedlings planted in poly pots are then sold. The respondents are also engaged in the process of propagation of plant cuttings. 5.2% (8) of the respondents are engaged in the process of flower seed germination and selling flower seedlings solely in their business. Germination of flower seeds is a continuous process and the seedlings are sold in bulk. Out of the total respondents a small number that is, 2% (3) are termed as resellers of floriculture goods. They sell propagated plant lings and seedlings produced by actual floriculturists and floriculture goods imported by floriculturists. Resellers are those who sell these goods straight to customers and could be considered to be middlemen of floriculture industry playing the role of intermediary in a distribution chain in the state.

Question on the year they started their business on seed germination was posed to those respondents engaged in seasonal flower seed germination. Out of the total 153 respondents, only 3.3% (5) are engaged in flower seed germination. Almost all of the floriculturists have been engaged in the particular business for more than a decade, in fact some of them had started germinating flower seeds since 1982 and are still pursuing the activity. The process of flower seed germination and marketing the seedlings generate better income than other type of floriculture activity according to 60% (4) of the respondents engaged in seed germination. Depending on the season flowers are germinated continuously several times a year, the seedlings are transplanted to plastic bags and sold. Seeds are procured normally from other states.

80% (4) of the seed germinators claim that the business they are involved in is a secure livelihood option for floriculture entrepreneurs and they also inform they would encourage other people to pursue the particular business as a means of livelihood. The floriculturists dealing with seed germination manage the business independently and they are the sole decision makers in the business.

Cut flowers are harvested with stalk especially for arrangement in vases. The most popular cut flowers are perennial Anthurium flowers which are long lasting and used in decoration and bouquet preparation. Out of the total 153 respondents, 15% (23) are engaged in Anthurium cut flowers. The respondents have been selected as beneficiaries for Anthurium cultivation by the state Horticulture Department. The Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram introduced the first commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers in 2002 under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India. Anthurium farmers have been involved in the business for more than a decade and they are provided with planting materials and inputs free of cost by the government. Such inputs are sufficient for the cultivation of Anthurium flower plants. Out of the 15% (23) Anthurium cultivators, 65.2% (15) have other source of income other than Anthurium cultivation, and 34.8% (8) rely on anthurium cultivation as their primary source of income. 60.9% (14) of the cultivators inform that the particular business provides a stable source of income for the household, while the rest 39.1% (9) argue that the business does not generate a stable source of income for the family. Majority of the Anthurium cultivators are able to cut flowers regularly and 91.3% (21) of the cultivators participate in the annual Anthurium festival organized by the state government, and their products are used for decorating the venue of the event which eventually helps boost the production of Anthurium. The Anthurium festival generate good revenue for both the government and the Anthurium cultivators.

Plant propagation has always been a part of flower and plant gardening. In Mizoram, cuttings are made from perennial flowering plants and foliage plants. Out of the total 153 respondents, 50.3% (77) are involved in plant propagation, stem and leaf cuttings are made and planted in poly pots, when such cuttings are rooted, the propagated plant lings are then stocked and sold in bulk. Propagation is a simple low-

cost way of multiplying perennial flowers and houseplants. Out of the total 77 respondents engaged in plant propagation, 96.1% (74) claim that this particular business is more profitable than other types of floriculture generating income regularly for the family. Majority of the respondents that is, 68.8% (53) of them procure the flowers and foliage plants they are cultivating in containers from other states and other local florists. While 19.5% (15) of the floriculturists have imported their floriculture goods from other foreign countries such as China and Thailand. At the same time, 11.6% (9) of the respondents procure their flowers and green plants from other states and foreign country. The majority of the floriculturists involved in this line of business (87%) propagate the cuttings of their flowering plants and the houseplants regularly, and 66.2% are able to sell the propagated plant-lings regularly. The floriculturists in this line of floricultural activity hardly include Mizo native flowers and majority (92.2%) claim that that Mizo native flowers have been replaced by other imported floricultural goods which eventually thrives in the climatic conditions of the state. While 85.7% of the respondents believe that such native flowers should continue to be propagated and made popular among the people in the state.

Out of the total 153 respondents studied, 18.3% (28) of the floriculturists procure and import floricultural goods from outside the state. These floriculturists have been importing goods from foreign countries like China and Thailand, and from other states of the country for more than a decade. Out of the 28 respondents who imports floricultural goods, majority 85.7% (24) believe that procured goods from outside the state is better in terms of profit than other aspects of floriculture. Further, 78.6% (22) of those who import goods argue that this line of floriculture business provides a secure means of livelihood for the floriculturists. Most of the respondents (64.2%) procure their floriculture goods from different parts of the country, while 35.8% of them import and procure their goods from different parts of the country and from other countries. Majority 42.8% (12) of the respondents procure goods from outside the state twice a month usually, while 35.7% (10) import goods from outside the state and foreign countries but only once a month. While 21.5% (6) procure their goods depending on their sales. If the sale of imported floriculture goods is fast, and sold in

bulk, then the floriculturist put orders and procure the goods again. The cycle goes on for the respondents. The sale of such imported goods is moderate according to the majority, that is, 78.3% (18) of the respondents, while 35.7% (10) claim that they are able to sell the imported floriculture goods at a good rate. Question on whether imported plants and flowers have replaced the native flowers of the state was posed to the respondents. The majority 85.8% (24) of the respondents believe that imported flowers have replaced the native flowers of the state, while 14.2% do not believe so. The respondents believe that people's aesthetic sense in houseplants and flowers have shifted towards international and national exotic and rare plants and flowers considering the recent trend in import of flowers and houseplants.

Out of the total 153 respondents, 3.3% (5) are in the seasonal cut flower business. The respondents procure the seasonal flower seeds they grow mostly from the local florists. The cut flower seeds are germinated and the flower seedlings are grown in open land, some of the respondents cultivate the flower crops under greenhouse facility and the blooms are harvested for sale in the market. The flowers are cut once and sometimes twice a week and sold in the local market. Out of the 5 respondents, 60% (3) believe that cut flower business is more profitable and generate a good amount of income than other activities. They believe that the business is beneficial as a source of income for the family. Majority of the respondents would encourage others to pursue the activity as a means of livelihood. The business has improved their standard of living since they started this particular business. The respondents who inform that the business has not improved their standard of living argues that seasonal cut flower cultivation is not profitable and the income generated is not enough to improve the standard of living of the whole family. The respondents inform that they are financially independent due to the business they are pursuing and the respondents are able to manage the finances independently though they may not be the head of the family.

Reselling is another aspect of floriculture pursued by floriculturists. Resellers buy floriculture products in bulk from the actual floriculture farmers with the objective of selling them at a higher price, receiving discounts from the floriculturists. They thus, connect the actual floriculture entrepreneurs and consumers through the act of

reselling goods to end users. Out of the total respondents of the present study, a meagre 2% (3) involves in reselling of floriculture products to consumers. They have been indulging in the reselling business for a decade. They are able to regularly procure at wholesale rate the floriculture products from the actual floriculture farmers. They believe and claim that the reselling business is worth pursuing as a means of livelihood. The resellers also inform that the business generate regular income for the household. The respondents inform that they normally resell imported goods from other states and other countries, propagated young plant-lings are also purchased in bulk from floriculturists to be resold. Some of the resellers also deals with germinated seedlings of seasonal flowers. The resellers inform that reselling of imported floriculture goods which arrives rooted in containers and poly pots, and does not require repotting immediately, and they are distributed to customers in the same condition they arrive. Resellers do export the goods they have procured from the importers to other states and to foreign countries like Myanmar. The resellers informs that they are able to meet the household daily requirements from the income generated from the sale of floriculture products, while 33.3% (1) however, argue that they are not able to meet the daily requirement of the household. For some of the resellers who are not able to meet their daily requirements of the household, 33.3% (1) of them inform that they have other source of income in the family, while another 33.3% depend on the business for their main means of livelihood.

6.5 Contribution of Stakeholders

Non-Governmental Organisations are gaining significance in the realm of development. They serve as a crucial connection between the state and the populace at the grassroots level. They exhibit diversity in organisational structure, culture, and the challenges they address. They are essential in promoting local activities regarding mobilisation and environmental development. Local individuals or stakeholders can achieve significant changes (Colney&Ralte,2024: 19).

The evolution of floriculture as a business venture in Mizoram is a relatively recent occurrence. The need for both native and new flowers in the hotel and wedding sectors has reportedly enhanced the floriculture trend within the socio-cultural and

religious framework of contemporary Mizoram. In Mizoram, the floriculture sector has evolved as a significant entrepreneurial activity, demonstrating substantial potential for creating profitable self-employment opportunities, particularly for women. Entrepreneurial ventures in floriculture enhance income generation and improve livelihoods, particularly for small-scale farmers and women in the state. The majority of women engaged in floriculture originate from an underprivileged segment of society, lacking advanced education and possessing limited entrepreneurial skills. Consequently, florist associations play a crucial role in enhancing their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge (*Ibid*: 20).

The leaders of three different florist associations namely Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-Operative Society (ZAGCS) and leaders of Non-Governmental Organization namely, *Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) and government officials have been interviewed and interacted upon as key informants.

6.5.1 Florist Associations in Promotional Action

In the context of floriculture in Mizoram, there are three prominent florist associations which specifically focus their attention to work for the interest of floriculture entrepreneurs. These are the Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), the *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS). The leaders of the three associations have been selected as key informants and they were interviewed.

Floriculture activity flourished in Mizoram from its nascent stage with the formation of the first florist association known as Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA), which was founded on 16th November 1997 in Aizawl with the motto 'Blooming Mizoram with Flowers'. It has 27 branches within and outside Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society was formed in 2002 by the Anthurium plant growers in the state. The *Pangpar Zuar* Association was founded in 2017 by floriculturists who are not members of MFA and who are involved in the business of importing floricultural goods from outside the state.

Flower cultivation in Mizoram is of a recent origin. It emerged as a commercial activity from the 1980s on a small scale. The Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram came into existence when the Mizoram Government issued a trifurcation order of the Agriculture Department in June 1993. Mr Z.Dengngura, the then Joint Director of the newly established Horticulture Department said in his article '*Zoram Timawitu*' in MFA Silver Jubilee Souvenir '*Mizo hmeichhiate zingah pangpar ngaina, mahni tui tuia pangpar la khawma, in bul vela ching an awm a*' (there were Mizo women who loved flowers collecting different varieties and growing them around their residences) (2022:21). A Flower Show was organized by the Horticulture Department in February 1995 to commemorate one of the important Mizo festivals called *Chapchar Kut*. However, the number of flowers showcased were not many. The Horticulture Department sponsored the flower show and the prizes too. The Horticulture Department officials organized a meeting of all the prize winners, and the Joint director advised and suggested the formation of a Floriculture Association and an association was born on this same day with seven office bearers. Then, on 3rd August 1995 the newly elected Office bearers of the association had a meeting with Mr Z. Dengngura the then joint director of Horticulture Department at his office chamber and the meeting resolved to conduct a training on how to cultivate and grow flowers successfully. On the 29th August 1995 training was successfully conducted for the floriculturists where Government officials, expert in flower/plant care and flower seeds germination acted as resource persons. On this day, the constitution and rules for the association was released and accepted, which was prepared by the senior advisor Mr. K.Lalduhawma. The name of the association was changed to Mizoram Floriculturist Association on the same day (MFA, Silver Jubilee Souvenir 1997-2022 (2022: 108-109).

As the number of floriculturists increased, in the mid-1990s two associations existed side by side, *Pangpar Ching* Association formed in 1994 in the southern part of Aizawl city and Mizoram Floriculturists Association in 1995 in the northern part. Such associations had similar interests but functioned and worked separately for the progress and development of their respective entrepreneurial activities. A member of *Pangpar Ching* Association said she was a committee member of the then

association and that with the formation of the association, people started to take interest in floriculture and the number of floriculturists increased pursuing similar interests.

As the then joint director of Horticulture Department advised the members of the two associations to merge into one association to enable the floriculturists to progress further in their entrepreneurship and also because it was the interest of the Department too to develop floriculture in the state. The members of the two associations after several meetings arrived at a consensus to amalgamate into one association and on 14th November 1997 a joint meeting was held at Horticulture Conference Hall and a new association named Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA) with a motto "*Mizoram pangpara tihvul*" (Blooming Mizoram with flowers) was formed.

Increase in the number of members led to the creation of its own constitution and rules for the association in 1998. The MFA is registered under The Mizoram Society Registration Act (Act 3 of 1997) on 13th October 1998. The registration number is SR-10/97/MZ-RFS of 1997. The registration includes the MFA Headquarters and its Branches. Office bearers and executive committee members hold the post for two years. The 2022-2024 MFA Headquarters has 9 Office Bearers and 83 executive committee members with the founder president Pi Lalnuntluangi as the current president of the association and Pi Vanlalzawni as the general secretary. MFA currently has 27 branches within Mizoram. Members of the association consists of those actual self- employed floricultural entrepreneurs where many of the members are engaged in the floricultural activity for their source of livelihood and some are pursuing the activity as their additional source of income and leisure time hobby.

Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA) as the pioneer association has holistic development of floriculture as its main focus and has specific objectives and was established to promote members' shared objectives. The MFA has several objectives:

- a) Production of flowers by propagating and germinating as much as possible in Mizoram
- b) Advancement of floriculturists

- c) Marketing of flowers and development of floriculture business
- d) To inculcate and instill cooperative spirit amongst floriculturists
- e) To help the needy by encouraging them to take up floriculture
- f) To assist and cooperate with the Government in their steps toward developing floriculture business
- g) To uphold honesty and be trustworthy in floriculture related activities
- h) Not to import flowers and plants from outside except those flower plants which are impossible to be propagated in Mizoram (MFA Silver Jubilee Souvenir 1997-2022 (2022: 2).

The association gives utmost priority to one's own creation through propagations of leaf and stem cuttings of plants and flowering plants, promoting unity and strength in their pursuit of common interest. MFA since its inception plays a significant role in encouraging entrepreneurship in floriculture in the state. The association welcome new members any time with the payment of Rs 100/- as membership fee and Rs 50/- as annual fee. The amount of membership fee and annual fee has been raised recently to Rs 200/- and Rs 100/- respectively. Annual fee has to be renewed every year if one wants to be a member continuously. Membership drive is mostly done during flower shows and fairs organized by the association. At the time of field work, the association had over 500 members all over Mizoram, however, members residing in Aizawl who are actually involved in the floriculture business to generate income falls down to 170 in number as per 2020 enrollment.

In 2002, the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram, initiated commercial-scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers as part of the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in the northeastern states of India. Anthurium was first cultivated by 24 farmers in 2002, and the number of cultivators has expanded over the years. The Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) was established in 2002 by Anthurium cultivators, currently there are 80 active members in Aizawl, the capital of Mizoram. The society is registered under the Mizoram Co-operative Societies Act (Colney & Ralte, 2024:21). The membership fee is Rs 500/- and an annual fee of Rs 50/- is paid by members. In order to become a member of the society, an Anthurium cultivator need to possess at

least 1000 Anthurium plants and should actually produce 50 Anthurium cut flowers per month. Fees are paid by members as they enroll themselves. Members are free to enroll themselves in other florist associations if their floriculture endeavour includes other perennial and annual flowers. The ZAGCS works hand in hand with the government and fresh beneficiaries are provided planting material, shade nets, greenhouse material, coco peat, fertilisers and pesticides free of cost by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. The number of Anthurium cultivators increased significantly, and the horticulture department facilitated the fresh beneficiaries till 2019. However, the progress was slowed down by the covid-19 pandemic as selection of new beneficiaries for Anthurium cultivation could not continue due to the pandemic lockdown during 2020- 2021. Further, unlike other florist associations, dealing with cut flowers Anthurium farmers export their products to other metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Mumbai, the cut flowers are also exported abroad for instance, UAE, London, Japan and Australia and recently Mizoram made history with first Anthurium flower export to Singapore on 28th February, 2025. This first Anthurium flower consignment from Mizoram to Singapore was exported by IVC Agrovat Pvt. Ltd.

As a result of growing aesthetic sense in flowers and opportunity for entrepreneurial activity offered by floriculture, there is existence of multiple florist associations in the state. Another florist association is *Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA)*, which was formed in 2017. The association is not registered as yet and there are 180 enrolled as members as per 2020 enrollment. The main objective of the association is upliftment of floriculturists especially those depending on the business as their primary means of livelihood. The membership fee is Rs 100 and Rs 200/- is contributed by members as *chhiatni thatni* fund (joy and sorrow/grief), members pay Rs 300/- as membership fee plus *chhiatni thatni* fund. Those interested in becoming members are welcome any time and membership drive is frequently done while having florist fairs. Unlike the Mizoram Florist Association which was formed under the advice and supervision of Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram, the *Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA)* does not have any collaborative works with the government. In

all the different florist associations, those interested become members of the respective associations and pay membership fee as they enroll.

Question on whether as a member of the association the respondents think floriculture industry has gained importance over the years was posed to the different florist association leaders who are the key informants. The respondents believe that floriculture business has gained importance over the years compared to the past years. The respondents also support the increasing importance given to flowers and plants in the Mizo daily culture.

Question was posed to the three florist association leaders on whether they organize flower show or florist fairs to showcase/increase market for the products of the florists. Out of the total 7 florist association leaders, 71.4% (5) of the respondents inform that their association organizes flower show and florist fair, an opportunity to showcase and sell their floricultural products. Organizing florist fairs three to four times annually, where self-employed floriculture entrepreneurs could exhibit and showcase different varieties of flowers and make significant sales and generate income is one of the significant steps taken by MFA and PPZA. Such florist fairs are organized to encourage entrepreneurs to showcase their creations such as their own propagated plants and flowers and also provide a platform to sell their products and goods and thereby generate income. The leaders of MFA and PPZA too being floriculturists themselves participate in the florist fairs organized by them exhibiting their creations and products. The leaders of the association believe that such florist fairs are beneficial and conducive for the growth of floriculture. Whereas 28.6% (2) of the respondents belonging to ZAGCS inform that display or exhibition of Anthurium flowers is organized once annually which is sponsored by the Horticulture Department, government of Mizoram. The members of ZAGCS participate in the annual Anthurium festival organized by the government where they showcase and exhibit and make significant sales of their products in the form of potted Anthurium plants. Anthurium flowers are shipped to other big cities and abroad, export rejected ones are sold in the local market.

Question on whether such florist fairs are beneficial and conducive for the growth of floriculture was posed to the leaders of the florist associations. All the respondents believe that florist fairs and exhibition of flowers are beneficial and conducive for the development of floriculture. Question was further posed to the respondents on the way such florist fairs are beneficial for floriculturists. The leaders of MFA share their ideas and opinions on how the floriculturists benefitted the florist fairs organized by the association.

The president of MFA aged 67, resident of Electric Veng locality opines-

Florist fair hi an nghah fak ber ani a, pangpar zuar te in hralh theihna hun ber ani.

They eagerly await the time for florist fair because floriculturists make significant sales at this time.

The secretary of MFA aged 58, resident of Tuikhuahtlang locality too opines-

Ina an in hralh ai chuan fair ah an in hralh nasa zawk.

Floriculturists are able to make significant sales in florist fair than they do at home.

The Vice-president of PPZA, aged 43, resident of Dinthar veng locality shares her thoughts-

Social media-a in zuar thiam lo nu kum upa lam tan inhralhna a siam a, an hlawkpui ve thin fair hi.

Older women unable to market their floricultural goods through social media have a good opportunity to make significant sales in florist fairs.

The treasurer of PPZA, aged 53, resident of Dawrpui Vengthar locality too opines-

Pawl member tam zawkin fair hi an nghah fak a ni ve a, an thil neih that leh mawi te an lo in khek ve hram hram thin fair-a hralhah.

Most of the members await eagerly for the florist fairs because they keep their best products to be showcased and to be sold in the florist fair.

The president of ZAGCS, aged 56, resident of Durtlang Leitan Hermon Veng locality shares her idea-

Anthurium par thawn chhuah tlak loh tlema hmelhem deuh te, pot-a phun te Horticulture Department in exhibition min siam sakah kan tiral ve thin a, tin, a hnah khawi pawlh tur te kan hralh thin bawk.

Members have a chance to sell their export reject Anthurium cut flowers and potted Anthurium plants in the exhibition organized by Horticulture Department, besides the leaves are also sold for arrangement.

All the leaders of florist associations besides being the Association's office bearers are also engaged in floricultural activity earning additional income through pursuing their hobby. They also have taken significant steps in promoting floriculture entrepreneurship in the state. The leaders of the florist associations share the steps taken by their associations in augmenting and promoting floriculture business among the people.

The president of MFA aged 67, resident of Electric Veng locality and the secretaries of the association shares the kind of steps taken by the association-

- 1) *Pangpar chi a man tlawma lei tur sawrkarah kan dil sak thin*
 - 2) *Greenhouse sakna hmanrua kan dilpui*
 - 3) *Curcuma pangpar chin kan dil bawk a, min tih hlawhtlin saka, a ching tur pawh thlan an ni.*
 - 4) *Pangpar tang vih nun, pangpar chi kui dan leh pangpar khawi training kan pe thin.*
-
- 1) *Request the concerned department of the government to supply flower seeds at subsidized rate frequently.*

- 2) *Frequent request made to provide greenhouse materials at subsidized rates to needy floriculturists.*
- 3) *Request made to cultivate Curcuma flower rhizomes to the government which has been accepted and beneficiaries selected.*
- 4) *Training organized for floriculturists on how to propagate leaf and stem cuttings, seed germination and flower arrangement.*

The Vice-president and the treasurer of PPZA, too shares the kind of steps taken by their association-

Florist fair kan buatsaih bakah hian member mamawh te tan Horticulture Department ah greenhouse tur hmanrua kan dilpuia, tin, pangpar chi pawh a tlawma min pe turin kan dila, kan hlawhtling ve zauh zauh thin.

Besides organizing florist fairs for the members, on behalf of the needy members we approach the Horticulture Department to provide us with greenhouse materials and flower seeds at subsidized rates, we were successful sometimes.

The president and the general secretary of ZAGCS too shares the steps taken by their society in promoting floriculture entrepreneurship-

- 1) *Leitha leh cocopeat te a man tlawma lei tur Horticulture Departmentah kan dil thin.*
- 2) *Anthurium chingtute an chinna hmunah kan tlawh kual.*
- 3) *Pangpar kung hrisel dan tur leh pangpar hleh hnua sawngbawl zui dan training kan buatsaih thin.*
- 4) *Shade net tlawm zawka lei theih tura pek chhuah*

- 1) *Request the Horticulture Department to provide good quality soil and cocopeat blocks at subsidized rates.*
- 2) *We conduct Anthurium farm visits*
- 3) *Organise training on maintaining plant health and post- harvest management of Anthurium cut flowers.*

4) *Providing shade net at subsidized rate*

The culture of *Tlawmngaihna* is found to set in, in the course of promotional action of the florist associations in Mizoram. *Tlawmngaihna* among the Mizos is a moral code of conduct which is characterised by selflessness, self-sacrifice, honesty and altruistic feeling for others. Questions on whether the florist associations play a role in aiding the floriculturists in need of help and on whether the florist associations support any benevolent work beyond floriculture was posed to the stakeholders and presented in the following table.

Table 6.5.1 The Culture of *Tlawmngaihna*

Aiding needy floriculturists	Frequency (%)
Yes	4 (57.1%)
No	3 (42.9%)
Total	7 (100%)
Supporting benevolent work	Frequency (%)
Yes	5 (71.4%)
No	2 (28.6%)
Total	7 (100%)

The table demonstrates whether the florist associations play a role in aiding the floriculturists in need of help. Out of the total 7 respondents, 57.1% (4) informs that florist associations play a role in aiding needy floriculturists. The leaders of PPZA and ZAGCS are the ones who play a significant role in helping needy floriculturists in cash and in kind.

Whereas 42.9% (3) who are the leaders of MFA who are not playing any further role in aiding needy floriculturists as an association. However, MFA office bearers contribute money to give as aid to members who met accident and those suffering from terminal disease. The table also indicates whether the florist associations support any benevolent work beyond floriculture. Out of the total 7 stakeholders,

71.4% (5) of the florist leaders inform that their association support benevolent work beyond floriculture. The MFA leaders and leaders of PPZA inform that their associations support benevolent work beyond floriculture and are practically involved in extending their aesthetic interest in flowers for the community at large.

Further, question on the way aid is given to needy floriculturists was posed to the leaders of the florist associations and the respondents put forth their thoughts on the issue-

The Vice-president and treasurer of PPZA informs the way needy floriculturists are given aid-

Committee member hovin pawisa thawhkhawmin dam lo te tanpuina kan pe thin. Chhiatni thatni fund atangin chhiat tawk te ral leh inneihnaa present pekte kan kalpui thin.

The committee members of the association contribute money to help ailing members in terms of cash. Condolence gift (inralna) in cash and wedding presents are given from chhiatni thatni fund (fund collected to be used in times of grief and joy) to needy members.

The president and the general secretary of ZAGCS informs how the association gives aid to needy floriculturists-

Covid-19 boruak lai te, flight cancel a awm chang te hian kan pangpar thawn chhuah theih loh a awm chang te in mi harsa zualte price support te kan in siam a, a sum angin kan in tanpui thin.

During the Covid-19 days and when our products could not be air lifted due to cancellation of flights, we make price support from profit earned through other sales and we help needy members financially.

The Mizoram Florist Association does not play specific role in aiding floriculturists in need of help, however, members suffering from terminal disease and facing tragedy or any misfortune are aided in terms of cash contributed by the office bearers of the association. Gifting bouquets as condolence gift on the occasion of death of close relatives of members of the association is another way of supporting each other

in the society. Question on whether the florist associations are involved in any benevolent work beyond floriculture was narrated by the leaders of the associations.

The leaders of MFA narrate their actions and involvement in benevolent work in the community –

- 1) *Lengpui airport civil aviation nena tangkawpin pangpar chi hrang hrang phunin kan chei thin. Budget estimate kan siam a sawrkarin min pe thin. Hnatlang kan nei fo tifaian.*
- 2) *Mahatma Gandhi lim dahna garden kan cheimawi thin. UD&PA in pawisa tlem min pe a, pangpar kan phun mawi thin.*
- 3) *RG Stadium hmunhma kan chei kum hnih chhung, mahse kan chhonzawm ta lo.*
- 4) *Pangpar chin dan leh a khawi dan training kan buatsaih fo thin*
- 5) *Kum tawp luanchhuah kan nei thin, Cancer hospital, Civil hospital, Synod hospital ah te mattress leh khum te kan pe ve a, pawisa in kan pui bawk. CM Relief Fund ah pawisa kan pe ve thin bawk.*

- 1) *Working together with Civil Aviation we are involved in landscaping the Lengpui airport, planting different flowers. We prepare budget estimate and the government sanctions the money. We often organize social work at the airport vicinity.*
- 2) *The mini garden with Mahatma Gandhi statue in it is maintained by us, UD&PA sanctions fund for the expenditure on flower plants.*
- 3) *We planted different flower plants at Rajiv Gandhi Stadium for two years, but we have discontinued the work due to lack of water.*
- 4) *We organise training frequently on how to grow and care for flowers and on the art of flower arrangement.*
- 5) *We are often involved in charity work at the end of a year where we gift mattress and beds and give cash to needy patients at the*

Cancer hospital, Civil hospital and Synod hospital. We donate money to Chief Minister's Relief Fund too.

The leaders of PPZA too, narrate their benevolent work-

- 1) *Synod hospital hmunhma kan tihfai saka, an pangpar kung te kan tan sak.*
- 2) *Sarawn pangpar nung tha sa te kan pe a, an pangpar te kan phun that sak.*
- 3) *Civil hospital hmunhma tihfai sak kan tuma kan la puitlin lo deuh.*

- 1) *We cleaned and cleared the vicinity of Synod hospital; we also trimmed their plants.*
- 2) *We donated potted bougainvillea flowering plants to the hospital and we repotted their plants.*
- 3) *We are planning to conduct a cleanliness drive at the Civil hospital, but the plan is still a plan and has not been achieved as yet.*

The leaders of the florist associations all (100%) believe that the floriculture industry has good prospects for income generation and self-employment. The president of the MFA shares her thought and says '*La naupang deuh ila sum lakluh nana hman ka chak*' (Had I been younger, I would have loved to generate income through floriculture). The secretary of the association too shares her opinion and says '*Hmeithai tan hian pangpar zawrh hi a tha viau in ka hria*' (I believe floriculture business is good for widows especially).

Question was posed to the leaders of the florist associations on whether they maintain good and cordial relation with other florist associations of the state. All the leaders of the florist associations that is, 100% (7) of them claim to have good relation with one another. However, the leaders of MFA claim that they do try to maintain good relation with other associations especially with Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) and other small associations. MFA restricts and prevents its members from procuring floriculture products from outside the state

and selling them to clients directly. MFA promote propagations, and encourages members to generate income through their own creations and products. Contrary to MFA, those floriculture entrepreneurs who procure goods from outside the state and abroad, and who disburse such imported goods directly to clients felt the need to form another association which could meet their interest, thus PPZA was formed. The secretary of the MFA shares her thoughts and opinion on the reason why their interests often clash with the other florist association that is, the Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA). She argues, '*Direct a phai lam pangpar chah a, an zuar mai hi kan duhdan a ni lova, kan in pawh tha lem lo*' (Procuring floricultural goods from other states and selling them straight to customers as they arrive clash with our interest, which is why our relationship is rather strain). The general secretary of MFA too opines '*Mahni kutkawih ni lo, phai ami pangpar chah a zawrh leh nghal hian thatchhiat min zirtir*' (Procuring flowers and plants from outside the state and selling them straight to customers which is not the handiwork of floriculturists teaches us idleness and laziness). On the other hand, the president of ZAGCS narrates, '*MFA nen chuan kan in kungkaih tha, functionah te kan in sawm tawn thin. Flower show ah te kan in pui. PPZA nen chuan kan in hnimhnai lem lo*' (We are in good terms with MFA, we invite each other in our respective functions. We assist each other in flower shows. We however, maintain distant relation with PPZA'). The vice-president of PPZA too narrates, '*MFA khan kan din tirh khan min hmu mawh deuh a, an member kan pawl-a member ni thote kan fair-a thute an rawn hnawt chhuak a*'. (When we formed our association in the initial stage, MFA leaders and members shunned us and at times drove away their members sitting at our florist fair who had dual membership with us PPZA). The treasurer of PPZA however shares the kind of relation they have with MFA and says, '*Mizoram Florist Association in an silver jubilee an lawmin, PPZA office bearer ho min rawn sawm ve*' (When Mizoram Florist Association celebrated their silver jubilee, PPZA office bearers were invited).

In response to the question on the type of support or aid the florist associations get from the government; the leaders of the florist associations shared their thoughts and opinions on the issue.

The leaders of MFA inform the kind of aid and support they get from the government

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Florist fair hmun hawhna min tum sak thin a, tin, Chapchar Kut pangpar show senso min tumsak bawk thin. Pangpar chi min chah sakin a tlawmin min pe a, greenhouse hmanruate, hmanrua te leh pangpar tui pekna 75% discount in min pe bawk thin. Flower show state dangah kan tel ve na tur min tum sakin, khawpui lian Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkotta leh Guwahati tlawha zinna tur kan dil thin. Foreign ram a bikin Thailand rama pangpar chinchang zirchiang turin min kal tir bawk thin.

The government usually sponsors our florist fairs and Chapchar Kut flower show organized by us. As per our request the government provides flower seeds, greenhouse material, gardening tools and watering cans at 75% subsidized rates. The government sponsors our participation in flower shows of other states. We also frequently request the government to sponsor visits to big cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkotta and Guwahati. The government also sponsors visit to flower gardens abroad to Thailand in the past and recently.

The leaders of ZAGCS too shares the kind of support they get from government-

Sawrkar atangin society angin greenhouse sakna hmanrua te, pangpar kung leh a kaihhnawih te, tui pekna te, pangpar damdawi te, damdawi kahna te, lei tih thawlina te, pangpar chaw tha te a thlawnin kan dawng a, 10% leka lei te kan nei.

As an association we are frequently supplied free of cost and buy at 10% of the original price from the government greenhouse material, planting material, drip irrigation, sprayer, fertilizers, pesticides, cocopeat.

The leaders of PPZA also shares the kind of support they get from the government-

Tanpuina kan dawng ve vak lo. Min pek ve ber chu kan florist fair hmunhma hman man min tum sak ve zeuh zeuh thin. Greenhouse sakna kan dil min pe ve zauh zauh.

We do not receive much aid from the government. The one thing the government does for us is sponsor our florist fair sometimes. We are sometimes successful in our request to the government for greenhouse material.

Question on whether the florist associations seek aid from the government for the interest of the members of the associations was posed to the leaders of the florist associations and 100% of the florist associations claim that they do so frequently. Question was further posed to the stakeholders as to whether the government fulfill their demands. The leaders of the different florist leaders share their experience with the government.

The leaders of the MFA share their experience with the government when they seek aid for the interest of the members-

Sawrkara kan thil dil leh duh kan thlen hian pawisa leh scheme an neih chuan min lo pui a, hlawhtlin chang kan nei a, hlawhchham chang a awm bawk.

In our effort of seeking aid from the government, depending on the availability of funds and schemes we are normally successful and at times we are also unsuccessful too.

The leaders of ZAGCS too, share their experience-

Sawrkara lam hian theihtawp min chhuahpui thin. Kan hlawhtling tlangpui thin. Thliin greenhouse a tihchhiat te hian, a thla kan la a, sawrkarah kan thlen a, subsidy in min lo pe thin.

The government try its best to fulfill our demands. We are very often successful in getting our demands. When strong winds destroy

members' greenhouses, we take pictures of the greenhouse and we approach the government. We are usually successful in getting new ones at a subsidized rate.

The leaders of PPZA share their thoughts too –

Sawrkara tanpuina kan dil te hi kan hlawhtling ve zauh zauh, hlawhtling khat khawp mai.

We are successful sometimes when we seek aid from the government, but we are usually unsuccessful in getting our demands.

The condition of the different florist associations differs in relation to meeting their demands and seeking aid from the government. The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) is a registered association formed under the advice and supervision of the officials of the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. The MFA works hand in hand with the government on different government official functions and have collaborative roles. The Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) is a registered association under Mizoram Co-operative Society and was formed by Anthurium plant farmers. Commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium plants was introduced by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states in 2002. The Horticulture Department provides assistance and planting materials and inputs free of cost to the beneficiaries. The association thus works hand in hand with the government and work together in a collaborative way. Whereas the *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) is an unregistered association formed in 2017 by a group of floriculturists who are in the business of procuring floricultural goods from outside the state and abroad. However, more members have enrolled in the association over the years. The PPZA does not work in connection with the government in a collaborative manner like the other two associations.

Question on whether the florist associations act as pressure groups when their demands are not fulfilled by the government was posed to the stakeholders. 100% (7) of the stakeholders claim that they do act as pressure groups in pressurizing the government about meeting the demands made on behalf of the members. The leaders

of florist associations often approach the government and remind the government when their demands are not fulfilled.

Question was posed to the stakeholders on the problems and challenges faced by their association. The different florist associations narrated the challenges they faced as an association. The leaders of MFA share their thought on the issue-

Pangpar kar tluana zawrhna tur hmun lian tha kan mamawh a, sawrkar kan nawr mek a. Flower showhouse hi kan la nei thei lo a, kan mamawhna a sang hle mai. Hmun zau tha nei ila, All India Flower Show neih te hi kan chak a, mahse a awm lo. Tin, pangpar zuar pawl dang awm hnu hian thil buaithlak a awm ve fo mai. Member te kan hloh zauh zauh, kan strict si a. Florist fair neih kan tum hian min lo tih khalth chang an nei thin a, rilru a na ve duh khawp mai.

We really need a big space where we could showcase our floriculture products and sell them the whole week, we are requesting the government for such a space. We are in great need of a flower showhouse. We would love to host All India Flower Show, but due to lack of sufficient space in the city we are not able to do so. Since the formation of another florist association, we have lost several members because we are very strict and we try to maintain discipline. They have every intention of organizing florist fair before we do which often hurt our feelings.

The leaders of PPZA narrate a different view –

Harsatna kan tawk em em lo. Sawrkar atang registration tih nan office neih a ngai a, signboard te neih a ngaia, kan la nei si lova, pawl hming registration kan la ti thei lo.

We do not face much problem or challenges as an association. In order to register the association in the government, having an office

and a signboard is mandatory, since we do not have both, registration of the association is still pending.

The leaders of ZAGCS too shares their problem –

Anthurium par hi a chhuak tam lo, kar khat danah kan thawn chhuak, sik leh sa in thlak thin avang ani a. Thlawhna thawnna turah kan buai fo bawk. Mahse tunah chuan Indigo thlawhnain kan thawn tawh e. Phurh man sang hi kan harsatna ani bawk.

We are not able to harvest much flowers in a week, we transport flowers after every second week, this is due to change in weather. We often could not get flight to transport our flowers. But now our goods are airlifted by Indigo flight. One big problem is the high air freight charge.

Thus, the florist associations of Mizoram function towards economic progress of their respective members and work collaboratively in their endeavour to promote floriculture entrepreneurship despite differences in their interests, thus creating self-employment and generating a source of income for floriculturists.

6.5.2 Role of Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)

The Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) is one of the largest voluntary non-government organizations in Mizoram. It was established on 6th July 1974 with registration no. 5 of 1977, Society Act 1860 (Act XXI of 1960). MHIP has its headquarters at Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. MHIP currently comprises of 10 Sub-Headquarters, 30 Block Units, 9 Joint Units, and 765 Branches, with a total membership of approximately 289,300 (<https://dipr.mizoram.gov.in/post>). Individuals interested in becoming a member of MHIP can become a member at the age of 14 years onwards and payment of Rs 5/- as membership fee to one's branch. MHIP is a strong social force established solely for the development and upliftment of the weaker section of the society especially women and children. The MHIP is an organization based on philanthropic work in which emphasis is on upliftment and empowerment of women and advocate women's rights in Mizoram.

MHIP as a voluntary organization has impactful contributions in various areas of community development. It has collaborative roles with the government in implementing the important government schemes and initiatives such as the Swadhar Greh and One stop Centre schemes which are schemes meant for helping needy women and empower them to rebuilt their lives and uplift their status. MHIP also involves in schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programmes. MHIP also played a pivotal role in the enactment of the Mizo Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance of Property Act in 2014 in Mizoram.

The central headquarters MHIP leaders are not enrolled in any of the florist associations. However, many MHIP leaders at the Branch level are active leaders and members of Mizoram Florist Association (MFA). MHIP leaders interviewed believes that floriculture has gained importance in the Mizo society. They opine that floriculture entrepreneurship reveals the capability and ability of Mizo women and that many womenfolk are engaged in the business venture generating income for themselves and their families. The leaders of MHIP do support the increasing importance given to flowers and foliage plants in the Mizo culture. However, even though the non-government organization fully support the increasing popularity of floriculture in the Mizo society, they do not have any collaborative work or role with any of the florist associations for the promotion of floriculture entrepreneurs in the society. One of the leaders of MHIP claim that she campaigns often about the importance of flowers and floriculture business as a means of generating income for the family in MHIP and *Kohhran Hmeichhia* (Women wing of the church) gatherings. MHIP and MFA functions side by side promoting each other's interests. MHIP promotes floriculture business because it is a venture pursued mostly by women who are engaged and self-employed in the business, thus, earning economic independence through their earnings which further upgrades their status within their families and in the larger society. The vice-president of MHIP informs that as an NGO, MHIP though working on the social and economic empowerment of women and upholding women's rights, does not play a prominent role in augmenting floriculture, but it encourages and gives emotional backing to floriculturists rather than give direct practical help.

6.5.3 Role of government in floriculture

Mizoram, a state nestled in the northeastern corner of India, claims unique and diverse ecosystem that provides fertile ground for floriculture. The state's favorable climate, fertile soil, and abundant rainfall create an ideal environment for cultivating a wide variety of flowers. The Horticulture Department was bifurcated from the Agriculture Department under the Government of Mizoram temporarily in 1993 and became a full -fledged department in 1997. The department officials claim that the department takes interest in developing floriculture since its inception in 1993.

Question was posed to the officials of the horticulture department on the way the government take initiatives for the development of floriculture. The then director of the horticulture department informs that-

Promotion of floriculture is done through government schemes by selecting beneficiaries or flower growers to meet local demand.

The joint director of the horticulture department, floriculture section informs that-

Area expansion has been done from 2001 onwards through central schemes known as Technology Mission, now known as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). Funds available under this scheme is utilized to develop floriculture. Anthurium cultivation is regularly maintained by the department. We have introduced cultivation of Curcuma flowers, leather leaf plants and Israeli Rascus plants and have selected the beneficiaries for these said plants.

The Deputy Director of the department too adds-

Besides Anthurium cultivation, we purchased flower seeds and distributed to floriculturists free of cost. We provided planting material, greenhouse material and structure to those floriculturists having available space for the construction of greenhouse.

The deputy director of Horticulture Department, floriculture section, informs that under the centrally sponsored scheme Mission for Integrated Development of

Horticulture (MIDH), there exist schemes and funds for the development of floriculture, besides the state programmes. Training on the cultivation, plant care and management of pests and flower arrangement are often organized by the department. The implementation of such schemes is done by selecting beneficiaries who would actually cultivate the flower plants, having available space and good source of water. Imported leather leaf plants and Israeli rascus plant were introduced in 2021 and Curcuma flower rhizomes in 2023. Market survey was done by the department for export of such products. Besides, the government distributes inputs free of cost such as flower seeds, planting materials, shade nets and greenhouse materials. Conducting training on packaging practices is also frequently done.

The officials of the Horticulture Department inform that the government had taken interest to promote Anthurium cultivation from 2002 onwards. At the initial stage, 24 beneficiaries were selected to cultivate Anthurium flowers, and since then the number of beneficiaries has increased over the years in every district of the state. Under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in north-eastern states of India, there was scope for development of floriculture in the state, and hence it was found that Anthurium flowers which was cultivated in Coorg could also thrive in Mizoram considering its weather conditions. Anthurium flower's vase life is long and found to be marketable and is of export quality to other parts of the country and abroad as well. As such, by 2003 the next year Anthurium cultivators started exporting Anthurium flowers. The government made use of certain criteria in selecting the beneficiaries. The beneficiary should have available space for cultivating the Anthurium plants, and they should possess sufficient water supply. They should be self-reliant and should not be dependent on the government. They should be able to afford buying inputs in the long run. All such criteria are verified before selection of beneficiary is finalised. Thus, the government provide the initial necessary inputs free of cost to the beneficiaries. Inputs are again provided free of cost when the need arises to the beneficiaries.

Apart from Anthurium cultivation, the government also provides subsidy to other flower plant cultivation such as Curcuma flowers to meet local demand and not for export. However, this cultivation is not large scale where only 20 beneficiaries have

been selected. Such beneficiaries are the floriculturists already involved in the business for their livelihood. Curcuma rhizomes imported from Thailand are distributed free of cost to these beneficiaries. Five beneficiaries have been selected from ZAGCS and the rest from MFA members. Leather leaf fern plant and Israeli ruscus plant cultivation have been started in 2020-21. These are the foreign variety of flowers and plants the government plans to initiate cultivation.

Question was posed to the officials of the government whether they receive requests for aid in terms of greenhouse and polyhouse material and other inputs like flower seeds, insecticides or pesticides from the floriculturists. The officials inform that they do receive such requests but the government does not entertain all such requests for inputs. The government normally respond to such requests for aid depending upon the availability of funds. Under the Integrated Pest Management Scheme, the government distributes pesticides and insecticides every year. Under the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), the government also provides inputs to floriculturists.

The government frequently receive request for aid from the florist associations like the MFA, ZAGCS and PPZA for the interest of their members. Depending on the availability of funds such requests for aid are fulfilled for instance, providing greenhouse material and structure. Further, florist associations often request the government to sponsor their flower exhibition, flower show and florist fair which are organized three to four times annually to create an opportunity to make significant sales of the products of floriculture entrepreneurs. The officials of the government claim that when the request for aid of the florist associations is not fulfilled and when their demands are not met, the florist associations do not react in an inhospitable way towards the officials of the government, but remain dormant. The relationship between the florist associations and the government is cordial, conflict or any unwanted strained relationship between the two does not arise even if their requests are not always fulfilled.

Question was posed to the officials of the government on whether the government give priority to the requests of the leaders of the florist associations like MFA, ZAGCS and PPZA. The government does give priority to their requests and gives importance to the requests of MFA and ZAGCS mostly because these two are registered associations formed under the supervision of the officials of the government. The government also often collaborate with the florist associations for the development of floriculture. The government and the florist associations have taken steps together in different ways including procuring flower seeds for the floriculturists, distribution of shade nets, greenhouse material, manure, fertilisers and pesticides on need base. Florist fairs and flower shows organized by the associations are sponsored and Horticulture Fair is organized annually by the Horticulture Department of the government opening opportunity for all floriculturists willing to participate and make significant sales of their products.

The government usually approach the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) on important government functions and events and when the horticulture department of the government hosts important dignitaries and guests. Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) is another recognized association often approached by the government depending on the occasion. The horticulture department of the government organized and sponsored the G20 Summit *Chapchar Kut* Flower Show held in March 2023 in collaboration with ZAGCS, MFA and other small associations like the Mizoram Bonsai Association and Mizoram Orchid Society. The G20 Flower show was successful on the part of the government and the floriculturists showcasing their floriculture products and floral arrangements.

The florist fairs organized by the florist associations of Mizoram are occasionally sponsored by the government depending on availability of funds. The government officials inform that the florist associations especially MFA and PPZA frequently request the government to sponsor their flower show cum fairs. Both the associations separately organize florist fair three to four times a year, an important opportunity for floriculturists who depend on the business for their livelihood to make significant sales and earn a good amount of income on such occasions.

The government officials inform that they provide incentives to the floriculturists to boost their production of flowers and propagations. The government regularly provide incentives to Anthurium cultivators in the form of inputs like planting material, plant protection equipment, shade nets, greenhouse material not only provided but installation done for the beneficiaries, pesticides and necessary materials. All these inputs are provided free of cost and at subsidized rate to promote entrepreneurial floriculture. The government also often identify needy floriculturists to be beneficiaries of available incentives. Those actual floriculturists indulging sincerely in the business venture were identified and their residential vicinity and available space were identified and verified, their needs identified and provided by the government occasionally. The deputy director of the floriculture section of the horticulture department narrates on this issue '*mi rethei tanpuitu department kan ni lo a; mahnia in hai veng turin kan beisei. Mahnia an in tundin hian kan lawmpui thin*' (we are not a department of charity; we expect them to survive without help. We are always happy to see them stand on their own feet). The government extend co-operation and respond to the needs of floriculture entrepreneurs as far as possible depending on the availability of funds and inputs. The government is ever ready to promote and develop floriculture industry to a thriving one in the state.

Question was posed to the government officials on the vision of the government regarding floriculture industry 10 years from now. The officials shared their views and vision. The Director, Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram shares her vision on floriculture industry ten years from now-

Floriculture will develop further because domestic market is good. According to the government's vision, flowers having a long vase life should be grown more and more. Low-cost good quality Anthurium which is currently cultivated does not meet local demand, there will be increase in production of Anthurium a decade from now. Procuring cut flowers from outside will not cease because demand of flowers will continue to increase because flowers are necessary ingredients in every important function and event in the Mizo society.

The Deputy Director, Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram too shares her vision on the industry-

If the central government and the state government continue to make schemes, development of floriculture industry will continue to be in our purview.

The study shows that the Horticulture Department of Mizoram from its inception took interest in developing floriculture sector. It introduced commercial cultivation of Anthurium flowers in 2002 and since then it also introduced cultivation of other flower crops to meet the local demand. It caters to the needs of needy floriculturists and provides necessary inputs to them free of cost and at subsidized rates. It continuously promotes the growth and further development of floriculture industry.

6.6 Case Studies

The present study has taken two case studies namely Zopar Export Private Limited and Laltei Nursery to enrich the information on floriculture entrepreneurship and strengthen the validity of the viability of floriculture as a livelihood option. The case study method is a research approach that entails a comprehensive analysis of a particular case, unit, circumstance, or behaviour. It is employed to understand intricate phenomena within their actual setting by gathering data from several sources, including interviews, observations, and records. Case study emphasises acquiring an in-depth understanding of a specific situation instead of extrapolating results to larger populations.

6.6.1 Zopar Export Private Limited

Case study was undertaken at the Zopar Export Private Limited, Zopar farm at Ailawng on 16th November 2023, where the owner cum managing director of the company Mr Rajesh Prasad was interacted upon.

Zopar Export Private Limited is a Bangalore based private company established in 2002 as an outlet in Aizawl, Mizoram and Zopar farm at Ailawng, Reiek Block of Mamit District in Mizoram was started in 2006. The founder and Managing Director of Zopar Export Private Limited is Mr Rajesh Prasad and Ms. Lianzami Leivang who

was also the founding Director passed away in 2021. At present, there are three directors of the company namely, Mr. Rajesh Prasad and his daughter Rini Leivang and son Rinsanga Leivang. There are two shareholders of the company, Mr. Rajesh Prasad and his wife Lalfakzuali Leivang. The founding director Mr. Prasad is a product of Delhi School of Economics and worked for a few years in NABARD and resigned. He then enrolled in management courses in IIM Ahmedabad and started his initial career in floriculture in India under Tata Industries and was initially posted in Pune region where he worked for a number of years.

Mr. Prasad had a floriculture farm at Bangalore and was trading floriculture goods exporting to other countries for several years. During those years the then Chief Minister of Mizoram Shri Lalthanhawla paid a visit to his floriculture farm at Bangalore in 1997 and spent three hours observing the work habit of the hired Tamil labours and the management of the farm. He then made a suggestion to Mr. Prasad to initiate a floriculture farm in Mizoram similar to the one he is managing. Shri Lalthanhawla also informed him that if he started the farm in Mizoram, he should however be ready to hire non-Mizos like Chakmas, Brus, Myanmarese and other tribes from neighbouring areas as labour because he told Mr Prasad that Mizos would not be able to endure the labour-intensive work of floriculture. True enough, when Mr. Prasad established his floriculture farm at Ailawng village in 2006, he initially hired 27 Mizo boys and girls who did not last long and were fired by the supervisor in the end. While at Bangalore he was again visited by the then Horticulture Minister Mr. Aichhinga who wanted to meet him, but unfortunately Mr. Prasad was unavailable at the farm and thus they were not able to meet.

When Mr. Prasad came to Mizoram in 2002 with his wife, he found that Mizo women loved flowers and were growing them at home tremendously. He was a pioneer in opening a flower shop in Aizawl in 2002, procuring cut flowers from outside the state mainly from Bangalore and marketed the flowers. There was no production of flowers in Mizoram at this time. Mr. Prasad shared '*Mizo people go house to house at Durtlang locality in search of fresh cut flowers for wedding flowers at this time*' Artificial flowers were used popularly for weddings. He brought one

professional florist from Kolkata who could arrange bouquets and arrange flowers in no time, the flower shop had customers from day one.

When Mr. Prasad came to Mizoram in 2002, he went to meet Mr. Aichhinga, the then Minister of Horticulture Department and shared his idea and thoughts on the feasibility of growing Anthurium flowers in Mizoram to the minister. He opined that since there were only three small flights from Mizoram at Tuirial airfield in a week, sending flowers outside Mizoram by airlifting would be tough. Mr. Prasad suggested growing flowers which have longer shelf life like Anthurium in Mizoram. A meeting of Mr. Prasad with the government officials consisting of the Director, Deputy Director of Horticulture Department, Director of Agriculture and other government officials was convened by the then minister Mr. Aichhinga. It was the year the Central Government initially launched the scheme Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern States. Mr. Prasad was confident that Anthurium crop would grow well in Mizoram considering the high humidity and moderate temperature. He narrated his suggestion to the government officials of his idea *'I do not have the required money, but I have the know-how of the technology of growing the flowers, I will buy back the flowers from the farmers since I am in the marketing of flower business'*. The meeting decided and instructed Mr. Prasad to make a project and thus 25 beneficiaries or growers were selected covering an area of 1000 sq km with 10,000 Anthurium plants as a pilot project involving Rs 16 lakhs expenditure which was later increased to Rs 32 lakhs by the central government. The selected farmers needed training and as such Mr. Prasad took them to Coorg to study Anthurium cultivation from the Coorg farmers. Then he took the second and third batch of Anthurium farmers to Coorg to learn the technique of growing Anthurium crops. With these 25 lady farmers, Anthurium cultivation was started in Mizoram. He too, started constructing greenhouses to cultivate Anthurium flowers from 2004.

As per agreement with the government, from the start, the Zopar Export Pvt Ltd supplied all the planting materials of Anthurium too which had been imported from Anthura and Avo Company, Netherland, and the procurement cost was borne by the department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram, who distributed free of cost to the selected beneficiaries under the Technology Mission.

Mr. Prasad at this time needed a job and thus worked elsewhere abroad in Ethiopia for several months and at this time, he was offered a big project by the Mizoram government. He then came back and was given an advance for the big project and started his journey in floriculture business in Mizoram. The selected farmers started producing excellent flowers with good grades and Zopar Export Pvt Ltd started purchasing the Anthurium flowers from 2003 from the farmers till 2013, involving one crore sale of flowers and farmers were paid Rs 60-70 lakhs earning income per year and a successful farmer for instance received Rs 20,000 – Rs 22,000 per month through their sales. Mr. Prasad informed that marketing was tough and that many a times he lost money, and did not make any money out of marketing but he continued buying the flowers for ten years. He was earning income from the greenhouses and the planting material he imported from the Netherland through the project. Such Anthurium flowers were sent all over the country and abroad to the Middle East and Japan. Zopar Anthurium became well known and famous all over the country right from the start through Zopar outlets in different cities like Delhi and Bangalore.

In 2006 Mrs. Lalfakzuali Leivang wife of Mr. Prasad was posted in Aizawl and she advised her husband to start a floriculture farm in Mizoram. Mr. Muanpuia, a government official and a family friend initially showed him the present plot of land at Ailawng where Zopar farm has been set up. Mr. Prasad bought the landed property in his mother-in-law and his wife's name. He and his mother-in-law were the two directors of the Zopar Export Private Limited company registered in Bangalore. Mr. Prasad was also working in all the eight states of North East India, also had one farm at Bangalore and one farm at Shillong. He had 500 employees all over North East and in Bangalore and working on different projects. In 2006, he started two bamboo greenhouses at Ailawng built with bamboos. He imported Liliun bulbs from Holland and started growing in the greenhouses. There was no sale of flowers in Mizoram and other NE states. When he started producing liliun flowers he sent them to Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Bangalore. He sent Liliun and Anthurium flowers together which were airlifted and he had to pay airfreight amount which was very high. Market for flowers in Mizoram had not developed at this time. However, he had outlets everywhere in the North Eastern states and elsewhere in the country like

Delhi, Bangalore, Jamshedpur, Calcutta and Nagpur. However, such mainland shops were losing money due to the heat and had to be closed eventually.

Mr. Prasad was called while he was in Africa to start a floriculture project by the Central Government under Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce of India, which promotes exports. The Director of the Horticulture Department Government of Mizoram too called him at this time to start and manage Anthurium Cultivation. Mr Prasad came back from Africa and made a presentation on the project he made at the Ministry of Commerce, and he suggested the government put in 70% of funds and he would put in 30%, the project was to cost 3.2 crores. The Zopar farm was selected and sanctioned for the project and clearance was given in 2007. Mr. Prasad borrowed funds from Export Development Fund and State Bank of India and started and finished the project. The government finally cleared the balance fund in 2013. The government official assured him that even if he did not export to other countries, as long as he employed and generated employment and income for people it was acceptable. He faced tremendous difficulties technically and financially in setting up the floriculture farm at Ailawng. Borrowing funds again from financial institutions he expanded the farm on Anthurium, and then started Chrysanthemum and Rose cultivation. Then added Gerbera flowers and strawberries later on. Mr. Prasad then, after some years stopped all government projects, because of too much corruption and it was too much to handle for him at that time. He had 22 shops few years back everywhere in North East and elsewhere in the country, working in collaboration with foreign companies in cultivating different foreign varieties of flowers, but at present he has 9 shops which he said are sustainable.

The Zopar Export Pvt Ltd at present has 40 acres of land, but 22 acres of land is under flower cultivation with 55 large greenhouses constructed which houses different varieties of flower crops including strawberry cultivation. The work environment at the Zopar farm is good and the work culture follows a standardized daily routine which starts at 6:00 AM to 9:45 AM, 11:20 AM – 3:20 PM in the evening and for those interested to work overtime the work continues up to 7:15 PM in the evening. This work routine has been followed for nearly two decades now. The

different supervisors at the farm are responsible for daily division of work and management. The initial daily wage of the workers starts from Rs 250 and those who have worked several years gets Rs 290 per day. Overtime workers get half of their respective daily wages. The farm has eight supervisors, some of them have been working for more than a decade dealing with different technical aspects of the farm for instance, administration, dairy unit, flower crop cultivation, vermicomposting, civil work like repairing roads and greenhouses, electrical works and welding works. The cost of production is high with Rs 30 lakhs to 40 lakhs being spent every month for the smooth maintenance and functioning of the farm. The company hires 150 daily wage labourers who resides in the family quarters and dormitories meant for women workers within the Zopar farm territory. Those workers who resides in the family quarters cook their own food, while those residing in the dorm dine at the mess together. There are two cooks who have been working for more than ten years, and they cook vegetables produced at the farm and those bought from the city. Workers residing as family have kitchen gardens producing their own vegetables and share them with other families. Mr Prasad opined “*the whole focus is how to make it generally good for the workers, so that they are satisfied and happy, that they are able to save money and improve their livelihood. This is the whole logic, if you don’t do that, you will fail*”.

The farm workers come from different parts of Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Myanmar. The workers informed that they are content and satisfied with the work routine and work culture. The main tasks at the farm are harvesting flowers, bending of rose stems, pinching the flower crops, discarding flowers less than 35 centimetres, propagating stem cuttings, constant weeding of the greenhouse facility and spraying fungicides, insecticides and giving nutrients to flower crops through irrigation system regularly. Watering is done through pipe irrigation controlled from the main line. Vermicomposting and composting are also carried out at the farm. Cows are reared to make use of the cow dung for fertilizer and to produce vermicompost soil. Leaves of the cut flower stems are collected in containers to be used for composting. Mr. Prasad opined ‘*hiring the poorest of the poor people is the most reliable, because they are*

hard -working and have perseverance at all times. He also informed that some of his workers have been working at the farm for 10 to 12 years.

Grading Hall exists where the variety of flowers harvested are organized neatly colour wise, and roses are graded and all the different variety of cut flowers and foliage are wrapped into bunches and stored in the cold storages before transportation. Zopar flowers are transported daily to different Zopar outlets on order basis in Aizawl, and twice a week to Saiha and Lunglei Zopar outlets in Mizoram, and cut flowers are also shipped to outlets on order basis in other parts of North East India outlets such as Dimapur, Kohima, Shillong, Tura and Guwahati regularly. On an average, the manager of Zopar company informed that Zopar farm harvests and transports daily Rs 2 lakhs and above worth of cut flowers to its different outlets in Aizawl, Lunglei, Saiha and different North Eastern states. Different varieties of flowers are harvested daily. Zopar floriculture farm receives numerous orders during the wedding season and religious festive season of the country and especially in Mizoram. Mr Prasad narrates *‘it is important to tune flower production with wedding season. In Mizoram, Easter, Good Friday, Christmas, New Year and Valentine’s Day are the occasions flowers are important and production is tuned to the local demands on these festive occasions. Based on occasions and tastes on flowers, production is carried out.’* Flowers like lilium, blue daisy and Gypsophilia and even roses which are not grown at the Zopar farm are regularly procured from other cities like Bengaluru to be sold at the Zopar outlets to meet local demands.

The owner of the company also informed that considering the welfare of the workers, he had chalked out provisions like Employee Social Insurance and Provident Fund. Employee Social Insurance covers medical bills for workers and their dependents. While for Provident Fund, 12% of workers’ wage is deducted from monthly salary and 13% matching share is provided from the company for workers’ benefit. The hired workers were at first reluctant to comply to such provisions of the company and were doubtful of the actual benefits. Mr Prasad organized training and lecture with a trainer on the issue. Workers have realized the benefit of the insurance and provident fund and have agreed to comply and join the facilities.

One of the male workers named Hmingsanga from Nghalim village, Lawngtlai district informed that families reside in the family quarters with children and that children of the workers altogether 20 of them go to school in Aizawl city and the owner of the farm Mr.s Prasad provides transport to and fro between the farm and Aizawl city. Children commute to school and come back from school in a sumo vehicle, which the owner of the company has willingly provided. The Zopar farm has its own chapel too, where Christian workers could worship and attend service. Marriage alliance between male and female workers of the farm often occurred too where the pastor of the local pastorate comes and solemnize the wedding. Workers at the Zopar farm are diverse for instance, Ranglong Hmars, Kaipeng and Myanmarese coming from different backgrounds from neighbouring states and the supervisors and technicians are mostly mainland Indians. Interests clash between the workers at times and such situations had to be brought under control. The owner of the farm Mr. Prasad informed that he does not discriminate gay people and gave them permission to work on the farm as long as they did not disturb the peace on the farm.

Mr.Prasad informed that an entrepreneur needs to run a floriculture farm not a farmer. He narrated that *“Extreme knowledge of the farming techniques is a necessary ingredient for entrepreneurs. You need to be skilled in that particular crop. You need experience, skill and one need to be trained in that particular field”*. He further narrated *“an entrepreneur has to have a different mindset, to be able to recover from shocks, anticipate problems and understand things. Converting a farmer into an entrepreneur is not possible”*. With all the experiences he has gained travelling to 40 countries, learning the skill he is still struggling and suffering. He further informed that he has suffered shocks and stress, he was almost bankrupt twice, cyclone blew off 35 of the greenhouses, heavy rain destroyed many of the flower crops, Covid-19 came everything was shut down for 6 months, could not sell his flowers but had to run the farm anyway to save the flower crops. Two years there was no sale of flowers, but he had to pay his workers to run the farm. He was in debt and had to do something to recover and save the business. He could recover by borrowing money again from the bank. At the same time, he had to sell off his properties in other cities to clear the loans he had borrowed and now with debts

cleared he has started living at Ailawng Zopar farm from 2020. The two most important problems they are facing is that of water which is not available at all times and labour is difficult to get.

On the importance of flowers he narrated, *“Flower is something which makes you happy. When you have flowers in the house, your whole attitude changes. It makes you feel nice and happy. We should encourage flower cultivation to boost the production and help the farmers”*.

Mr. Prasad opined on his entrepreneurial business, *“floriculture is a life style not a business. You have to live in that and enjoy it as it is. Be satisfied with very less money even if losing at times. If an entrepreneur is willing to do that, then it is viable for him to do it. There is very high cost of production while production and profit margin are less”*.

Zopar Export Private Limited which was started as an outlet at Aizawl in 2002 and Zopar farm in 2006 is a Bangalore registered private company. Zopar farm has extensive land area covering 40 acres, but the large greenhouses are constructed on 22 acres of the entire land. 2 acres of the land focus on open cultivation of crops. The founding director and owner of the private company is a floriculturist whose initial work on floriculture started with the Tata Industries. Moving on from his career at the Tata Industries, he built his own floriculture entrepreneurship business at Bangalore and was marketing and exporting floriculture goods to other countries for several years. Gaining skill and experience at floriculture business, he started an outlet and a farm in Mizoram which today has become an established and reliable outlet and farm catering to the local demand and meeting the aesthetic needs of the Mizo people. Zopar Export Private Limited initially was selected by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of India as a government project. The government assured Mr. Prasad to generate employment and income for people through the project considering the rate of unemployment in the country. The Zopar company at present employs 150 workers coming from all parts of the mainland and North East India and many Burmese are also hired as labour. The company follows standardized daily routine and division of work which aids in the smooth functioning and administration

of the farm resulting in a good work culture and work environment. The farm work is managed and supervised by eight supervisors, each having his own portion and area of work to supervise and see that a day's work is done and completed. The flowers are harvested daily which are graded in the grading hall, wrapped in bunches and stored in the cold storage ready to be shipped to the Zopar outlets in the city and other districts, and also to other outlets in the North East. Zopar company has at present 9 flower shops in North East India. The company provides accommodation in terms of family quarters and dormitories to the hired workers, and a mess is provided for the girls. The Zopar company takes into account the welfare of the workers to a tremendous extent that provisions are made in terms of Employee Social Insurance and Provident Fund. The spiritual needs of the workers are also taken into consideration with the presence of a Christian chapel, where service is conducted regularly. The company has undergone tremendous set-backs and shocks, up to the point of bankruptcy since its inception, but the entrepreneurial skill and excellent experience of Mr. Prasad in the field, together with the strong will to survive and his determination has led him to recover from the shock and at present is debt free. The company does not export its products anymore to other countries, but its farm products are now shipped and sold in the company's outlets in Mizoram as well as other outlets in North East India. The Zopar flowers are popularly known in Mizoram and they cater to the cultural and religious needs of the Mizo society throughout the week especially on weekends and festive occasions.

6.6.2 Laltei Nursery

Laltei Nursery is a nursery where flower plants are grown from germination of seeds and the seedlings are allowed to grow and reach the appropriate size to be transplanted to bigger size poly pots. In this nursery, the process involves sowing seeds, caring for and maintaining the seedlings, and transplanting them to small disposable pots and poly pots for sale. Propagations of stem cuttings of perennial flowering plants and leaf propagations are also carried out in the nursery.

Laltei Nursery is owned by Mrs. Lalchatuanthangi, 54 years of age, a widow with three sons residing in their own house at Ramthar Veng, a locality situated in the

northern part of Aizawl city. She is a high school drop-out and a self-employed entrepreneur. She is also an executive committee member of Mizoram Florist Association. Laltei Nursery is a family enterprise where Mrs. Laltei and her eldest son are the proprietors.

The owner of the nursery Mrs. Laltei as she is called by close friends was prompted to take up floriculture business way back in 1994 due to the influence of her mother-in-law who was in the habit of growing and propagating flowering plants back then. She took initiative in selling the propagated plants of her mother-in-law in the local bazaar which she did very frequently. She possessed good marketing skill and was able to sell all the goods whenever she sits at the bazaar on Saturday mornings. She urged her mother-in-law to start growing seasonal flowers from seeds and so they began germination of flower seeds procuring the seeds from Kolkota. She then started selling flower seedlings in the local market and with her skill at marketing she could sell off all in no time whenever she sits at the bazaar. After her mother-in-law passed away, she continued with the floricultural activity teaching herself the trade and the process of germination and transplanting seedlings for sale, thus Laltei Nursery came into being.

Mrs. Laltei was determined to achieve her main goal which she set when she started her floriculture business venture. She informed that *'ka tum ber chu hei aia in leh lo tha zawk din ve ani a, kan nupa in kan in khawl dun thin a'* (my main goal was to construct a better house than the one we were residing in, my husband and I did our best at saving). They were able to demolish their Assam type house and started constructing RCC building before her husband's demise and have completed a three-storey building from the income she and her sons generated through their floriculture entrepreneurship.

The initial customers of Laltei Nursery were middle aged women who were mostly members of Mizoram Florists Association, government department offices were also her customers. There were not much floriculturists involved in the same kind of floricultural activity during those days. Mrs Laltei consider herself a pioneer in germinating flower seeds and selling flower seedlings, though when she started her

business one floriculturist in another locality was also involved in the process of germination. She procured the flower seeds from Kolkata which are all hybrid and dwarf varieties imported from abroad. Laltei Nursery area covers three greenhouse areas at their roof top and rented roof top nearby of which two are of the same size 36x24 square feet, and one is 42x45 square feet. The greenhouse materials and structures have been bought at subsidized rate whereas the initial greenhouse utilized was provided free of cost by the government. Mrs. Laltei informed that she received UV film and shade nets after her written requests to the government. She hires daily wage labour sometimes for two or three consecutive years and sometimes on need base. The Nursery cultivate several varieties of flowers from seeds at a time and flower seeds are germinated as frequently as possible during the season and on depending on the sale of seedlings. The seedlings are marketable after two to three weeks of germination to customers. The seedlings are sold very fast based on online order received by resellers and bulk selling to government departments who buys the seedlings for their landscaping purposes.

Mrs. Laltei narrates how she normally sells her products. *‘Inrinniah chiah ka in zuar chhuak bazarah. Commission ho leh sawrkar department ho leh mimal tam takin min dawr thin. Pangpar tiakrawn order te hnenah kan deliver bakah inah minrawn pan thin a hlawma duhin’* (I sell my products only in the local market on Saturdays. Resellers, government departments and interested individuals are my regular customers. We deliver the goods to those who order online and there are many individuals who come and buy the flower seedlings in bulk). The Nursery send out its products to other districts of the state such as Lunglei, Champhai, Lawngtlai, Kolasib and Serchhip, and besides these, the nursery goods are also sent to other states like Manipur and Meghalaya. Laltei Nursery has created WhatsApp and Facebook groups known as Laltei Nursery group and has been posting their new products available for sale regularly for many years and members interested orders their products online and the Nursery delivers the goods making use of delivery agents. Laltei Nursery also markets its variety of products in florist fairs organized by Mizoram Florist Association. Such fairs are organized four times annually where floriculturists exhibit and showcase their products and make significant sales within three or four

days. Mrs Laltei participates regularly in such florist fairs and flower shows organized by the association, she not only sells her products but frequently bagged numerous first three prizes for best products and often received several consolation prizes too.

The Laltei Nursery generate sufficient income monthly through the sales of seedlings and plant propagations of different variety of flowers and foliage plants and Mrs. Laltei informed that the nursery generates approximately Rs 16 lakhs and above annually through the sale of its own products. The owner of the nursery gives full time to her floriculture business and does not indulge in other income generating jobs as she claims '*khaw dang kan hawi hman lo*' (no time to involve in other activity). Mrs. Laltei informed that they do not have any higher goals or aims in expanding their floriculture business, and that she and her son are content with their current business venture.

The floriculture business of Laltei Nursery does not face serious problem or stress which could hinder the business. Mrs. Laltei informed that her main problem is the heavy task of transplanting thousands of seedlings into poly pots which needs to be done fast once the seedlings reach certain height. She also informed that she is very often in a dilemma, torn between her urgent floriculture work and social and family obligations, for instance, *chhiatni/thatni* (day of grief/joy) of friends and relatives need to be attended. She also narrated her thought on the issue of the heavy work and said '*mi tha rin reng chu a theih loh. Zan lamah dar 1 thleng te hna kan thawk nasa mai*' (we cannot depend on labour all the time. We work very hard during the night staying up late till 1:00 AM).

As a floriculture entrepreneur, Mrs. Laltei has played significant role in order to bring development in the field of floriculture in the state. She wrote articles on the process and steps in the germination of seeds and seedlings care in the Mizoram Florist Association's Florist Magazines and Souvenirs, she is often called to act as resource person and as trainer on seed germination and plant care in seminars and trainings organized frequently by Mizoram Florist Association. She is also often requested to talk on her experience on flower seed germination, transplanting young

seedlings and care of seedlings in the florist association's general assembly held annually. She has been interviewed by the local television channels namely Zonet and LPS, Doordarshan Aizawl and by All India Radio, Aizawl. The most important attributes one need to possess to become a successful floriculture entrepreneur in Mizoram according to Mrs. Laltei is *'tumruhna leh taihmakna a pawimawh hmasaber'* (*determination and hard work are the most important all the way through*). She further adds that perseverance is important even in times of heavy losses and failures. Possessing skill and knowledge of the technical aspect in floriculture business is also significant.

The nursery entrepreneur informed that the floriculture business has assisted her in establishing network of relations with other florists within the state. Being an executive committee member of Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) who has several branches in different districts of the state, Mrs. Laltei informed that she maintains good relations with other florist members of the association as well as members of other branches who belong to different districts.

Being a successful entrepreneur in her line of business she has received several citations and has very often bagged the first three prizes and citations at the numerous flower shows organized by Mizoram Florist Association and Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. She usually received such prizes for the best seasonal flowers and the most beautiful healthy blooms in the flower shows. She has also won numerous consolation prizes for her flowers. She was also once chosen to participate in the International Flora Expo held at New Delhi in 2006 by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram, and she participated in the event.

Mrs. Laltei claimed that she has made an impact on Mizo floriculturists as a whole and has played significant role in developing floriculture entrepreneurship in Mizoram. She has become one of the most important and popular figures in the field of floriculture in the state. She frequently shares her experience in floriculture entrepreneurship through different platforms and in print media. She has trained and taught the skill and the technical know-how of floriculture activity to several women

who used to work under her as daily wage labour. Such women after learning the technical aspect and the skill started their own business venture on seed germination and seedling care and the process of propagation, earning income through the business and depending solely on the enterprise they have built. Mrs. Laltei argued that she would never abandon floriculture business venture even if given another chance. She further opined that floriculture business in Mizoram is carried out within the premises of the residential area, on the rooftops, on the balconies, verandahs and on every available space around the residence. Thus, it is convenient for unemployed homemakers to grow and cultivate flowers and plants without leaving the house, at the same time earning income while staying at home caring for their kids and the household.

The Laltei Nursery suffered serious stress and a set-back during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. The nursery had thousands of seedlings which had been transplanted in poly pots and some in the process of germination during the pandemic lockdown. The seedlings had reached the marketable stage and needed to be sold, but due to the complete pandemic lockdown for several months, the flower seedlings could not be sold, and the seedlings grew and bloomed after a month or so, they had to remain in the poly pot till they withered and died. There was absence of market during the pandemic lockdown and flower seedlings and propagations worth lakhs of rupees were damaged and ruined and it was a huge loss for the nursery owner. However, determination and perseverance pushed the nursery owner not to lose hope and after some months of pandemic lockdown, the floriculture entrepreneurship could continue through online marketing of goods. The process of germination was continued and the nursery was able to recover from the loss it faced after several months of lockdown. Online marketing was the normal means of business during the pandemic outbreak to ensure physical distancing. The nursery has fully recovered ever since then and has regained normalcy in the business venture.

In response to what she thinks the condition of floriculture industry in Mizoram would be ten years from now. Mrs. Laltei narrates, '*pangpar zawrh lama sumdawwna chu a changkang ve viau tawh ang. Nimahsela sawrkar hian pangpar zuar ho hi*

showhouse pe thei se, nitina inphona tur emaw thla khat dan vela in pho na tur hi min pe se. Showhouse neih hi pangpar zuar tan a pawimawh ka ti ber mai' (Floriculture industry would have progressed a lot ten years from now. But I personally feel that the government should make arrangement to establish a flower showhouse for the floriculturists, to showcase and exhibit our products every day or at least once every two months. Establishing a showhouse for floriculturists is the most important and the need of the hour).

Laltei Nursery is a small family enterprise established thirty years ago where the owner, a widow and her children co-operatively work hard for the smooth functioning and the success of the business. The Nursery owner and her children solely depend on the floriculture business they have set up for their livelihood. The Nursery generates regular income with regular sale of its products to customers, and normally has an annual income of Rs 16 lakhs and above. The Nursery continuously germinates flower seeds once the season for different varieties of flowers begins, and the heavy task of preparing soil and filling up poly pots with potting soil and transplanting thousands of seedlings continuously takes a lot of time and energy for Mrs. Laltei and her sons. The nursery hires daily wage labour to help run the nursery smoothly. The Nursery owner with her marketing skill adopts various strategies to market their products and goods. She herself sits at the local market and sells the goods, besides this, the nursery being well known and popular in the state receives online orders through WhatsApp and Facebook groups they had created from different corners including government offices, resort owners and individuals. The Nursery also sells its goods in bulk to resellers. The Nursery products are also sold to individuals at the time of florist fairs and flower shows organized by the Mizoram Florist Association. The owner of the Nursery often shares her experience of the technical aspect of germination of seeds and plant care through talks in trainings and seminars, and also interviews in local television shows and radio, and also in print media. She also trained and taught the skill and technical aspect of the process of germination to her daily wage labour and nearby neighbours, who have set up independent business of their own, germinating flower seeds and caring and selling seedlings of flowers on their own and relying on the income generated by the

business. The nursery had faced shock and set back especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, but determination and perseverance in the midst of problems pushed the owners of the Nursery to move forward and has recovered and has learnt useful lessons in their business through the problems they had faced. The Laltei Nursery caters to the aesthetic need of the people and the nursery tries its best to meet the local demand on the goods.

6.7 Overview

Mizoram has transitioned from commercial food cultivation to flower cultivation, driven by women's active involvement, increased demand for flowers, and export potential. Flowers are indispensable in Mizo society, and female farmers lead the floriculture sector, enhancing their income and livelihood. Floriculture, with proper training, can lead to careers in landscape architecture, consulting, floral design, landscape architecture, and landscape design in the service sector.

The Mizoram Florists' Association, founded in 1997, aimed to promote flower cultivation in Mizoram. The association initially aimed to import and propagate the ornamental and flowering plants from outside the state, but it has since grown into a family business, importing, procuring and propagating new varieties of foliage, indoor plants, flowering plants, perennials, and ornamental plants from outside the state to meet local consumer demands.

The cultivation of Anthurium significantly transformed Mizoram's horticultural landscape, improved grower living conditions, and provided employment and steady income for both growers and unskilled labourers. Mizoram's Anthurium products are airlifted to big cities and exported to other countries. Mizoram has achieved a growing role in global floriculture strengthening trade connections recently with Singapore.

Floristry involves crafting and arranging bouquets and designing floral decorations for events like weddings and celebrations. This profitable enterprise generates significant returns quickly. Floriculture, a small-scale urban venture in Mizoram, is rapidly transforming into a commercial sector generating cash through cut flowers, ornamental plants, and potted house plants.

Floriculture as livelihood option: The present study illustrates the fact that floriculture is pursued as a means of livelihood in the Mizo society due to aesthetic interest developed since childhood and as such their passion has turned into a small-scale individual and family business venture on their available land space nearby, on roof tops and backyards. The study reveals that floriculturists having had interest since childhood have been indulging in flower cultivation for more than a decade and some even more than three decades. Such floriculturists have had decades of experience of the technical and social aspect of floriculture entrepreneurship; years of experience have taught them resilience when faced with shock and stress and determination and hard work helps them recover from difficulties. It is evident from the study that family members support each other and work collectively for the family business to survive and thrive.

The present study reveals that in the Mizo society, floriculture business is pursued by most people as a supplementary source of income. However, there are considerable number of families depending solely on floriculture business venture as their main means of livelihood, earning significant income monthly during the peak season.

Floriculturists in Mizoram employ several methods to market their floricultural products and generate income regularly. Floriculturists often ship their goods to their respective destinations by road within the state and other states and some are air lifted to metropolitan cities as there is no railway line in the state yet, thus cost of shipping becomes high. As informed by the entrepreneurs in the field, products regularly sold within the state through various means of marketing have much better returns and more profitable than shipping outside the state.

The study demonstrates that floriculture in Mizoram is normally carried out under mini greenhouse facilities, where such small poly houses and greenhouses are constructed on available spaces around their residences and on roof tops, and some even construct on rented land and rented roof tops. Those floriculturists dealing with Anthurium and cut flower cultivation, germination of seeds and propagations utilise greenhouse to control the environment and to protect their products and crops from

the harsh weather. Those not utilising greenhouses make full use of their home spaces to house their products.

Floriculturists as a whole except a few, do not receive aid or grants from the government for the construction of greenhouses. The study illustrates the fact that small time floriculturists believe that the government should give more aid to them and provide inputs more often. Further, though there are beneficiaries of necessary inputs from the government, they believe that the government is not equally distributing inputs to all the floriculture entrepreneurs due to lack of fund and schemes. However, the Government cater to the needs of Anthurium cultivators regularly by providing cold room facilities, providing packaging material, planting material, plant nutrient, greenhouse, and facilities for collection centre. Floriculturists argue that the government do not give awareness to the floriculturists about the incentives and inputs that could be availed. It is evident from the study that floriculturists normally come to know of the available incentives through the leaders of the florist association to which they are members and also through their fellow members. Florist associations work hand in hand with the government for the development of floriculture and the farmers.

The study reveals the fact that the significant role played by the government in marketing the products of floriculturists is by sponsoring the florist fairs and flower shows organised by the florist associations especially Mizoram Florist Association (MFA). Horticulture Fair is annually organised by the government providing an opportunity to floriculturists too to showcase their products and make significant sales during the fair.

The present study illustrates the fact that floriculture as a business venture is viable for self-employment. The floriculturists who pursue the business to generate additional income for the household believe it is viable for self-employment sharing the view of those floriculturists who rely solely on the business for their primary means of livelihood. Floriculturists who strongly believe the viability of floriculture business for self-employment would advocate the business and encourage their offsprings and relatives as a viable livelihood option. The study also demonstrates

that floriculturists do enjoy a decent standard of living through their indulgence in floriculture because the business venture generates a decent amount of regular income for the household. Further, they are able to meet the basic household requirements regularly and make ends meet out of the income generated through the entrepreneurship. As evident from the study, as flower cultivation is their passion and hobby and as it generates income while staying at home the floriculturists would never abandon the business even if given an opportunity with some other livelihood option.

The study reveals the fact that enrolling as members in florist associations such as Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-Operative Society (ZAGCS) have benefitted floriculturists tremendously in many aspects. The floriculturists believe that being affiliated to the florist associations are beneficial in terms of building confidence, capacity building, taking risks and strengthening their business. Further, it helps them in sharpening their entrepreneurial skills and marketing abilities resulting in more sales and profit. It helps in establishing network of social relations with their fellow members and customers, in developing deep bond and close affinity with their fellow members often manifested in times of Mizo *chhiatni* and *thatni* (day of joy and sorrow) where members support each other in such times. The floriculturists still have higher goals and aspirations for expanding and strengthening their floriculture venture, and they still have higher aspirations and aims which they would like to explore and achieve. The study reveals the different aspects of floriculture the stakeholders pursue in their entrepreneurial business, where it is evident that floriculturists deal mostly with perennial flowers and plants, and propagation of stem and leaf cuttings of perennial flowering plants and houseplants is a continuous process. They are also engaged in the process of germination of seeds, cultivation of cut flowers, importing of floriculture goods and selling directly to customers and resellers of floriculture products.

Floral Designing as livelihood option: Floral design is the art of arranging flowers and other plant elements to create harmonious, visually appealing designs. It involves considering shape, texture, and color in balanced proportions. Floral designers and event decorators work together to transform spaces and occasions, incorporating flower arrangements into the overall atmosphere to create a memorable experience and a beautiful ambience.

As evident from the study, floral designing is emerging as a livelihood option for skilled florists generating income through the activity. Floral designing is an inborn skill the designers have since childhood, and some have undergone training on flower arrangement. They have been indulging in the activity for a decade, but most are not enrolled in any florist associations, and do not have any collaborative roles with the florist associations. Nor do they function as an association in the city as yet. Floral designers have collaborative work with the government on big and small events and occasions organized by the government. They usually work with a team of hired workers in their entrepreneurial activity, depending on the kind of event they decorate helpers are recruited.

The study indicate that floral designing is indeed viable for self-employment, however, floral designers opine that perseverance, courage and good acquaintance are all significant for the smooth function of the entrepreneurship. It is evident from the study that they believe it is pertinent on the part of the government to implement policies or introduce grants or loans as start up to help the florists to establish themselves and prosper, and encourage unemployed youths to enter this line of business to become self-reliant.

Decoration of coffin and giving flower bouquet as condolence gift are accepted and have become an indispensable part of Mizo funeral practice. In their entrepreneurial endeavour, floral designers are often engaged in decorating coffin with fresh flowers in their locality and outside generating some amount of income on each occasion. Besides, funeral bouquet of flowers and basket of flowers are arranged by them on request and becomes a source of income for floral designers. Decoration of graves of loved ones on festive occasion like Christmas is a practice where the professional

skill of floral designers is utilized which is a good source of income for them. The study demonstrates that the importance placed on flowers in funerary practices of the Mizo society have in turn become an important source of income for floral designers.

The present study reveals the fact that floral decorations occupy a central place in distribution of bride price ritual and send off ceremony of the girl. Floral designers are hired to decorate the venue of pre-wedding rituals, and has become a huge source of income for them. Church flower arrangement and wedding reception venue decorations, bridal bouquet and the whole package are the professional work of floral designers who earns sizeable amount of income as appointees of venue decorator. It is seen from the study that floral designers promote themselves on social media platforms advertising their workmanship regularly. Floral designers work according to the budget set aside by families which may be big or small on weddings, and are well equipped with the necessary tools and accessories to decorate wedding reception venues.

It is evident from the study that the income generated from decorating wedding event differs and depends on the budget planned for the floral decorations, the income range differs for the floral designers per wedding event. The floral designers support the incorporation of floral decoration in wedding events in the Mizo wedding venues, as it is a significant source of income for them. They also claim that they would be willing to spend on floral decoration of their children's wedding.

The study also highlights that on a regular basis, floral designers indulge in arranging Sunday church flowers and also occasionally on festive events and conferences of the church, earning income which however, varies depending on the amount sanctioned by the different churches. The total annual income generated by floral designers also varies depending on the number of appointments they receive. The entrepreneurial activity on floral designing and event decoration is the primary means of generating income for the floral designers. They do believe that this entrepreneurial endeavour they are engaged in is viable for self-employment and for supporting their respective families, though the entrepreneurial activity does not involve regular work on a daily basis.

Culture of floriculture: Floriculture in Mizoram consist of different aspects and floriculturists pursue the different aspect of floriculture indulging in cultivation and production of different types of flower crops. The floricultural activity includes annuals or seasonal flowers and cut flowers in open field and in controlled situation like greenhouses, perennial flowering plants, house plants, ornamental plants and foliage plants which are cultivated in containers and nursery pots, there are those who import floriculture goods from outside the state and there are resellers of goods.

The study indicates that floriculturists engaged in annual or seasonal flower seed germination have been in the business for more than a decade, in fact some have been pursuing the activity for more than three decades. The process of germination is a continuous process and the seedlings are marketed and the cycle goes on during the season. Germination of seeds and selling seedlings of seasonal or annual flowers brings good returns and the entrepreneurial activity is a secure means of livelihood for those depending on the business.

The most popular cut flower cultivated is Anthurium flowers, and the farmers have been indulging in the cultivation for more than a decade as beneficiaries of Anthurium cultivation. Anthurium products are shipped and air lifted to other metropolitan cities of the country and was also exported to other countries. Export rejected products are consumed locally within the city. The study reveals that Anthurium cut flower cultivation provides a stable source of income for the household, and is a source of livelihood for some of the cultivators.

Propagation of plants and flowers is an important part of floriculture. The study illustrates the fact that propagation of perennial plants and flowers is pursued by a large number of floriculturists who also claim that this aspect of floriculture is more profitable and is a simple low- cost method. Stem and leaf cuttings of flowering and non-flowering plants which have been imported and procured from other states are propagated continuously and the plant-lings when rooted are marketed individually or in bulk thus, generating regular income for the household.

Importing and procuring of floricultural goods from abroad and outside the state is another aspect of floriculture venture pursued by the floriculturists. Importing floriculture products from other countries and procuring from other states have been pursued for more than a decade. Procured goods from outside the state have better returns, providing a secure means of livelihood for the floriculturists and their families. Procuring and selling of goods is a continuous process. Mizo indigenous flowers have been replaced by imported flowers and people's taste in plants and flowers have shifted to international and national exotic plants.

Seasonal cut flower is another aspect of floriculture activity pursued by a few floriculturists. The study highlights that seasonal flowers are germinated and the seedlings cultivated in open field and greenhouse facility, the flowers are then harvested for sale in the local market. The cut flower business generates profitable income during the season for the household. The seasonal cut flower business is beneficial for the entrepreneurs and household requirement is met through the business.

Reselling of floriculture goods while not actually involved in cultivation of flowers is another aspect of floriculture pursued by floriculturists. The study shows that for more than a decade resellers or wholesalers obtain goods from actual floriculturists and importers and resell them to local customers and also ship them outside the state at a higher price. This business fetch profitable income for the resellers depending on their sale and is worth pursuing as a means of livelihood.

Contribution of Stakeholders: Non-Governmental Organisations are pivotal in development, serving as a link between the state and grassroots communities, promoting local mobilization and environmental change, enabling significant change. Floriculture in Mizoram has grown significantly due to the demand for flowers in hotel and wedding sectors. This sector offers profitable self-employment opportunities, especially for women, enhancing income generation and livelihoods. Florist associations help women from underprivileged backgrounds and improve their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

Florist Associations in Promotional Action: The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), the *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) are the prominent florist associations selected for the study as key informants.

The Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA) was the first florist association founded in 1997 with the motto 'Blooming Mizoram with Flowers'. The association was registered in 1998 and has its own constitution and rules which the members are expected to follow. As the pioneer florist association in Mizoram, it has holistic development of floriculture as its main focus and has specific objectives and was established to promote members shared objectives. Members pay membership and annual fee to become members of the MFA. The association gives utmost priority to one's own creations through self-propagations of flowering and non-flowering plants, and encourages entrepreneurship in floriculture.

With the introduction of commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram in 2002, the Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) was established in 2002 by Anthurium cultivators. It was started by 24 Anthurium farmers initially, the number of cultivators increased over the years. However, there are 80 actual producers of Anthurium flowers in Aizawl, the capital city. The society is registered under the Mizoram Co-operative Societies Act. The association accepts as members only those possessing at least 1000 Anthurium plants and those who actually produce 50 Anthurium cut flowers per month, if one meets the criteria, then membership fee is paid. The ZAGCS work hand in hand with the government and beneficiaries of Anthurium cultivation are provided free of cost the necessary tools and planting material by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. The number of beneficiaries of Anthurium cultivation increased year by year and Anthurium flowers are sent out of the state to big cities and are exported to other countries, such as Singapore recently.

With increasing number of floriculturists, there is existence of multiple florist associations. One such association is *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) which was

formed in 2017. The association is not yet registered and has 180 enrolled members in 2020. The association aims to uplift floriculturists depending on the business for their livelihood. Those interested become members of the association paying membership fee.

It is evident from the study that two of the florist associations organise flower show cum florist fair three or four times annually. Such florist fairs represent a great opportunity for floriculturists to exhibit their creations, products and goods and make huge sales per day. The leaders of the florist associations too, participate in the florist fairs. Such florist fairs is a significant platform for floriculturists to make huge sales and generate income, and it is beneficial economically and socially and it is conducive for the growth of floriculture. Unlike the two associations, one of the associations organise exhibition of Anthurium flowers once annually and showcase their products in Anthurium festival organised annually by the government.

The florist fairs organised by the florist associations are beneficial and conducive for the growth of floriculture. The floriculturists make significant sales in florist fairs within a few days which they could not do at home, it is much more beneficial for those depending on the business for their livelihood. Besides being the association's office bearer, florist association's leaders are involved in floricultural activity themselves which they pursue as additional source of income.

The study reveals the fact that the florist associations take significant steps in promoting floriculture entrepreneurship. The associations take important steps to promote floriculture by often approaching the government requesting for necessary inputs and incentives free of cost and for providing infra-structure at subsidised rate to the floriculturists. Further, by providing training to floriculturists on seed germination, propagation, plant care, plant health, post-harvest management of flowers and flower arrangement.

The present study indicates that the associations often play a role in aiding needy floriculturists. The associations give aid in cash and in kind to floriculturists in need of help. In such situations, the spirit of *tlawmngaihna*, a moral code of conduct and selflessness sets in among the leaders and members of the associations. Office

bearers and committee members of the three associations contribute money to help ailing floriculturists especially those suffering from terminal illness, and those who met with accidents and need help. Needy floriculturists during Covid-19 pandemic were supported in cash and in kind. The florist associations support each other in times of sorrow and joy, gifting condolence flowers and presenting wedding gifts. The study reveals the fact that the florist associations take important step towards benevolent works even beyond floricultural activities like charity work donating money and goods to different hospitals.

The floriculture industry has good prospects for income generation and livelihood as revealed in the study. The leaders of the florist associations too opine that floriculture generates regular income and is viable for self-employment.

The study highlights that all the three florist associations maintain cordial and good relation with one another. However, MFA and ZAGCS who are in good terms with each other do not have cordial relation with PPZA. MFA and PPZA have interests which often clash and the two associations normally have strained relationship with one another. The kind of interests and the path followed in the floriculture business is different between the two associations, while MFA promotes propagations of flowering plants and houseplants at all times and promote floriculturists' own creation and own products. PPZA on the other hand, does not promote propagations but imports and procures flowering plants and houseplants from outside the state and sell them directly to customers. They do not deal with their own creations and propagated products. Further, PPZA is an association formed recently and not yet registered and not yet recognised by the government. ZAGCS as an association does not have any collaborative work with PPZA.

The florist associations are provided support or aid by the government. The government sponsors florist fairs and *Chapchar Kut* flower show organised by MFA and necessary inputs and incentives are provided to the members on need base. Special tour to metropolitan cities and sometimes abroad is arranged by the government often for MFA florist members. The government regularly provides incentives and inputs free of cost and at subsidised rate to ZAGCS members, because

Anthurium cultivation was initiated by the government under a centrally sponsored scheme, under which new beneficiaries of Anthurium cultivation are still selected. However, PPZA members hardly receive incentive from the government, only on two or three occasions when requested. Florist fairs organised by PPZA had been sometimes sponsored by the government. Apart from these, unlike the other two associations, PPZA members are not provided inputs as often as the other two associations.

The study reveals that the florist association seek aid from the government for the interest of the members frequently. The government in turn fulfils such demands and requests for providing incentives and inputs depending on the availability of fund and scheme. The government does its best to provide aid to needy floriculturists and provide infra structure materials at subsidised rate as far as possible. The florist associations which have collaborative work with the government are successful in their demands being fulfilled often, while PPZA as an association are hardly successful in receiving their requests and demands.

The florist associations are often placed in a position to act as pressure group when the members' demands are not being fulfilled. The leaders approach the government to remind and pressurise the government to provide the incentives demanded on behalf of the needy members.

The present study highlights the challenges and problems faced by the florist associations. MFA leaders claim that their biggest problem is lack of sufficient space to exhibit their floriculture products and the association is in dire need of a flower house to showcase their flowers for the whole week. They have approached the government for such a space but they have not been successful as yet. PPZA on the other hand, claim that the only problem they face is not having a registration number as yet which hinders their association in many aspects. They are yet to meet the pre-requisite for registration which is an office with a signboard. ZAGCS as an association argue that they are not able to harvest as many flowers as they would like to within a week due to weather change. High airfreight is a big problem for the members of ZAGCS at the time of shipping their products to other states.

Thus, the florist associations in their promotional action on floriculture function towards the economic progress of their respective association members. Each of them works co-operatively for the development of floriculture, generating income for their livelihood despite differences in their interests and ideology, the florist associations functions parallel to each other with similar objective, that is development of floriculture entrepreneurship.

Role of Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)- The *Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) established in 1974 has its headquarters at Aizawl. It is one of the largest voluntary organizations and is a strong force formed for the development and upliftment of the weaker sections of the society especially women and children. The MHIP as a non-governmental organization has had impactful contributions in various ways for the good of the community. It has collaborative roles in helping needy women and empowering them through various schemes. MHIP leaders are not enrolled in any of the florist associations, but at the branch level members are indeed enrolled in florist associations. MHIP does not have any collaborative roles with neither the government nor the florist associations in floricultural activity. It is evident from the study that MHIP promotes and encourages floriculture business because it is a business venture mostly pursued by women and MHIP advocates upliftment of women's status economically and socially. Thus, MHIP gives emotional backing to floriculture entrepreneurs rather than give direct practical aid.

Role of government in floriculture- The Horticulture Department which was bifurcated from Agriculture Department under Government of Mizoram in 1993 and became a full-fledged department in 1997 had floriculture as one of its goals since its inception.

The study reveals that the government has been taking initiatives for the development of floriculture, and since 2001 area expansion and introduction of new variety of flowers and foliage plants have been done through central schemes with the funds available under the schemes to develop floriculture. Incentives and

available inputs are provided to floriculturists to improve and develop floriculture entrepreneurship.

The government officials claim that under the centrally sponsored scheme Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), funds and schemes exist for the development of floriculture in the state. Implementation of such schemes have been done by selecting beneficiaries to cultivate the new variety of flowers and foliage plants in 2021 and 2023. Training of floriculturists on plant care, management of pests, packaging practices and flower arrangement is frequently done.

The study also shows that the government had taken interest in promoting Anthurium cultivation with only 24 initial beneficiaries under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern region in 2002. The government laid down certain conditions which should be met by the beneficiaries. The number of cultivators increased over the years. Inputs are provided free of cost to the cultivators, and also on need base.

Apart from Anthurium cultivation, in order to meet local demands, the government has recently initiated the plantation of Curcuma flowers providing subsidy to the 20 beneficiaries in 2023. Such beneficiaries are actual floriculturists involved in the business to generate income. Foliage plants imported from other countries had also been cultivated by beneficiaries from 2021 onwards. These plants are meant to meet local demand and not to be exported or shipped to other places.

The study demonstrates that the government frequently receive requests and demands for inputs and material for greenhouse. The government does not entertain all such requests for aid and inputs. However, depending on the available schemes and funds requests for inputs are responded. Under schemes like Integrated Pest Management Scheme and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), inputs are distributed and provided to floriculturists.

The government frequently receive requests for aid in terms of different inputs from the florist associations. Besides these requests, the government is often approached by florist associations to sponsor the florist fairs cum flower show organized three to four times annually. The government officials claim that when such requests of florist

association are not fulfilled, they do not press or push the government to fulfil their demands, they remain dormant for some time. Unwanted strained relationship does not exist between the government and the florist associations.

The present study reveals that the government does give priority to the requests of florist associations which have been formed under the supervision of the Horticulture Department officials, which are the MFA and the ZAGCS. The government mostly collaborate with the two associations on important events and functions. The two florist associations and the government work together for the promotion of floriculture and the government too annually provides a platform in the form of Horticulture Fair for floriculturists to showcase and market their products.

The government approach the ZAGCS and MFA to collaborate with it on important events and functions, and when it hosts important dignitaries and guests. For instance, the successful G20 *Chapchar Kut* Flower Show which was organized in 2023 was a collaborative work between the government, MFA and ZAGCS.

The florist fairs organized frequently by the florist associations is usually sponsored by the government as per requests of the associations. Such florist fairs are important for the growth and development of floriculture and also serve as an important platform for floriculturists to make huge sales which they could not do at home.

The study shows that the government provide incentives to floriculturists to help boost their production. Provision of incentives and necessary inputs are done free of cost and also at subsidized rate. The government identifies needy farmers to be beneficiaries of incentives, and aid is provided to those actual producers. The government respond to the needs of the floriculturists and is taking continuous steps to promote and develop floriculture industry.

Case Study I: Zopar Export Private Limited- Zopar Export Private Limited is a Bangalore registered private company owned by Mr. Rajesh Prasad and Lianzami Leivang (L) who passed away in 2021. The company was started as an outlet in 2002 and Zopar farm was started in 2006. Zopar Export Private Limited has land area of 40 acres, where on 22 acres of land large greenhouses are constructed for flower crop cultivation and open cultivation is done on 2 acres of land. The founding director and

owner Mr. Prasad started his floriculture business journey with the Tata Industries. Moving on and building his own floriculture farm at Bangalore he travelled to a number of countries, learning the skill and gaining experience along the way. After many years he began his floriculture journey in Mizoram from 2002 and built a reliable and successful farm and outlets in the state catering to the aesthetic needs of the local people. The Zopar company at present employs 150 workers coming from all parts of the mainland India and North East India and many Burmese immigrants are also hired. The farm thus generates employment opportunities and provides livelihood to its employees coming from poor economic background. The farm has standardized daily routine which is strictly maintained by eight supervisors who manages the daily work routine and see to it that work is done. The flowers at the farm are harvested daily which are graded in the grading hall and wrapped in bunches and stored in the cold storage to be shipped to Zopar outlets in Mizoram and other outlets in North East India. The Zopar flowers are available in the outlets 6 days a week, thus, meeting the local demands which has become high. Zopar farm provides accommodation in terms of family quarters and dormitories to the hired workers, and a mess is provided for the girls. The Zopar company takes care of the welfare of the workers by providing Employee Social Insurance and Provident Fund. A small Christian chapel exists which caters to the spiritual needs of the workers. The Zopar Export Private Limited has undergone tremendous setbacks and shocks and was at the point of bankruptcy too. But the entrepreneurial skill and experience and determination of the owner has helped in recovering from the shock and stress and is at present debt free. The company does not export its product anymore, but the farm products are transported to the many Zopar outlets in Mizoram and other parts of NE India. The Zopar flowers are popular in the local market and they cater to the religious and cultural needs of the local people especially on weekends and on festive occasions.

Case Study II: Laltei Nursery- Laltei Nursery is a family business established some 30 years ago owned by Mrs. Laltei, a resident of Ramthar Veng, a locality in Aizawl city. Mrs. Laltei is a widow with three sons who help her run the business. The nursery is a source of income and livelihood for Mrs. Laltei and her sons. The nursery produces different variety of flower seedlings throughout the year based on the season. The nursery hires two to three workers daily to tackle the different tasks involved in preparing soil, germinating and transplanting seedlings. The nursery owner with her marketing skill adopts various strategies to market their products and goods, she herself sells their products in the local market and florist fairs, products are sold online through social media platform. The nursery owner plays important role in sharing her knowledge and experiences at seed germination and seedling care in seminars and talks organized by Mizoram Florist Association. She also shares her experiences in radio discussions and is also interviewed often by Doordarshan Kendra and local Television. She has written a number of articles on her line of business in souvenirs and magazines of the association. She also trained her hired workers and taught them the skill and technical aspect of the business; such workers have set up independent floriculture business of their own. The nursery had faced problems and lost lakhs of rupees worth of seedlings and plants during the Covid-19 pandemic. But determination, hard work and perseverance pushed the owner to move forward and has recovered from the stress and shock it experienced during the pandemic. Laltei nursery's flowers are popular for landscaping resorts and picnic spots and office buildings, and individuals make use of the flowers to beautify their residential surroundings.

The two case studies on Zopar Export Private Limited and Laltei Nursery share similarities in that they both cater to the aesthetic needs of the Mizo people and meet the local demand on cut flowers and flower plants to a great extent. The owners of the private company and the family enterprise are both pioneers in their own field of floriculture business. Mr. Prasad the owner of Zopar is a pioneer in managing a floriculture farm and exporting flowers to other countries and also in opening a flower shop dealing with cut flowers procured from outside the state. While Mrs. Laltei is also considered a pioneer in germinating different flower seeds and selling

the flower seedlings in Mizoram. Both cases dealing with floriculture are labour intensive where hard work is required to achieve success. Both business ventures depend to a large extent on festive occasions and one on wedding season and the other on weather seasons.

There are certain divergences between the two cases studied. One is a big private company worth crore of rupees owned by a male entrepreneur, while the other is a small family enterprise worth a few lakhs of rupees owned by a woman floriculturist. The Zopar farm covers 40 acres of land with 55 large greenhouses constructed over 22 acres of land, and 2 acres of open cultivation. While Laltei Nursery covers only a small area in fact, it covers two roof top areas of the same size 36 x 24 square feet and one roof top with an area of 42 x 45 square feet, where greenhouses fitting the size have been constructed to house the nursery. The Zopar company deals with cut flower cultivation meant for flower arrangement and bouquets, while the Nursery concentrates on seed germination and sale of flower seedlings meant for beautifying residential areas and for landscaping purposes. The two cases differ tremendously in the number of hired labour. The Zopar company being extensive in its floriculture business hires 150 workers hailing from different neighbouring areas, who are engaged in various tasks daily. The workers if they are willing are employed continuously earning regular income for several years. While the Nursery hires two or three women labour regularly to help with the tasks related to the process of germination, and only sometimes are men hired to deal with heavy load of manure and sand. Hired workers at the nursery do not work continuously so new workers are recruited often. Thus, both cases generate employment for workers to earn for their livelihood. The monthly expenditure goes up to Rs 40 lakhs at the Zopar company, including workers' wages, repair and maintenance work at the farm. Thus, cost of production is high and profit margin is low. While the monthly expenditure at Laltei Nursery is not high involving more or less than 1 lakh, including the flower seeds, workers' wages, manure, sand, poly bags and poly pots. Considering the size of the nursery, the expenditure may be high but the profit margin is high too. The welfare of the hired workers at Zopar company is taken into consideration providing insurance and provident fund, while such welfare provisions for the hired labour are not taken

into account in Laltei Nursery. The two cases had undergone shocks and faced challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, losing a lot of money and in debt. But experience, skill, perseverance and hard work have all played huge roles in their recovery from the stress and loss of money and both have attained a position where they are debt free and have recovered from the pandemic shock.

Sociological Significance of Floriculture as a Livelihood Option

Floriculture as a livelihood option is pursued as a family enterprise and it has not only helped meet the entrepreneurs' basic household requirements and enjoy a decent standard of living, establishing network of relations with fellow floriculturists through florist associations and clients. Such social relationships are manifested in times of *chhiatni* and *thatni* (day of joy and sorrow), offering condolence gifts in the form floral bouquet and cash. It is manifested in exchange of potted flowers and potted plants which strengthens their relationship cohesively, learning the technical skill of the business and building up social capital necessary for the success of the business. The floriculture business as livelihood option has in turn helped improve position of women entrepreneurs within the household and enhance economic independence, increase purchasing power and be more confident and gain self-esteem.

With limited employment options for unemployed low educated people, entrepreneurs with aesthetic sense in flowers have turned their attention to this entrepreneurial endeavour looking at it as a path out of unemployment. Women entrepreneurs are pursuing floriculture entrepreneurship as a small micro family enterprise in an effort to empower themselves, generate additional income for the family, and be more productive in their lives.

More so, florist associations in Mizoram act as catalysts fostering an environment conducive for the continuous growth of floriculture. The florist associations encourage floriculture entrepreneurship and continuously work for the growth of floriculture and works in tandem with the government to develop floriculture. They are constantly working for the benefit of floriculture entrepreneurs by approaching on their behalf the government for provision of necessary inputs and incentives

available for floriculturists. They constantly encourage, motivate and train interested entrepreneurs in the skill and art of floriculture entrepreneurship through trainings and seminars and also in print media. They also very frequently create a platform in the form of florist fairs and flower shows to market their own products and goods and generate significant income.

The Horticulture Department, government of Mizoram too plays significant role in flourishing floriculture business in the state. The government initiated the commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers in the state under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India, now known as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). Under this scheme, with availability of funds the government regularly provide necessary inputs and incentives for the growth of floriculture at lower prices and free of cost at the request of floriculturists. Besides, the government sponsors florist fairs and flower shows organized by florist associations and annually organizes Anthurium festival to encourage the Anthurium farmers and promote tourism at the same time, and Horticulture fair to provide a market platform for floriculturists too, to exhibit and make significant sales of their propagated products and floriculture goods. The government organizes trainings frequently for floriculture entrepreneurs on plant care, plant health, germination of seeds and flower arrangement. Thus, the government also act as catalyst for the growth of floriculture. It plays a tremendous role in providing opportunities for generating income through Anthurium cultivation for livelihood to entrepreneurs, and also encourage and promote floriculture among women entrepreneurs who in turn takes the opportunity to generate income for the household. The floriculture business venture has in turn produced economically independent women entrepreneurs who are empowered and more productive with experience.

Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) or Mizo Women Organization is one of the largest and popular voluntary organization and has had tremendous contributions towards community development. A strong force established for the upliftment and development of the weaker section of society especially women and children. Emphasis is laid upon empowerment of women and advocating women's rights.

However, MHIP does not have any collaborative roles with the florist associations nor with the government to develop floriculture. It supports the increasing importance gained by floriculture in the state but do not take steps to promote floriculture activity and in augmenting the entrepreneurship. The NGO gives moral support and emotional backing to floriculturists rather than give direct aid.

CHAPTER VII

Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced

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Chapter VII

Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced

7.1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a crucial factor in a country's economic development, as it generates new employment opportunities and fosters innovation. The economic development of a nation is the result of deliberate social engagement, particularly human involvement. Consequently, entrepreneurship significantly influences the economic system of a nation. Currently, a primary aim of contemporary economics is to identify the determinants of economic development, with entrepreneurship being a significant factor that impacts the economy, both directly and indirectly (Khan, 2018:32).

Entrepreneurial success can result in a flexible work schedule, increased independence, and an increased sense of achievement and satisfaction. Entrepreneurs generate employment opportunities for themselves and others, so alleviating unemployment and promoting economic growth.

Entrepreneurial endeavours encompass the initiation, administration, and expansion of a business, typically aimed at launching innovative products, services, or business frameworks. These endeavours are motivated by the recognition and utilisation of opportunities, necessitating innovation, risk-taking, and a readiness to overcome obstacles. Entrepreneurship encompasses diverse actions, including initiating a new enterprise, innovating within an established organisation or advocating for a social cause.

The emergence of entrepreneurs in a society depends to a great extent on the economic, social, religious, cultural and psychological factors existing in the society. Women entrepreneurs are described as an individual or group of women who establish, manage, and operate a business enterprise. The involvement of women in economic activities is essential not just from a human resource perspective but also

for enhancing the position of women. The economic standing of women is now recognised as a measure of a society's level of progress.

7.2 Entrepreneurial Pursuits

Floriculture presents substantial prospects for female entrepreneurship, facilitating economic empowerment and sustainable enterprises. Women are progressively engaged in multiple facets of the floriculture industry, encompassing cultivation, value-added goods, and retail, with a rising emphasis on female leadership and innovation in the field.

Floriculture is considered a longstanding agricultural practice in India, with significant potential to create profitable self-employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for small and marginal farmers. Entrepreneurship serves as a means to enhance the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities, while also fostering a robust economy and environment.

7.2.1 Training and Skill Development

Training skills terminates inefficiency and low productivity. Individuals interested in pursuing floriculture as a business venture can gain floriculture training through various programmes including certificate course or diploma course which cover a range of topics from basic cultivation techniques to advanced techniques in nursery management, hands -on training in nurseries, in greenhouses and gardens. Soil management, cultivation practices, propagations, seed germination and plant care and maintenance, floral design are areas of floriculture training. Floriculture, or flower farming, presents significant opportunities for skill development and income generation, particularly in regions like Northeast India with suitable agro-climatic conditions.

Skill development is required in flower growing techniques, nursery management, pest and disease management, post-harvest handling, and marketing tactics. Moreover, cultivating competencies in entrepreneurship, financial management, building customer relationships, adaptability and innovation and adapting to evolving consumer demands are essential for success in the floriculture sector.

Question on whether the respondents have undergone training to run their floriculture business was posed to them and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.1.1 Training taken

Training taken	Frequency (%)
Yes	62 (40.5)
No	91 (59.5)
Total	153 (100)

The table above demonstrates whether the respondents have undergone training to run their floriculture business. Out of the total respondents, 59.5% (91) of them claim that they have not undergone any training to run their floriculture business in order to achieve success. Seminars and trainings are organized frequently by the Mizoram Florist Association and the Horticulture Department, government of Mizoram on floriculture related issues for the benefit of floriculturists. One of the floriculturists inform that she has not attended any training sessions on floriculture, because she believes she believes that she is capable of managing her business enterprise with the active support of her family members. On the other hand, 40.5% (62) of them have undergone different trainings on floriculture and how to run the business successfully. Such respondents have attended trainings and programmes organized frequently by the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram and Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) on soil mixing, plant management, pest management, flower seed germination process, care of seedlings, Anthurium plant care, harvesting, post-harvesting skill and management and also flower arrangement. Floriculturists who have undergone training on care of flowers and plants possess the skill and knowledge to care for their plants to thrive and last long. The government and MFA organize training on flower arrangement skill frequently to motivate floriculturists and others interested in flowers to indulge in the business of event decoration and generate income. Training on such areas help floriculturists to run their floriculture business smoothly and successfully.

Question on whether the floriculture business bring out the respondents' entrepreneurial skill over the years was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.1.2 Entrepreneurial skill over the years

Entrepreneurial skill over the years	Frequency (%)
Yes	143 (93.5%)
No	10 (6.5%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above reveals whether floriculture business bring out the respondents' entrepreneurial skill over the years. Out of the total 153 respondents, 93.5% (143) of them claim that their floriculture business venture has brought out their entrepreneurial skill over the years. Majority of the respondents have been involved in floriculture business for more than a decade, some more than three decades. The floriculturists, as informed by them, have developed different entrepreneurial skills like innovation, risk-taking, adaptability, marketing strategies and financial management which are crucial for the success of their business. These skills enable floriculturists to identify opportunities, manage resources effectively and navigate the challenges of a competitive floriculture market. Whereas 6.5% (10) claim that their involvement in floriculture business has not brought entrepreneurial skill over the years. Their business venture has not helped in developing entrepreneurial skills much, because these floriculturists have been involved in the business recently and lack sufficient experience. They have been involved in the business only a few years which has not helped them develop entrepreneurial skills as yet.

Question on whether the business enabled the respondents to develop social skills over the years was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.1.3 Developing social skills due to floriculture business

Skill Development through floriculture	Frequency (%)
Yes	148 (96.7%)
No	5 (3.3%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table shows whether the floriculture business has enabled the respondents to develop social skills over the years. Majority of the total 153 respondents, that is, 96.7% (148) of them claim that the floriculture business has enabled the floriculturists to develop social skills over the years. Floriculturists have been involved in their entrepreneurial activity for many years so much so that they have developed social skills, and the ability to interact effectively and positively with others. They inform that they develop the ability to connect with others, communicate verbally and non-verbally with their customers, understand and manage their emotions and recognize emotions in others. Further, they also inform that develop the ability to resolve disagreements and disputes with their fellow floriculturists and clients and they also have the capacity to understand others which is important for building strong connections with others. Floriculturists inform that they tend to be more confident in their relationship and interaction with people, which is important for floriculturists to be successful. The floriculturists built a network of social relations with their customers and fellow floriculturists which is crucial for success and of navigating their business. While 3.3% (5) do not believe that floriculture business has enabled them to develop social skills over the years. These floriculturists pursuing the business for a few years do not benefit much in terms of social relationship with others from their business, and they do not participate actively in the frequent florist fairs organized by florist associations.

7.2.2 Entrepreneurial Innovations

Innovation enables an individual entrepreneur or a group of entrepreneurs to enhance or substitute a certain product, process, or service. It enables them to enhance the items by generating innovative concepts and values. Innovative entrepreneurs

employ diverse techniques to surmount the problems within their enterprises. Entrepreneurs may need a definite strategy and vision to implement innovation within the organization. Generating creative ideas necessitates the continual challenge of oneself and the exploration of new possibilities or techniques (<https://in.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/innovative-entrepreneurship>).

Innovativeness denotes a readiness to endorse innovation and experimentation in the launch of new products and services, alongside technological leadership and research and development in the advancement of new processes. It signifies a fundamental readiness to abandon established technologies or techniques and explore beyond the current state of the art (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996a cited in Vreeken, 2012:2).

The floriculturists pursue their business as their primary and secondary source of income. Question on whether the respondents' entrepreneurial activity take most of their time was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.2.1 Prime time in floriculture entrepreneurial activity

Whole timer in entrepreneurial activity	Frequency (%)
Yes	105 (68.6%)
No	48 (31.4)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table highlights whether the entrepreneurial activity take most of the floriculturists' time. Out of the total respondents, majority of them 68.6% (105) claim that the floriculture activity takes most of their time. One of the respondents involved in germinating seeds informs that flower seed germination and plant propagation processes are labour intensive activities involving preparation of soil mix, preparation of poly pots with soil, transplantation of thousands of seedlings and plant-lings, which is a continuous work carried out with the help of hired labour sometimes. According to one of the floriculturists, care of perennial flowering plants like bougainvillea too involves continuous work, the plants need trimmings occasionally to bloom profusely, stem cuttings for propagation is done frequently and

rooted propagations are transplanted again in disposable and poly pots and are made ready for sale. Floriculture works consumes most of the time of the floriculturists, especially those who depend on the business for their livelihood and have to give their full time for the success and smooth functioning of their business. Family members give full support to floriculturists and spouses of women floriculturists too do not react in a negative way or disapprove the time given to the floriculture activity. While 31.4% (48) of the respondents inform that their entrepreneurial activity does not take most of their time. These floriculturists are the ones who pursue the business as supplementary source of income and does not fully concentrate and give their full time to the activity. As informed by them, they are not solely dependent on the business for their livelihood and as such are able to devote their time to some other works. However, majority of them pursue it as their whole-time activity and hence primary. Moreover, floriculturists as informed by them very often hire help in their business, because they are not able to manage the workload solely as floriculture business venture involves hard work.

Question on whether the respondents often innovate their floriculture products to increase market value was posed to them and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.2.2 Innovating floriculture products to increase value

Innovating to increase value	Frequency (%)
Yes	138 (90.2%)
No	15 (9.8%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above highlights whether floriculturists often innovate their floricultural products to increase the market value. Out of the total respondents, majority of them 90.2% (138) claim that they do innovate their products to increase the market value. As field observation shows, floriculturists consider innovating their products very important by re-planting their foliage plants in white flower pots to enhance the beauty of the plants. According to one respondent, plant-lings and house plants are transplanted in white plastic pots, or in ceramic pots which enhances the appealing

beauty of the plants far better than being planted in poly pots. Plants and flowering plants like bougainvillea are always cut and trimmed to give them better shape and increase their aesthetic looks. One floriculturist informs that before participating in florist fairs, they take care of their products, clean and wipe the leaves of the plants, use good potting media for the plants to thrive healthily and give them nutrients and innovate them to enhance their appearance and make them look interesting and eye-catching. Such innovations of the plants help the floriculturists to make sales much better in the florist fairs and at home too. Another respondent informs that in order to make significant sales and make their business thrive, they take chances in innovating the business venture by importing new products and exotic plants from abroad and abandon some of the products no more trending. On the other hand, 9.8% (15) of the respondents claim that they do not innovate their floriculture products to make sales. They do not feel the need to transform the appearance of their products to make them more appealing and attractive.

Question on whether the respondents extend their entrepreneurial activity beyond selling flowers and plants was posed to the respondents and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.2.3 Extension of business venture beyond floriculture

Extension of business venture	Frequency (%)
Yes	48 (31.4%)
No	105 (68.6%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table indicates whether the respondents are indulging in extending their business venture beyond floriculture activity. Out of the total respondents, majority of them 68.6% (105) claim that they do not indulge in extending their business beyond floriculture activity. Field observation reveals that floriculturists do not indulge in vending floriculture related business venture such as potting soil or media, manure, plant nutrients and all kinds of flower pots, due to lack of space and time

around the residence. While, 31.4% (48) of the respondents inform that they do indulge in extending their business venture beyond floriculture. They are selling at the same time materials and goods necessary for growing flowers and plants such as potting media, manure, cocopeat, plant boosters or nutrients, fungicides and insecticides and some are dealing with nursery plastic pots and ceramic pots and containers. They inform that setting up a business venture on such floriculture related goods alongside floriculture activity help boost income generation and strengthens the business for the floriculturists besides vending flowers and plants.

Question on the kind of related aspects or nuances of floriculture business the respondents are dealing with was posed to the respondents and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.2.4 Nuances of floriculture business dealt with

Related aspects of floriculture business dealt with	Frequency (%)
All kinds of potting media	3 (2%)
Cocopeat /coco husks	7 (4.6%)
Plant nutrients/flower boosters	7 (4.6%)
Pesticides /fungicides	3 (2%)
Nursery pots/flower pots	3 (2%)
Potting media, cocopeat, plant nutrients, pesticides and gardening tools	14 (9.2%)
Potting media, cocopeat, plant nutrients, pesticides, gardening tools and flower pots	11 (7.2%)
None	105 (68.6%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table displays the related aspects of floriculture business the respondents are dealing with. Out of the total respondents, 68.6% (105) are not involved in any other business venture other than floriculture activity. The rest of the respondents consisting of 31.4% (48) are indulging in trading with goods related to floriculture activity. As revealed in the table, 9.2% (14) of the respondents include in their

business venture goods necessary for cultivating flowers and plants such as different kinds of potting media, cocopeat, plant nutrients, pesticides or fungicides and gardening tools. One of the respondents informs that indulging in selling such necessary items and goods alongside floriculture activity fetch more income for floriculturists leading to a decent standard of living and they are able to meet the basic household requirements. The business venture also helps in enhancing the financial independence of the floriculture entrepreneurs. While 7.2% (11) also indulge in the same endeavour vending related items and goods of floriculture such as different kinds of potting media, cocopeat, plant nutrients, pesticides or fungicides and gardening tools with flower pots and containers besides their floriculture activity. While 4.6% (7) are dealing with cocopeat used as a part of potting media, another 4.6% (7) are dealing with different kinds of plant nutrients or flower boosters such as NPK fertilizers (Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium). While 2% (3) of the respondents are dealing with potting media such as cow manure and ready-made soil mix, and another 2% (3) are also selling pesticides and fungicides for plant care and health, and another 2% (3) are dealing with flower containers and nursery pots including the disposable pots and poly pots necessary for transplanting seedlings and plant-lings and mother-plants. These floriculture related items fetch regular income for the floriculturists who are dealing with them besides their flower crops.

Question on whether the respondents adjust themselves often to meet the trending demands of the customers was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.2.5 Adjusting to trending demands of customers

Adjusting to trending demands	Frequency (%)
Yes	138 (90.2%)
No	15 (9.8%)
Total	153 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork Data

The table above demonstrates whether the respondents adjust themselves to meet the trending demands of the customers. Majority of the respondents that is, 90.2% (138) of them claim that they do adjust and adapt themselves to the trending demands of floriculture goods of the customers. As per field observation, floriculture plants and flower crops of different varieties and species are being cultivated within the state and procured from outside the state. According to one of the floriculturists, specific flowers and foliage plants become trendy at some point of time like fashion and are thus in fashion and are popular and attractive for people. She further adds that floriculturists too, adjust and adapt themselves according to the changing preferences of their customers. They adjust to the trend and aesthetic appeal of new flower species and plants, and thus they procure such trendy plants and flowers satisfying their clients' aesthetic taste and interest. Adjusting themselves frequently according to the popularity and changing fashion in flowers and foliage plants is a necessity in order to make significant sales in florist fairs, in the local market and at home. While 9.8% (15) claim that they do not feel the need to adjust according to the trending demands of customers. Such floriculturists are those who do not keep in touch with the trending plants and flowers, and of the customers' specific interest and aesthetic taste. So much so that they hardly adjust and adapt to the changing trend and demands of the market.

7.2.3 Risk Taking and Income Promotions

Entrepreneurship and risk-taking are inherently connected. Successful entrepreneurs are prepared to undertake calculated risks to seize possibilities that may lack assured outcomes but possess the potential for substantial profits. This entails weighing the risk of failure against the prospect of success, and it is a vital component in encouraging innovation and growth in businesses.

Entrepreneurship offers economic advantages such as limitless earning potential, the capacity to accumulate substantial wealth and attain financial independence, as well as the opportunity to establish several income streams. Entrepreneurs enjoy a sense of success and independence, control over their assets and income, and the potential for tax benefits. In addition to individual profit, entrepreneurship produces wider

economic advantages by generating employment and promoting innovation. Entrepreneurial success can result in a flexible work schedule, increased independence, and an increased sense of achievement and satisfaction. Entrepreneurs generate employment opportunities for themselves and others, so alleviating unemployment and promoting economic growth.

Question was posed to the respondents on whether they take risks in expanding their entrepreneurial activity such as importing rare exotic plants and flowers to generate more income and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.3.1 Taking risks in importing rare plants and flowers

Taking risks in importing rare Species	Frequency (%)
Yes	72 (47.1%)
No	81 (52.9%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above indicates whether the respondents take risks in expanding their business venture by importing rare exotic plants and flowers to generate more income. Out of the total respondents, 52.9% (81) consisting of the majority abstain from taking risks by importing rare plants and flowers from outside the state and abroad. According to the respondents the risk involved in importing rare exotic plants from abroad is high and could result in heavy financial loss if the goods arrive in damaged condition. One of the respondents narrated her experience where she took a risk once and ordered exotic plants from China, and due to the long journey and the shipping costs, her ordered floriculture items arrived in a damaged condition and it resulted in a huge financial loss and she informed that she would never repeat the same mistake again and take another risk. The floriculturists would rather avoid such financial loss than indulge in taking risks. On the other hand, 47.1% (72) of the respondents frequently take risks in importing rare exotic plants and flowers to generate more income. According to one of the respondents, imported exotic plants if

they arrive in good and healthy condition fetch high price and if they are in high demand in the market they are easily sold and as such more income is generated for the household. The respondents however, indulge in taking high risk uncertain whether their floriculture goods would arrive in good or bad condition, which would mean fetching good price or heavy financial loss.

Questions on whether the floriculture business makes the respondents financially independent and whether they have authority to decide how to spend income from business were posed and are presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.3.2

Financial independence and authority to make Expenditure Decisions

Financial independence	Frequency (%)
Yes	148 (96.7 %)
No	5 (3.3 %)
Total	153 (100%)
Authority to make Expenditure Decisions	Frequency (%)
Yes	151 (98.7%)
No	2 (1.3%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above shows whether respondents have any financial independence through floriculture business. For 96.7% (148) of the total respondents, the floriculture business has made them financially independent who are able to manage the income individually. The income generated by their business venture is managed by the floriculturists in order to run the business and they have the authority and liberty to spend the income on their personal requirements. According to one floriculturist, financial independence also means purchasing power which is in the hands of the floriculturists who are at liberty if they wish, to procure more varieties of flowering plants and foliage plants to propagate so as to increase income for the

household and spend the income for the household and personal needs. Out of the total respondents, only 3.3 % (5) of them argue that they do not gain financial independence through their floriculture business. Income generation is not high for those who initiated their business a few years ago and for those who pursue the business for secondary source of income. Hence, the floriculture business does not make them financially independent.

The above table also indicates whether the respondents have the authority to decide how the income from the business should be spent. Out of the total respondents, majority of them 98.7% (151) claim that they have the authority to decide how the income should be spent. The floriculturists on the whole are at liberty to spend the income generated through the business as they see fit, they have the authority as mentioned earlier to spent on personal requirements and for the family members in need. They have the freedom to expand their business and procure more species of flowers and plants to propagate and may deposit as savings in the bank too. While a meagre 1.3% (2) argue that they do not possess authority to decide how to spent the income. In such households, men possess the authority and decision is taken up by the head of the family on how to spent the income. Thus, financial independence and authority to spent the income go hand in hand, which is gained by floriculturists through their business venture.

Question on whether the generation of income helped improve the respondents' position in the household was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.3.3

Status Enhancement with generation of income

Status Enhancement	Frequency (%)
Yes	136 (88.9%)
No	17 (11.1%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above highlights whether the generation of income helped improve the respondents' position in the household. Out of the total respondents, 88.9% (136) opine that the generation of income has helped improve their position in the household. The Mizo society is a patriarchal one where males dominate and has primary authority and power in the family. Inheritance and lineage are traced through the male line which reinforces male dominance in the society. Women have subordinate roles in the household, however, if permitted by their husbands or the elder males in the family, they are able to pursue their passion for instance, growing flowers and plants. Their floriculture endeavour is also supported by the head and other members of the family. One of the floriculturists narrates that the income generated through their business venture has helped improve their position and status in the family, where the women floriculturists' voices are heard and considered important by their spouses and the family members. Their opinions matter and their decisions concerning the family are considered important. On the other hand, 11.1% (17) of the respondents argue that the generation of income through floriculture has not improved their position within the household. The reason may be the income generated is not sufficient to meet the household's basic requirements and is too less to provide for a decent standard of living which results in no improvement in the position of women floriculturists.

Questions on whether generating income for the household facilitate the respondents to make important decisions for the family and on whether floriculture business help the respondents to be more productive in family matters were posed and are presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.3.4

Income facilitates making decisions for the Family Welfare

Income facilitates making decisions for the family	Frequency (%)
Yes	150 (98%)
No	3 (2%)
Total	153 (100%)
Income helping productive family decisions	Frequency (%)
Yes	146 (95.4%)
No	7 (4.6%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above demonstrates whether generating income for the household facilitate the respondents to make important decisions for the family. Out of the total respondents, majority of them 98% (150) claim that generating income through floriculture for the household facilitates them to make important decisions for the family. Generating income for the household facilitates economic independence and helps in decision making ability of the floriculturists. They opine that financial independence makes women floriculturists in building up confidence and capabilities in dealing with decision making in important family matters. Opinions and decisions of the women floriculturists matter and are considered important by other members of the family especially when they are the sole earners of the family. Whereas 2% (3) of the respondents claim that the income they generate through floriculture for the household does not facilitate them to make important decisions for the family.

The table above also highlights whether the floriculture business help the respondents to be more productive in family matters. Out of the total respondents, 95.4% (146) of them claim to be more productive in family matters due to the business endeavour. The floriculturists after indulging in the business for many years gain entrepreneurial skill and experience in trading strategies which are crucial for generating more income for the family. They inform that such experience and skill gained through the years have helped the floriculturists to be productive in household

matters, developing a strong work ethic, working hard, are willing to do what it takes to get their job done and get their household chores done in time and they are more able to shoulder responsibility in family matters. Thus, income generation through floriculture business facilitate decision-making in important family matters for the floriculturists, family members give importance to their decisions and views and besides, it also helps them to be more productive in their dealings with family matters daily. While 4.6% (7) inform that their business venture does not help them to be more productive in the family, floriculture business does not change them.

Question on whether the entrepreneurial activity has increased the respondents' self-esteem was posed and presented in the following table.

Table 7.2.3.5

Increased self-esteem due to floricultural activity

Increased self-esteem due to floricultural activity	Frequency (%)
Yes	151 (98.7%)
No	2 (1.3%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above demonstrates whether the floriculture entrepreneurial activity has increased the self-esteem of the floriculturists. Out of the total respondents, 98.7% (151) of them opine that the floriculture business has increased their self-esteem. Floriculturists have indulged in the floriculture business venture for a number of decades and have gained confidence over the years. One of the respondents opine that their business has helped them realise their self-worth, their abilities and qualities which affects their overall well-being. Increased self-esteem leads to self-confidence in their abilities, capabilities and in their accomplishments in the business. She further adds that they develop self-esteem which allows them to approach life's challenges with optimism. With their self-esteem floriculturists are able to build healthy relationships and face challenges too. A meagre 1.3% (2) argue that the entrepreneurial activity does not improve their self-esteem or their self-worth, and does not bring about personal development for them.

7.3 Constraints Faced

Floriculture, though a promising industry, encounters certain limitations. These can be broadly classified into production-related challenges, market-related issues, and financial obstacles. Production obstacles encompass insufficient quality planting material, poor infrastructure, and restricted access to innovative technologies. Market-related issues encompass challenges in transportation, storage, and securing dependable purchasers. Financial limitations frequently arise from the seasonal characteristics of the floriculture business, complicating the acquisition of long-term financing.

The floriculture industry in Mizoram has witnessed an increasing demand for rare and exotic flowers and plants. Growing inclination towards flowers for different social events, religious purposes, and cultural events in the recent years have resulted in flourishing of floriculture in the state. However, despite its potential, the floriculture industry in the state faces constraints and challenges which to a large extent hinder its development and expansion. The floriculture business faces constraints in terms of inadequate infrastructure, limited land space, limited market facilities and issues related to quality control.

Question on what part of the floriculture business gives the respondents the most problem was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.1**Problem faced in floriculture business**

Problem faced in floriculture business	Frequency (%)
Maintenance of plants/flowering plants	4 (2.6%)
Propagating plants/flowering plants	23 (15%)
Marketing of products	2 (1.3%)
Price fluctuations	3 (2%)
Limited water supply	38 (24.8%)
Propagating plants/flowering plants, price fluctuations	10 (6.5%)
Maintenance of plants, propagating plants, marketing of products and limited water supply	19 (12.4%)
None	54 (35.3%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table demonstrates which part of floriculture business gives problems the most to the respondents. Out of the total respondents, 35.3% (54) of them claim that they do not face any such problems in their floriculture business venture. Such problems if faced are tackled and solved by these floriculturists who are resilient in their business. 24.8% (38) of the respondents inform that their main problem is limited water supply which is quite a hindrance for them. They inform that many of the floriculturists depend on the water supplied by the Public Health Engineering Department, Government of Mizoram under Aizawl Water Supply Scheme, which is supplied every week and in some areas after every ten days. During the dry season, the water supply becomes less and less frequent due to shortage of water. Floriculturists are thus not able to water their flower crops frequently as they require, sometimes even leading to loss of plants. While 23 (15%) of the respondents inform that successful propagation of plants and flowering plants is a problem they face in their line of business. They inform that hundreds of stem cuttings and leaf of flowering and non-flowering plants are propagated based on the season, on sand in small plastic bags. All of such propagations are hardly successful, in fact only a few

of them are rooted and propagations are successful. The floriculturists relentlessly continue their propagation work when the previous ones are not successful as expected. While 12.4% (19) of the floriculturists inform that maintenance of plants, propagating plants, marketing of products and limited water supply are the challenges frequently faced by them. Floriculturists face problem in maintaining their flower crops healthily, without any disease like powdery mildew and other fungal diseases, propagating plants successfully, successfully marketing products and shortage of water. These floriculturists face multiple constraints in handling their floriculture products which affects their business. 6.5% (10) of the respondents face constraints in their business in terms of propagating plants and price fluctuations. Propagation requires skill and if floriculturists lack the skill, it becomes a problem. Price of floriculture products tend to fluctuate which becomes a problem for some of the floriculturists. 2.6% (4) of the respondents inform that their main problem is maintaining flowering and non-flowering plants healthily at all times. They narrate that fungal disease tends to attack flower crops which lowers the value of the crops, tackling the pests and disease with the right fungicide and pesticide is required. For 2% (3) of the respondents, price fluctuation of floriculture goods is a constraint which hinders their business. Lastly, 1.3% (2) of the respondents inform that marketing of products is a problem they face in their business venture.

Question was posed to the respondents on whether they think the government is playing sufficient role in helping floriculture entrepreneurs and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.2

Adequacy of Government's role in helping floriculturists

Adequacy of Government's role in helping floriculturists	Frequency (%)
Yes	67 (43.8%)
No	86 (56.2%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table demonstrates whether the Government is playing sufficient role in helping floriculture entrepreneurs. Out of the total respondents, majority of the respondents that is, 56.2% (86) opine that the Government's role in helping the floriculturists is not adequate. The respondents inform that the needy floriculturists have often approached the Government through florist associations such as Mizoram Florist Association for greenhouse structure and infra structure materials such as shade nets and polyhouse materials for their business at a subsidized rate. They inform that their requests have not been entertained and responded to by the Government and they have lost hope of ever getting their requests entertained. Absence and lack of such needed infra structure and inputs are constraints which they are facing. Moreover, the respondents further inform that they would like the Government to give a helping hand to the floriculturists in general in terms of incentives and inputs needed for the business. Further, most of the floriculturists' dream is to have a flower showroom or space for them to showcase and exhibit their floriculture goods for the whole week every day, and they inform that they wish the Government could provide a huge space for them to display and market their goods every day. On the other hand, 43.8% (67) of the respondents believe that the Government is playing sufficient role in helping the floriculturists. The Government according to them provides greenhouse material, flower seeds and other inputs at subsidized rate to some of the floriculture entrepreneurs, and distributes incentives free of cost to them.

Question on whether the floriculturists are able to keep up with the changing trend in floriculture business was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.3

Ability in keeping up with changing trend in the business

Ability in becoming trendy	Frequency (%)
Yes	110 (71.9%)
No	43 (28.1%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table indicates whether the respondents are able to keep up with the changing trend in floriculture business. Out of the total respondents, 71.9% (110) of them claim to keep up with the changing trend in floriculture business. One of the floriculturists narrates that floriculture is experiencing significant transformation and development driven by technological advancements and changing preferences of consumers. Online platforms are increasingly popular for flowers and plants sales, reaching a wider customer base and offers convenience. She further adds that there is a huge demand for unique and exotic rare plants and flowers which has led to increased import of rare plants from other countries like China, Thailand and Indonesia, and also procuring from other states of the country. Floriculturists are able to procure exotic plants and trending flowers and propagate them successfully addressing the needs of customers demanding such rare plants. The respondents inform that marketing of products online through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp are now popularly carried out by floriculturists, they have their own page and accounts where they promote and showcase their products. They are well versed in the use of modern technology and social media. Payment is also received through the popular Google Pay platform. While 28.1% (43) inform that they are not able to keep up with the changing trend in floriculture business. These floriculturists inform that it is difficult to keep up with the rapid changes and the use of modern technology and social media. Since use of social media is a constraint for them, they are not able to keep up with the changing trend in the business and they lack the ability to adapt and respond to the changing preferences of customers and slow to catch up with the trending plants and flowers. Indulging in online transaction and online payment is a constraint for them and thus expanding and advancing further in their business is difficult.

Question on whether the respondents are competing with other floriculturists in terms of procuring new houseplants and flowering plants was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.4

Stiff Competitions in procuring houseplants and flowering plants

Stiff Competitions	Frequency (%)
Yes	37 (24.2%)
No	116 (75.8%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above shows whether the respondents are competing with other floriculturists in terms of procuring plants and flowering plants. Out of the total respondents, 116 (75.8%) claim that they do not compete with their fellow floriculturists in procuring flowering plants and other plants which are in high demand. They inform that stiff competition does not exist in them, but they update themselves in terms of the changing trends in flowers and plants, with the preferences of customers and procure such goods which are trending with a good spirit. While the rest 24.2% (37) of them inform that they do compete with their fellow floriculturists in procuring trendy floriculture items which are in high demand. They opine that they put in extra effort to be the first to procure and be the only seller of rare and exotic plants which are in high demand. These floriculturists are ambitious and possess strong competitive spirit and, in the process, misunderstanding and jealousy amongst them crop up unexpectedly. They try hard to be exceptional entrepreneurs and generate more income than others by importing and procuring new houseplants which are rare and expensive.

Questions on whether any unhealthy competition exist amongst the floriculturists with regard to customers was posed and whether the respondents have experienced any kind of misunderstanding or jealousy from other floriculturists was also posed and are presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.5

Unhealthy competition for customers and jealousy from other floriculturists.

Unhealthy competition for customers	Frequency (%)
Yes	27 (17.6%)
No	126 (82.4%)
Total	153 (100%)
Jealousy from other floriculturists	Frequency (%)
Yes	19 (12.4%)
No	134 (87.6%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above indicates whether there exists unhealthy competition amongst the floriculturists with regard to their customers and whether the respondents have experienced any kind of misunderstanding or jealousy from other floriculturists. Majority of the respondents that is, 82.4% (126) claim that there does not exist conflict or unhealthy competition amongst the floriculturists with regard to customers in their business. In their interaction and relationship with their fellow floriculturists, they have not encountered any unhealthy situation amongst the floriculturists. This indicates that floriculturists run their business establishing network of social relations in a healthy environment. Whereas 17.6% (27) of the respondents feel that unhealthy competition exists among the floriculturists with regard to customers. As per one floriculturist narrative, there have been instances where an ambitious competitive minded floriculturist had stolen her potential customers offering them lesser price for the same item they intended to buy. This sometimes happens in florist fairs and in online platforms such as WhatsApp group posts. When such incident happen, conflict arises and unhealthy competition and jealousy occur between such floriculturists.

Similarly, out of the total respondents, 87.6% (134) of them have not experienced any bad misunderstanding or jealousy from other floriculturists. They inform that they maintain good and cordial relationship with other floriculturists, with no open

misunderstanding or any kind of jealousy from others. However, 12.4% (19) of the respondents do claim that they have had bad experience of misunderstanding from their fellow floriculturists. As one of the respondents' narrative reveals, in one particular florist fair, some of the floriculturists overcome with jealousy of her rare and exotic products which were propagations and were rooted, complains vocally to the leaders of the florist associations which is Mizoram Florist Association claiming that her products had been recently imported and repotted fresh for the purpose of the florist fair which is against the rule of the association. When the leaders examined closely however, they were nicely rooted propagations and were not fresh transplantations as the jealous floriculturist's allegations. She further informs that she was so furious that she left the Mizoram Florist Association for good and joined the *Pangpar Zuar* Association instead. Such kind of jealous action happen amongst the floriculturists.

Question on whether the respondents have ever received floricultural goods in damaged or stressful conditions when importing them from outside was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.6

Receiving imported floricultural items in damaged condition

Receiving in damaged condition	Frequency (%)
Yes	78 (51%)
No	75 (49%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table illustrates whether the respondents receive imported floriculture goods in damaged or stressful conditions while importing goods. Out of the total respondents, 51% (78) of them inform that receiving imported items in damaged condition is a massive constraint for them because they have taken risk and invested a huge amount of money on the imported goods. They inform that they had received

their imported floricultural goods in damaged condition, because transportation and shipping of live plants needs a long journey and it takes a number of days to reach their destination Aizawl especially from outside the country like China. One of the floriculturists inform that when plants arrive in a damaged condition, importers face huge financial loss very often together with the high shipping charge. Procuring plants from other states too, arrive in stressful condition and often needs reviving and rejuvenating which takes a number of days. Whereas 49% (75) of the respondents inform that they have not received floriculture goods in damaged condition when they import them. Though a few of the plants are stressed and tired of the long journey on their arrival, they are revitalized with the help of plant nutrients after a few days by the floriculturists, thus earning good income. Such floriculturists are fortunate enough not to experience financial loss while importing floriculture items.

Question on whether the respondents are at liberty to put a price on their propagated products was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.7

Freedom to price propagated products

Freedom to price propagated products	Frequency (%)
Yes	135 (88.2%)
No	18 (11.8%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above shows whether the respondents have liberty to put a price on their plants and propagated products. Out of the total respondents, 88.2% (135) of them claim that they are able to put a price on their propagated products without any hassle. Floriculturists who deal with propagation of perennial plants and flowers produces hundreds of propagated plant lings and plantlets. They are at liberty to put a price on such propagated plant lings, considering the price set by other floriculturists. Some may even set a lower price than others in order to sell their products faster.

While 11.8% (18) of the respondents argue that they are not at liberty to put a price on their propagated products. They inform that they enquire the price set to similar plant propagations by other floriculturists prior to putting a price on their products. Though they are at liberty to put their own price, they are afraid of disturbing the current market price of such products. There are no individuals or institutions controlling the market price as per narrative of the respondents.

Question on whether the respondents feel that the market infrastructure is sufficient for marketing their products was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.8

Sufficiency issues of market infrastructure for marketing products

Sufficiency issues of market infrastructure	Frequency (%)
Yes	77 (50.3%)
No	76 (49.7%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above indicates the opinion of the respondents on whether they feel that market infrastructure is sufficient for marketing their products. Out of the total respondents, 50.3% (77) of them opine that they feel that market infrastructure is sufficient for marketing their products. They are content with existing infrastructure for marketing of their products. They inform that floriculturists having seats at the Saturday local markets showcase their goods and earns enough to purchase their household requirements. Online platforms through social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram are being utilized popularly by the floriculturists to market their products. On the other hand, 49.7% (76) of them opine that the market infrastructure is not sufficient to market their products and is a constraint for them. Most of the floriculturists do not have any opportunity to sell their floriculture goods in the local Saturday markets due to lack of space to showcase their products. According to one of the respondents, existing main market provides seat to a few

florists selling cut flowers and their goods. The floriculturists have very little space in the local markets existing in different localities to market their products, nor do they have enough space at the main market area. Thus, the existing market infrastructure is considered insufficient by the floriculturists and is a big constraint for them and they earnestly claim that they need enough space within the city to exhibit and showcase their plants and items throughout the week and market their goods.

Question on whether the respondents face constraints with regard to infrastructure in their business was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.9

Facing difficulty with regard to infrastructure

Infrastructure constraints	Frequency (%)
Yes	84 (54.9%)
No	69 (45.1%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above illustrates whether the respondents face constraints with regard to infrastructure in their business dealings. Out of the total respondents 54.9% (84) of them claim that they do face constraints with regard to infrastructure in their business venture. The respondents inform that their business requires greenhouse facility which they lack, shade nets and poly house which controls the temperature are necessary infrastructures they lack and is a constraint for the floriculturists. Majority of the respondents narrate that lack of enough space to run their business around their residences is a big constraint for the floriculturists, they are prevented from expanding their entrepreneurial activity due to limited space around their residences as well as lack of land space to conduct their business. While 45.1% (69) inform that they do not face constraint with regard to infrastructure in their business dealings. The much-needed infrastructure for their floriculture business for instance

greenhouse facility is possessed by them and in terms of space too, such floriculturists does not face much problem.

Question on whether the respondents face difficulty in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse was posed and is presented in the table.

Table 7.3.10

Difficulty in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse

Difficulty in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse	Frequency (%)
Yes	38 (24.8%)
No	115 (75.2%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above demonstrates whether the respondents face problem in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse. Out of the total respondents, 75.2% (115) of them claim that they have not faced any difficulty in securing greenhouse or polyhouse. Many of the respondents have not experienced any difficulty in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse because they have not applied and requested for such inputs from the Government who disburse such inputs at subsidized rates. Some of the respondents inform that they purchased their greenhouse materials from others. Those who applied have been fortunate in being provided such inputs at lower price by the government; thus, the needed input is acquired by these floriculturists. However, though the majority does not face difficulty, 24.8% (38) of the respondents do face difficulty in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse to protect their flower crops from the harsh direct sunlight. Some of these floriculturists as field observation shows have applied a number of times for greenhouse material from the Government, they have been rejected even till the time of field work. One of the respondents inform that the reason varies; it may have been due to lack of fund, non-availability of the material and no response from the government and even lack of support from the florist association.

Question on whether the respondents face problem in hiring skilled labour was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.11

Problems in hiring skilled labour

Problem in hiring skilled labour	Frequency (%)
Yes	20 (13.1%)
No	133 (86.9%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table shows whether the respondents face any problem in hiring skilled labour. Out of the total respondents, majority that is, 86.9% (133) of them inform that they do not face difficulty in hiring skilled labour. Floriculturists are small time entrepreneurs pursuing floriculture as a family business. Most of the floriculturists interviewed indulge in the work themselves supported by their family members for instance their spouses and children, thus the business is managed without hired labour. While those who hire labour do not face problem in hiring skilled ones who knows how and what to do under the guidance of the floriculturists. On the other hand, 13.1% (20) of the respondents inform that they do face difficulty in hiring skilled labour. They inform that floriculture activity requires knowledge of the work involved for instance, care of the varieties of plants, how to prepare potting media, seed bed preparation, how to transplant and repot, how to trim and make cuttings for propagation and the like. They also claim that labour skilled in such kind of work is difficult to come by and floriculturists have to work overtime and extra hard in order to get the required work done and keep the business running.

Questions on whether the respondents face pest and disease problems on their plants and whether they experienced loss of plants due to the diseases were posed and are presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.12

Experiencing loss of plants due to diseases

Facing pest and disease problems on plants	Frequency (%)
Yes	138 (90.2%)
No	15 (9.8%)
Total	153 (100%)
Experiencing loss of plants due to diseases	Frequency (%)
Yes	104 (68%)
No	49 (32%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table illustrates whether the respondents face pest and disease problem on plants as well as whether they have experienced loss of plants due to diseases. Majority of the respondents face pest and disease problems on their flowers and plants, out of the total respondents 90.2% (138) of them experience pest, disease problems and other fungal attacks. Such pest problems once they set in, spreads fast and becomes a huge constraint for the floriculturists if not treated quickly. According to one of the respondents, floriculturists are capable of tackling the fungal infection, pests and other diseases with the help of experts on the field. If treated and tackled quickly plants do not suffer much and does not lose their market value. While a small percentage that is, 9.8% (15) of the respondents are fortunate enough not to face any pest and disease problems on their flower plants. These floriculturists are able to maintain the health of their plants which thrive with no infection, maintaining the market value.

The table also demonstrates whether the respondents experience loss of plants due to diseases. Out of the total respondents, 68% (104) of them experience loss of plants due to diseases. They inform that fungal infection or diseases manifest in different

ways, which impact the flower plants' growth, health and can even lead to damage or to the demise of the plants in severe cases. Such fungal infection and diseases if treated rapidly could be cured and they become healthy and thrive again with nutrients. However, if not tackled soon, it spreads fast and becomes difficult to be cured which frequently leads to loss of plants and loss of money. However, 32% (49) of the respondents are fortunate and have not experienced any loss of plants due to pest and disease. These floriculturists are blessed with healthy and thriving flower plants, not facing difficulties in their business venture.

Question on whether the respondents face water problem during the dry winter season was posed. Out of the total respondents, 55.6% (85) of them do not face water problem during the dry winter season. They inform that floriculturists who reside within the heart of the city are fortunate because they receive water supply regularly after every two weeks, which they store in huge water tanks for future use. Some of the floriculturists harvest rain water and store them in huge tanks saving for the dry season. They also purchase when they face shortage of water. Plants and flower crops receive ample water to thrive healthily. While on the other hand, 44.4% (68) inform that they do face water shortage during the dry winter season. Some of the floriculturists reside on the urban fringe, on the outskirts of the city. They narrate that they do not harvest rain water and lack good storage facilities for water. These floriculturists facing water shortage frequently purchase water for their consumption as well as for watering purpose. In extreme cases, they inform that their plants and flowers suffer not getting enough water to thrive healthily in the dry season.

Question on whether the respondents are facing any constraints which is preventing them from expanding their business and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.13

Constraints regarding expanding business

Constraints regarding expanding business	Frequency (%)
Yes	107 (69.9%)
No	46 (30.1%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above illustrates whether the respondents face constraints which prevents them from expanding their business. Out of the total respondents, 69.9% (107) of them inform that they are facing difficulty which is preventing them from expanding their floriculture business. They inform that the floriculturists on the whole face constraint in terms of available space to run and expand their business smoothly. They say that limited and congested space around their residential compound makes it difficult for the floriculturists to expand their business. Majority of the narratives of floriculturists reveal that the major constraint they are facing and which is preventing expansion is lack of available landed space around their residences, shortage of water and lack of good quality garden soil also hinders expansion. While 30.1% (46) believe that they do not face any constraint which prevents them from expanding their business. They are able to run their business smoothly without much constraints and hindrances.

Question on whether the respondents have had any bad experience or issues as member of florist association was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.14 Having Issues as member of florist association

Having Issues	Frequency (%)
Yes	17 (11.1%)
No	136 (88.9%)
Total	153 (100%)

The table above shows whether the respondents have had any bad experience as member of florist association. Out of the total respondents, 88.9% (136) of them inform that they have had no bad experience as members of florist association to which they are affiliated to. They claim to have friendly relationship with other florist members of their association. Members of florist associations maintain close relationship through their conferences and meetings and also through flower show cum florist fairs their associations frequently organize to exhibit their products to make significant sales. Close interaction with each other lead to solidarity of the florist members, supporting each other in times of crisis, sorrow and joy. However, a small number of floriculturists that is, 11.1% (17) of them have had bad experience as member of florist association. Members of florist associations though they seem to have friendly and close relationship with each other, there are instances where some members face conflict and are placed in unfavourable situations, sometimes even find themselves in hostile circumstances. They inform that this kind of bad experience is usually faced during florist fairs where members compete with each other and try to make as much sales as possible. A floriculturist narrated that a fellow member of Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) was manifesting a fault-finding behaviour with her every move, the fellow member was envious because she was able to sell her propagated products faster than others and so was criticizing her products and went to complain to the leaders of the florist association. The floriculturist narrated that she quit the MFA not wanting to be in a negative work environment and joined *Pangpar Zuar* Association, another florist association.

Question on whether all floriculture entrepreneurs are controlled by the association they are affiliated to was posed and is presented in the following table.

Table 7.3.15

Control exercised by florist association on floriculture entrepreneurs

Authoritative Control exercised by florist association	Frequency (%)
Yes	84 (54.9%)
No	69 (45.1%)
Total	153 (100%)

The above table depicts whether all floriculture entrepreneurs are controlled by the association they are affiliated to. Out of the total respondents, 54.9% (84) of them inform that they are controlled to some extent by the rules laid down by the association to which they belong. According to one of the floriculturists, Mizoram Florist Association as the pioneer association believes in floriculture as a business dealing with one's own creations and handiwork and propagations of flowering and non-flowering plants, which are healthily rooted. The association inspires and motivates its members to value their fellow member's germinated products and propagated products and trade with each other. She further adds that the association lays strict rules and is against selling plants which are not rooted properly, as well as marketing imported and procured flowers and plants as soon as they arrive without caring them for a while or propagating them. The association is authoritative in such a case and expects its members to strictly follow the rules laid down by the association. According to another floriculturist, the MFA put emphasis on propagation of imported exotic and foliage plants and marketing such products, thereby controlling continuous cash flow outside the state. Propagations take time to be rooted healthily, as such, products could not be sold at low price. On the other hand, another floriculturist narrates that *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) allows its members to market imported and procured goods as they arrive, not emphasizing on propagations. However, the association expects the members to sell well-rooted

thriving plants only. She further adds that the association members are expected to clean their spot and surrounding area after the end of every florist fair they participate. The respondents inform that the two florist associations' interest often clash in terms of their ideals and values in running floriculture business. The Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) too controls its members in terms of marketing, the quality of flowers and the price rate of flowers. Whereas 45.1% (69) of the respondents claim that they are not controlled by their respective florist associations in their business, but all the associations expect their members to be fair and not market goods which are not yet rooted and abstain from deceiving clients.

7.4 An Overview

Entrepreneurial pursuits- Entrepreneurship is a key driver of a nation's economic development, as it creates new jobs and promotes innovation. It is a result of social engagement, particularly human involvement, and significantly influences the economic system. Contemporary economics focuses on identifying determinants of economic development.

Entrepreneurial success offers flexibility, independence, and satisfaction. It generates employment opportunities, alleviates unemployment, and promotes economic growth. Entrepreneurs initiate, manage, and expand businesses, launching innovative products, services, or frameworks. Motivation is recognition and utilization of opportunities, requiring innovation, risk-taking, and overcoming obstacles.

Training and Skill Development

Training skills in floriculture is crucial for productivity and efficiency. Individuals can gain training through certificate or diploma courses, covering topics like cultivation techniques, nursery management, and plant care. Floriculture offers significant opportunities for skill development and income generation, especially in regions like Northeast India. Skill development is required in flower growing techniques where competencies in entrepreneurship, financial management, customer relationships, and innovation are also essential.

Majority of the respondents have not undergone training on floriculture as the study reveals, though the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram and Mizoram Florist Association frequently organizes training sessions and seminars on the different aspects of cultivation, care and maintenance of flowers and plants. However, a number of the respondents have attended and undergone training sessions on floriculture and flower arrangements.

The present study highlights the fact that indulging in the floriculture business venture for a number of years have helped developed entrepreneurial skill in terms of risk taking, innovative ideas, adaptability, marketing skill and financial management. The floriculturists identify opportunities and manage resources and navigate the challenges of a competitive floriculture business successfully.

The present study reveals the fact that floriculturists over the years have developed social skills, connecting with others effectively and positively. They have developed the ability to communicate efficiently with their customers and fellow floriculturists creating social bonds. They also develop empathy and learn to understand and manage emotions. They show the ability to resolve conflict, disagreements and disputes with their clients and fellow floriculturists. Experienced floriculturists show confidence and capability in their dealings with floriculture business.

Innovations: Innovation allows entrepreneurs to improve products, processes, or services by generating innovative concepts and values. Innovative entrepreneurs use various techniques to overcome challenges, often requiring a clear strategy and vision. Generating creative ideas requires continuous self-challenge and exploration of new possibilities or techniques.

Floriculture activity takes most of the prime time of the floriculturists, being labour intensive the family members actively support the floriculturists who indulges full time in the business to achieve success and generate better income. Though some pursue it as additional source of income and does not devout full time in the activity.

Innovating floriculture products and goods to increase the market value is a necessity to make successful and significant sales which is a popular routine followed by floriculturists. They consider innovating the appearance of their flowering and

foliage plant important which enhances their appealing beauty to increase the sale value. While some take risk by procuring exotic plants and repotting them in containers to enhance their looks and increase the sale value.

Floriculturists on the whole do not extend their business venture beyond cultivating flower plants and foliage plants. A few do indulge in vending goods and items related to floriculture alongside their floriculture activity, for instance they sell items such as potting media, manure, nutrients, plant boosters, fungicides, pots and containers and gardening tools, which help generate more income providing a decent standard of living and meeting the basic needs of the household.

The study reveals that floriculturists adjust and adapt readily to the trending demands of customers in their business. Specific species of flowers and plants like fashion are in fashion and in high demand, floriculturists keep themselves up to date on the trending waves of floriculture fashion and readily adjust themselves to meet the demands of their clients.

Risk Taking and Income Promotions

Entrepreneurship and risk-taking are interconnected, with successful entrepreneurs taking calculated risks to seize opportunities with potential for substantial profits, weighing failure against success. Entrepreneurship offers unlimited earning potential, financial independence, and multiple income streams. It provides a sense of success, control over assets, and potential tax benefits. It also generates employment, promotes innovation, and alleviates unemployment, ultimately promoting economic growth.

The present study highlights the fact that indulging in the floriculture business venture for a number of years have helped the floriculturists to be cautious in taking high risks at importing goods which could result in financial loss if the goods arrive in damaged condition. However, most of the floriculturists have developed entrepreneurial skill in terms of risk taking, innovative ideas, adaptability, marketing skill and financial management. The floriculturists identify opportunities and manage resources and navigate the challenges of a competitive floriculture business successfully.

The floriculture business has made the floriculturists financially independent and they have the liberty to spend the generated income on the household needs as well as their personal requirements. They have the authority and a say in how the income from the floriculture business could be spent and they could spend as they see fit.

The floriculture business generates significant income for the family which tremendously help improve the floriculturists' position in the family. Patriarchy exists in the Mizo society where men have dominant status and women have subordinate position and roles within the household. Floriculture business venture benefits the floriculturists in terms of status; their voices are heard and considered important by their spouses and the family members. Their views and opinions matter and their decisions important for the household.

Generating income for the household provides economic independence to the stakeholders which further facilitates important decision-making ability of the floriculturists for the family. The study reveals that floriculturists build confidence and strengthen their capabilities and capacity in making important decisions for the family. The study highlights that floriculturists after indulging in the business venture for a number of years have gained entrepreneurial skill and experience in trade which makes them more productive in family and household matters and are able to shoulder responsibility much better.

Floriculturists have gained experience and confidence over the years through their business and it has helped them in being conscious of their self-worth, their abilities and qualities which gives them a better well-being. The study shows that floriculturists have gained self-esteem increasingly, with self-confidence in their business dealings, building healthy relationships and facing challenges with perseverance.

Constraints faced

Floriculture in Mizoram faces production-related challenges, market-related issues, and financial obstacles. Production issues include insufficient quality planting material, poor infrastructure, and limited access to innovative technologies. Market-related issues include transportation, storage, and securing reliable purchasers.

Despite the growing demand for exotic plants and cut flowers, the industry faces constraints such as insufficient infrastructure and market facilities.

Floriculturists face numerous challenges in their business venture, including limited water supply, which often leads to plant loss during the dry season. Successful propagation of stem cuttings and plant care are also major challenges. These issues require regular attention and assistance from experts, ensuring the success of their venture.

The floriculturists believe the government's role in helping floriculturists is inadequate. They often request greenhouse structures and infra structure materials from the government through florist associations like Mizoram Florist Association, but only a few have been successful. The lack of these resources and inputs is a significant constraint. The respondents also express a desire for government assistance in terms of incentives and inputs for businesses. They also desire a flower showroom for floriculturists to showcase their goods daily, requesting a large space for daily display and marketing.

Floriculturists are adapting to changing trends in the floriculture business due to technological advancements and consumer preferences. They are utilizing social media platforms for marketing and self-promotion, and Google Pay is a popular option for online transactions. They are well-versed in modern business and contemporary customer preferences of flowers and plants.

The study reveals that floriculturists lack a strong competitive spirit in procuring high-demand plants and flowers. They do procure exotic and popular plants from outside the state, but only a few possess the competitive spirit to be the first to possess and be a lone seller and be an exceptional entrepreneur.

There is absence of strong unhealthy competition regarding customers amongst the floriculturists. They do not encounter any kind of jealousy from any floriculturists which results in unhealthy situation in their business. But a few however, have encountered such situations where potential customers are stolen from them by over ambitious floriculturists. The study also reveals that floriculturists on the whole have not experienced any jealous attitude or behaviour from their fellow floriculturists.

Floriculturists importing and procuring flowers and plants from abroad and from other states frequently receive the imported goods in damaged or stressful conditions resulting in huge financial loss because plants do not survive the long journey. Stressed plants are rejuvenated requiring weeks to regain strength. Some of the floriculturists however, have been fortunate in receiving goods in good condition, thus, not losing quality, and earning good income.

The study indicates that the floriculturists are at liberty to put a price on their propagated products but at the same time enquiring the price set by others on similar products. No individuals or institutions control the market price.

Floriculturists are content and consider the existing market infrastructure sufficient for marketing their products locally. Online platforms are increasingly popular to market floriculture goods. Contrary to this, some floriculturists on the other hand, opine that the market infrastructure is not sufficient for marketing of floriculture goods, Saturday local markets congested with vegetable vendors are not able to accommodate all floriculturists who would have loved to showcase their products.

Floriculturists encounter limitations related to infrastructure, such as adequate greenhouse facilities or polyhouses, to regulate temperature and shield plants from heat in their commercial endeavours. The survey indicates that, primarily, insufficient space for product storage is a significant difficulty encountered by nearly all floriculturists.

Floriculturists, who are small-time entrepreneurs, often manage their business without hired labour, as they are supported by their family members. Some of the floriculturists face difficulty in hiring skilled labour, as they need knowledge in various aspects of floriculture, such as plant care, potting media preparation, seed bed preparation, transplanting, and propagation. These skills are difficult to find, and floriculturists often have to work overtime and extra hard to keep the business running.

Floriculturists face issues with pests and diseases affecting their plants, and in severe instances, they have suffered plant losses owing to these diseases and fungal

infections. Through years of experience, floriculturists are capable of dealing with such diseases and save their flower crops.

During the dry season, most of the floriculturists fortunately do not face water problem, storing water in huge water tanks during water supply which they receive every week. However, a number of floriculturists do face water problem and frequently purchase water to meet their requirements.

The primary problem faced by floriculturists, as indicated in the survey, is the restricted area for their floriculture operations, hindering business expansion. The congested and restricted location in which they operate their business significantly impedes their ability to extend their entrepreneurial endeavours.

Members of florist associations cultivate strong relationships, providing mutual support during *chhiatni/thatni* (days of sorrow and joy) and giving potted flowers and plants as gifts, thereby reinforcing their connections. There are limited instances however, where members have encountered negative experiences within the florist association due to unhealthy competition and jealousy among certain members.

Florist associations in Mizoram establish regulations that members are expected to adhere to rigorously. The Mizoram Florist Association, aim at promoting items that are self-propagated and properly rooted. The association anticipates its members to adhere strictly to the rules and control financial flow beyond the state to the greatest extent possible. The association continually stimulates and motivates its members to appreciate their products and engage in trading with one another. Direct marketing of imported floriculture products to clients is prohibited. The *Pangpar Zuar* Association, however, permits its members to directly market items sourced from outside the state to clients without prior propagation. Members are expected to market plants that are healthily rooted. The Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society too establishes regulations that members are required to follow.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary of Chapters

8.2 Findings and Conclusions

8.2.1 Socio-economic profile

8.2.2 Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

8.2.3 Floriculture as livelihood option

8.2.4 Entrepreneurial Persuasions and Constraints Faced

8.3 Contextualization of Findings

8.4 Sociological Implications

8.5 Recommendations

8.6 Suggestions for Further Research

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

The present thesis contains eight chapters. Chapter 1 deals with eight different sections and begins with introduction of the thesis. It has. The chapter covers the global scenario, the Indian context, the North East India context and the scenario in Mizoram of floriculture industry. It also covers the significance of flowers in cultural traditions, floriculture as livelihood option and floriculture for women empowerment and entrepreneurship. Chapter II covers Review of Literature which is mainly divided into three sections namely Theoretical Review, Thematic Review and Methodological Review. Chapter III is about the Research Methodology covering the research context and framework of the study with all the objectives and research design and procedural details. Chapter IV contains the Socio-Economic Profile of the respondents consisting of the floriculturists. Chapter V deals with Flowers in Mizo Socio-Cultural Context covering gift giving and extension of sentiments, funerary rituals, marriage ceremony, church occasions and social events. Chapter VI is on Floriculture as Livelihood Option which covers floral designing as livelihood option, culture of floriculture, contribution of stakeholders such as Florist Associations in promotional action, role of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) and role of Government in floriculture. The chapter includes two case studies on Zopar Exports Private Limited and Laltei Nursery. Chapter VII deals with Floriculture as Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced. Finally, Chapter VIII sums up the findings and deals with conclusion of the research.

Chapter 1 which is on Introduction provides a general outline of the present study. The chapter has been discussed under eight different sections. The chapter begins with a brief introduction on the significance of flowers and of floriculture. The second section of the chapter is devoted to the global scenario of floriculture covering how floriculture has become an export- oriented agroindustry internationally, greater and increasing demand of decorative plants and how

commercial floriculture has become the most lucrative industry worldwide and how flowers possess substantial cultural and emotional significance in social and religious rituals around the world. The third section deals with floriculture in the Indian context covering how floriculture is currently establishing itself as a significant commercial crop sector in India to how floriculture industry is a rapidly expanding sector focused on exporting goods and the aesthetic significance of flowers for religious rituals and social events. The fourth section covers floriculture in North East India on how though the region is rich in biodiversity and favourable agroclimatic conditions it lacks infrastructure required for commercial floriculture to thrive and thus, there are only a few established commercial floriculture businesses. The fifth section deals with floriculture in Mizoram where flower crops are home grown on roof tops, verandahs and on all available spaces around the house. The section discusses the first commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers which has experienced encouraging results and has transformed the horticulture industry in Mizoram. Significant demand of cut flowers in the state for purposes like church, weddings, funerals, birthdays, special occasions and home arrangements is highlighted in the section. The section highlights the emergence of florist associations in Mizoram, namely Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), the pioneer association which was founded in 1997. With the introduction of Anthurium cultivation in 2002, an association was formed by the cultivators named Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) in the same year. Another florist association came up in 2017 named *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA). The sixth section discuss the social significance of flowers and floriculture, how flowers hold significant importance in various cultural traditions in the world. The section also highlights how flowers are symbolic objects or items serving as extension of sentiments and feelings, and on how people worldwide use flowers as a medium for expressing emotions. The section also covers how flowers hold both cultural and religious significance in India. The seventh section covers floriculture as livelihood option emphasizing on how floriculture has become a feasible option with its ability to create a profitable self-employment opportunity for small and marginal farmers. The section also discusses floristry as another area offering livelihood which can yield substantial profit, and value-added items using flowers as important

commercial floriculture industry. The eighth section which is the last one covers floriculture for women empowerment and entrepreneurship. The section highlights how empowerment of women is not only necessary but is vital for the comprehensive development of society and of the whole nation. The section also deals with how economic empowerment is the need of the hour for women to become financially independent and contribute actively to the family.

Chapter II consists of Review of literature involving the review of gathered studies and literature of different scholars from the local, national and international on the present study. The chapter on review of literature is divided into three sections, the first section is on theoretical review, the second is on thematic review and third section is on methodological review. The theoretical review focuses on sustainable livelihood approach highlighting the definition, meaning and views of different scholars and thinkers on the livelihood framework, strategies and ideas and the multitude of methods by which individuals sustain themselves. It covers how sustainable livelihood is used as a strategic approach to development to enhance progress in poverty eradication. The review also covers social capital as livelihood asset; how social capital is a crucial resource for the impoverished in both urban and rural areas. It also looks into views of sociologists on how social capital, like other types of capital, is productive and enables the accomplishment of specific goals that would not be possible without it. The section also looks into how social capital relies on being well integrated into social networks, interpersonal connections which serve as the foundation for social capital. The theoretical review includes social exchange theories of different scholars and thinkers focusing on the exchange process, which to some scholars guides most of human behaviour and underpins interpersonal and group connections. To some others, understanding these interactions and how they develop, change, and transform the groups and networks in which they are embedded. While others view that engaging in continued social exchanges can help form a trusting pattern that facilitates the development of close connections. The theoretical review of the study also includes the norm of reciprocity, which to scholars refers to a social rule that dictates, among other things, that people should repay favours and other acts of goodwill. Others highlight the concept of internalized

social norms, which suggests that engaging in morally correct actions and reciprocating favors might provide a sense of self-satisfaction. The theoretical review also covers the gift giving theory which focus on how giving gifts creates a social bond between the giver and the receiver, with the recipient having an obligation to reciprocate. The section also focuses on the sociology of entrepreneurship highlighting how it is the process of discovering and acting on opportunities that create value. It also focuses on family entrepreneurship by concentrating on entrepreneurial behaviours among family members, family companies, and family enterprises.

The second section of the literature review covers the thematic review which consists of employment generation and self-sufficiency, floriculture as livelihood, cost and labour efficiency, market potentiality of floriculture products, floriculture as entrepreneurial opportunity and activity, floriculture as women entrepreneurship and empowerment, sustainability of floriculture, socio-cultural importance of flowers and constraints faced. The thematic portion of the review has shown that floriculture generates employment and a path to self-employment. It also shows that floriculture improves livelihood and generates income. It shows the market potentiality of floriculture products and shows floriculture as entrepreneurial opportunity and pursuits. It also discusses the sustainability of floriculture business and the socio-cultural importance flowers have and the constraints faced.

The literature review also covers methodological review highlighting the different methods employed by different scholars on their respective study. The review includes research tools employed by the researchers which are Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) approach, interview method, participatory learning method, pre-determined schedule of enquiry, questionnaire, case studies, observations which are all used by them to gather data. The researchers made use of multi stage stratified random sampling technique, random sampling for selecting samples. The aspects of qualitative and quantitative methods adopted by scholars have been reviewed which is relevant for the present study.

Chapter III consists of the research methodology, the framework adopted and the necessary procedures followed during the course of the study. The chapter deals with the methods and approach employed from the start to accomplish the end result of the present research project. Any research effort is built upon its research objectives. The main aim of the present research is to analyze the entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options through floriculture in Mizoram. Based on this main aim, the study started off with the following specific objectives-

1. To prepare a socio-economic profile of floriculturists of Mizoram.
2. To study the importance of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context
3. To find out recent trends and growth of floriculture as livelihood option in Mizoram.
4. To analyze the growth of floriculture as a form of women entrepreneurship.
5. To study the constraints faced by the floriculturists in Mizoram.

The present research represents an exploratory cum descriptive research design. The study makes use of the mix method of mainly qualitative and need based quantitative design. An exploratory research design is adopted to have an in-depth understanding on the research problem at hand that is, entrepreneurial activity and livelihood options available through floriculture in Mizoram. The present study is conducted in Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The universe of the study comprises of the following categories of respondents:

1. Those floriculturists involved in the business as their livelihood options belonging to the three large florist associations in Mizoram namely, Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS).
2. Church elders belonging to the three church denominations in Mizoram namely The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.

3. Leaders of Decoration Committee / Women's Wing belonging to the three denominations such as The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
4. Flower arrangers in the three church denominations: The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
5. Floral artists/designers in Aizawl, Mizoram
6. Leaders of the three florist associations in Mizoram as Key Informants such as Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS).
7. Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram as Key Informants.
8. Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo Women's Organization as Key Informants.

Purposive sampling is adopted to identify the stakeholders from the total population in Aizawl city. Convenience sampling is followed in identifying the floriculturists. Using purposive and convenience sampling, 51 floriculturists, that is, 30% have been selected as sample from the total members of Mizoram Florist Association, but exceeded by 19 at the time of field work, which came to 70 floriculturists. 54 floriculturists amounting to 30% from *Pangpar Zuar* Association have been selected as sample, but exceeded by 4 which came to 58 in total. From the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, 16 Anthurium growers amounting to 20% have been taken as sample, but exceeded by 7 which came to 23 in total. The total sample of floriculturists after the completion of field work was 153.

Using the same sampling method, 60 church elders/Salvation Army Officers have been selected from 10 different churches each namely of Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and Salvation Army from 10 different localities were selected as sample. Using the same sampling design, 60 Decoration Committee members and 60 flower arrangers of the same denomination churches and same localities have also been selected as sample. The total sample representing the church

elders/ Salvation Army Officers, Decoration Committee members and flower arrangers came to 180.

Using convenience sampling, 10 floral artists/ floral designers of Aizawl city were taken as sample.

Key Informants Interview have been conducted with (a) the Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, (b) leaders of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or Mizo Women's Organisation and (c) leaders of the three Florists' Associations.

The present study is based on the mix method focused more on the qualitative analysis which includes data collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected through administering interview schedule, observation, case study and key informants' interview. Secondary sources have been collected from published and unpublished research articles and thesis, journals and library sources, Statistical Handbook of Mizoram, reports of Mizoram Florists' Association and You Tube channels on floriculture which provided relevant information.

The basis of the study has been made from frequent visits through pilot study on the floriculturists before the actual research was done. The pilot study helped sharpen the ideas and concepts, relevant and irrelevant questions on the schedule were identified, the design flaws and feasibility of the study were assessed and the methodological direction was decided upon. Interview schedules were made for the church elders of different denomination churches, decoration committee leaders and flower arrangers of churches from ten localities within Aizawl city. Interview schedule was also constructed for floral artists or designers; key informants' interviews were conducted with mainly unstructured questions.

Data collection from all categories of respondents was completed within a span of 12 months from March 2023 to March 2024. Interview schedules administered in the field work were filled in by the investigator which have been answered by the respondents and information have been provided by them. The data collected also include case notes and relevant inputs from the key informants. With the completion of all the field work, the next step was to scrutinize and cross-check all the collected

data. Minor errors detected were rectified and incomplete responses were completed to facilitate coding and tabulation. To condense the volume of collected data into more comprehensible form, classification of data was done. The raw data was grouped into different classes which have homogenous characteristics to get meaningful relationships.

The necessary coding was done to translate the responses into numerical values to be used in data analysis. The data were disaggregated under four heads- 1) Socio-economic profile 2) Flowers in Mizo socio-cultural context 3) Floriculture as livelihood option and 4) Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced. The next step consisted of tabulation of data which focused on presenting the data in a structured format and systematically arranged into rows and columns in a table. Next analysis of data was done transforming the raw data into meaningful facts, and the tabulated data was analysed to find underlying meanings.

The present study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods as its analytical framework. For quantitative analysis, the raw data were codified. A separate code was assigned to each question, and each of the response was fed to the computer. For quantitative analysis Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used. Open-ended questions were analyzed separately. For qualitative data analysis, in addition to observation and narrative analysis method, the method of lived experiences was adopted. The present study focused on the experiences that had been lived through by the floriculturists to understand the meanings that they attached to their daily activities in their floriculture entrepreneurship endeavour. The interviews of the two intensive case studies were carefully listened to and a summary of each case was prepared. Finally, the chapter included operationalization of concepts, research ethics and limitations of the study.

8.2 Findings and Conclusions

The chapter wise field-based summary and conclusive findings are presented as follows-

8.2.1 Socio-economic profile

Chapter IV discusses the socio-economic profile of the respondents who are the floriculturists, which gives a clear picture in understanding better the universe of the present study in Aizawl city. Socio-economic profile data provides the required information on the heterogenous background characteristics of the respondents. The variables adopted and analysed in this chapter to understand the socio-economic status of the floriculturists include gender composition, age composition, marital status, educational status, training on floriculture, occupation of respondents and their spouse, type of family and family size, family income, religious denomination, housing status of respondents, possession of bank accounts, savings and deposits, possession of land and quantum of land used for floriculture and the chapter ends with overview.

Looking at the total sample of 153 floriculturists in Aizawl city, the gender composition of floriculturists is dominated by women. Floriculture as an entrepreneurial business venture is still considered a stereotypical domain of women in the Mizo society. This consideration emanates from patriarchal sentiments because males, even though they have aesthetic interest in flowers refrain from floricultural activity believing it to be a feminine work. But wider opportunities have opened up for men and thus they are more and more drawn to this entrepreneurial activity. The study reveals that the dominant age group pursuing intensely floriculture venture falls between 41-60 plus age, when their children are grown up and they have the free time to pursue their passion to generate additional income for the household. Floriculture is less pursued by women below 40 years of age because married women need to concentrate their time and energy to the upbringing and care of their offsprings.

With regard to the marital status, it varies from being married to unmarried, to divorced, single, widow and separated. However, married women dominated the respondents, suggesting that they are being supported by their spouse and children in their business. The unmarried category consists of the male respondents mostly. A few of the respondents are divorcees supported by their children in their business,

and it is seen that the widows have pursued floriculture business after the death of their spouses. A small percentage of the respondents consists of those who are single and separated. It is evident from the study that the educational status of majority of the respondents is matriculation and high school, not highly educated their option is to pursue their passion in floriculture and be self-employed. A few of the graduates and post graduate respondents have government jobs with regular income, they pursue floriculture for additional income. Primary and middle school educated are few in number, who are engaged in the business for their livelihood.

The study reveals that majority of the respondents have not undergone any training on floriculture, they are self-taught acquiring the knowledge or skill required to run a floriculture business on their own. A few of the respondents have undergone training sessions and seminars on floriculture.

Looking at the occupation of the respondents and their spouses, the study shows that the respondents are mostly self-employed floriculture entrepreneurs. Quite a number of the respondents rely solely on floriculture venture for their livelihood, while the rest pursue the business venture for additional income. A small percentage of the respondents are employed in government and private firms with monthly income. A few of their spouses too are self-employed and a good number of them are in government service with regular income and quite a number are unemployed. Those without spouses such as single, unmarried, divorced and widows are self-employed and are the breadwinners of their families.

The study shows that the respondents follow the nuclear family type. In Mizo society the nuclear family type is where husband and wife and their unmarried children reside together under one roof. The Joint family type where three or four generations live together found elsewhere in the country is not followed in the Mizo society. Extended family type is also not practiced much. Whereas a few of the respondents follow the stem family type where parents choose one of their sons, whether the eldest or youngest to remain in the parental household after marriage to perpetuate the family lineage.

The size of family in the Mizo society is small with four to five members as nuclear family with two generation members living together is mostly practiced. The presence of three generation family is also a common feature where both or either of the grandparents also reside with the family. The study reveals that the respondents' families have two to seven dependent family members who are mostly children, students and elderly grandparents, other dependent members such as aunts and uncles help support the floriculture business. The study also indicates that the number of earning members of the respondents' families ranges from one to four members, who are employed in government service, private firms and are self-employed in various fields.

With regard to family income the study clearly reveals that majority of the respondents have Rs 40,000 and above income per month as family income. This indicate that the respondents do not depend solely on the floriculture business but have other sources of income per month. Only a few respondents have low income who depend on floriculture business and other odd jobs for income.

The study highlights that the majority of respondents belong to the Presbyterian denomination, which is the largest and dominant denomination in Aizawl city. This indicates that Presbyterians tend to indulge more into floriculture entrepreneurship and generate income through the business than other denominations.

Looking at the housing status and type of house of respondents, the study illustrates that majority of the respondents reside in their own houses while the rest reside in rented houses. The study also shows that majority of the respondents reside in Assam type houses and the rest in pucca (RCC) houses. It is discernible that majority of the respondents residing in their own houses mostly possess Assam type houses and that a few of them also do possess and rent pucca type houses.

Nearly all the respondents are owners of their floriculture business venture, while a negligible number are hired workers cum owner floriculturists. Hired workers work for the floriculturists to earn additional income while at the same time are floriculture entrepreneurs themselves too.

The respondents hold bank accounts to achieve financial stability and preserve savings and deposits. Floriculturists deposit their income and profits via online transfers and payments. Their accounts were primarily opened post-marriage and, for some, subsequent to the establishment of their firm. Individuals in government jobs are required to own bank accounts, and self-employment also necessitates having bank accounts. Respondents possess individual accounts that are independently managed.

The study reveals that respondents save between Rs 10,000 and Rs 40,000 per month based on product sales, with most saving and depositing from profit. Most do not engage in other personal savings beyond depositing in their accounts, with only a few investing in post office schemes, life insurance policies, or household treasury to meet household needs. Most respondents do not indulge in other personal savings beyond depositing in their accounts.

The study reveals that most respondents do not own land in their name due to patriarchy in the Mizo society, where immovable property is considered the right of the male head. However, women can possess landed property in their name. Those who own land in their name usually acquire it after marriage, indicating it is a gift from parents or a joint venture of husband and wife through housing loans, with ownership in the wife's name.

The study highlights the fact that the size of land possessed by a few of the respondents and the quantum of land used for floriculture in terms of hectares varies from 0.005 ha to 16.01 ha. Open field cultivation is practiced by only a few floriculturists, who construct greenhouses for the cultivation of flowers.

8.2.2 Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

Chapter V deals with flowers in Mizo socio-cultural context emphasising the significance flowers occupy in the Mizo society as a whole. The chapter has been discussed under the following heads: 1. Introduction 2. Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context 3. Gift giving and extension of sentiments 4. Funerary rituals 5. Marriage ceremony 6. Church occasions 7. Social events 8. Overview

Flowers have been a significant part of human society since history, serving in social, cultural, and religious occasions due to their inherent essence and fragrance. They represent love, sentiments, and spirituality in both traditional and modern rituals, and are considered artistic offerings and essential components of society. Flowers have been used to mark significant occasions and convey feelings and emotions.

The Bible uses flowers as symbols of beauty, transience, and God's creation. The lily, often referred to as a celestial beauty, symbolizes purity and care for God's creation. The rose, often associated with love and beauty, symbolizes the appeal of the beloved, often interpreted as an analogy for Christ's love for the church. The Bible uses flowers as symbolic representations of beauty, impermanence, and divine providence, offering insights into God's nature, creation, and spiritual truths.

Flowers have long been associated with love and romance, symbolizing deep emotions and desires. They have been used as emblems in literature and poetry, often representing sentiments and moral qualities. Floriography, the secret language of flowers, allows writers to express intricate feelings through specific arrangements. The tradition of attributing significance to flowers dates back to earliest civilizations worldwide.

Mizoram's indigenous flowers hold significant place in the hearts of the Mizo people and cultural tradition of the state and flowers feature frequently in the Mizo folktales and folklores. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Mizo writers and poets drew inspiration from nature, land, and lamentations. They used indigenous flowers as symbols in various genres, including love songs and sentimental songs. Mizo traditional and modern writers and poets value flowers in different genres and hymns. Indigenous flowers symbolize deep emotions, romantic attraction, beauty, and sentiments, while modern Christian hymns represent Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

The state flower of Mizoram is the red vanda orchid, called *senhri* in the local term. The Mizo forefathers had an aesthetic interest in indigenous flowers, such as marigold, zinnia, and cockscomb which surrounded their jhum fields. These vibrant flowers brought positive emotions to Mizo women, who worked hard in the fields. Evidence suggests that Mizo women brought home such cut flowers after working,

arranging them in their homes. Indigenous flowers occupy a significant place in the hearts of the people and they often feature in the Mizo folklore and folktales too.

Mizo culture values flowers as a symbol of emotions and beliefs in life. Mizo textiles are known for their intricate designs and vibrant colors, with floral motifs representing nature's beauty. Handloom weaving, particularly the *puan*, is a prevalent handicraft in Mizo communities, worn in festivals and occasions and is worn primarily by women. Traditional motifs on *puan* feature designs derived from indigenous flora and fauna. Some of the traditional floral motifs have transcended into modern *puan* with modern version of the fabric and the floral motif highly favoured and valued by older generations.

Urbanization and standard of living in Mizo society have increased demand for cut flowers for social events like bride price ceremonies, marriages, birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's Day, funerals, and Valentine's Day. Floral arrangements in churches and wedding reception venues are becoming more lavish and expensive, boosting the floriculture wave in the socio-cultural and religious context of Mizoram.

The study explores the significance and vitalness of flowers in Mizo society's Christian festivals such as Christmas, Good Friday and Easter. Flowers' significant role as a medium is revealed for symbolizing emotions, beauty, love, sentiments, and romantic attraction. The respondents emphasize on the cultural values, beliefs, and practices that contribute to the social construction of symbolism, regardless of the cost involved in using flowers during such events as marriage, funerals, Valentine's Day and birthdays.

Flowers have a universal role in human history, connecting people through symbolism. Flower gifting conveys different meanings and emotions, expressing thoughts and personal feelings. The vivid colors and fragrance of flowers can instantly activate happy emotions, forming bonds with the recipient. The act of gifting flowers is an extension of sentiments to near and dear ones, creating connections and bonds with those on the receiving end.

Altruistic behavior is observed in the exchange of live plants and flowers between the respondents. The satisfaction of the giver is determined when the gift is

equivalent to what was initially given. This mutual exchange and dependence between actors are based on reciprocity, which is rooted in justice and fairness, which serves as an extension of sentiments, expressing deep emotions and feelings, and creating a strong bond among Mizo florist members. The exchange is reciprocated by recipients, who are often florists themselves. This relationship is manifested during times of mourning or joy. Floriculturists use their products as '*ralna*', a Mizo tradition of giving money to bereaved families. Instead, they give potted plants or flowering plants as a farewell gift, symbolizing ties and relationships between the giver and receiver. This act of benevolence creates trust and may not be reciprocated equally. The significance of flowers in Mizo society's socio-cultural context is evident in their gifting of floral bouquets on important occasions like Mother's Day, birthdays, anniversaries and Valentine's Day which symbolize love, emotions, and deep feelings, and are reciprocated by the recipient to maintain a balanced and sustained relationship.

Flower giving has become a popular way to celebrate close friends and colleagues' achievements. Floriculturists often give potted plants as housewarming gifts to those who have newly constructed houses. Flowers symbolize emotions and show appreciation for people's success. A flower bouquet makes recipients feel cherished and loved, making it a heartfelt way to convey congratulations to family members and colleagues.

With rapid advancement in technology, the Mizo people are influenced to a great extent by the Western practices where gifting of flower bouquets as condolence gift is a popular act in funerary practices. Tradition is kept well intact and maintained in terms of condolence gifts, as the study reveals it is not endangered in funeral rituals, because flower giving will not replace giving *puan* as condolence gift. The present study reveals that people also prefer giving flowers and *puan* alternately to express their sympathy and sentiments at funerals. The practice of giving flowers to the departed symbolize love and is an expression of sympathy and compassion to those who are grieving and is considered the right gift to bid farewell to the deceased as revealed in the study.

The study reveals the fact that decoration of coffin with flowers is supported in the society believing it is the last best gesture on the part of the grieving family to show their love and bid farewell to the deceased. The bereaved families gain satisfaction and is at peace in their hearts when the coffins are embellished with flowers.

The study also illustrates the fact that floral decoration of coffins, floral gifts in terms of bouquets or baskets, are influences of the Western practices, they have become indispensable part of the Mizo funerary rituals. The kind of flower arrangements on the coffin, the number of flower bouquets received as condolence gifts are manifestations of the social status of the deceased and the grieving family, and further is an indicator of the existence of social hierarchy in the Mizo society. The study indicates that, despite the Young Mizo Association's (YMA) efforts to promote equality by banning coffin decoration and limiting floral displays during photo sessions, the community's inclination to express sympathy and affection towards bereaved families through the gifting of flower bouquets remains unabated, as flowers continue to be widely utilised in Mizo funerary customs. Flowers remain utilised in burial rites and are recognised as an integral aspect of Mizo culture.

Looking at the pre-wedding rituals in the Mizo society, the study highlights that flowers have gained tremendous importance and is used lavishly in conducting payment and distribution of bride price ceremony. It is viewed as making the event memorable and significance to decorations is given, while others perceive them as manifestation of wealth, as a huge gap between the rich and poor, an indicator of social hierarchy. In Mizo church wedding event, usage of flowers has become lavish and extravagant, symbolizing the love and emotions shared by the married couple. The Mizos in keeping up with the contemporary trend in the usage of flowers are more than willing to make their children's wedding event memorable and special, but desires to keep the wedding reception decorations moderate but elegant.

The study also reveals the fact that the usage of flowers in matrimonial event and other accessories is an indicator and a manifestation of the social and financial position of the families involved. Floral decorations, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are an influence of other cultures, with the increasing advancement of

people's outlook and Western influence of their aesthetic sense. Usage of flowers have become increasingly indispensable and is incorporated as a part of Mizo culture.

Churches often have a decoration committee or *pangpar* (flower) committee responsible for maintaining flower arrangements during Sundays, festivals, and conferences. They also care for potted plants and flowers of their respective churches. In some cases, the women wing of the church takes on this responsibility, viewing it as their personal ministry to God. While the significance of flowers in church events is acknowledged, some church elders object to lavish expenditure and expect specific budgetary provisions. Despite modernity's limitations, tradition remains high in churches.

The decoration committee of churches collaborates through *hnatlang* (social work) to beautify their church premises, fostering solidarity and unity. Flowers are seen as a reflection of God's glory, and churches are willing to cover expenses for flowering plants. Budget estimates for flowers are accepted by church committees, emphasizing the importance of beautifying church premises.

Decoration committees in churches maintain flower arrangements on Sundays, appointing mostly women members to do the task. Some churches carry out this on a voluntary basis, with volunteers covering the expenses on flowers. Churches often sanction funds for fresh flowers for every Sunday, and if need arises, members often contribute the required amount to purchase flowers, viewing it as their personal ministry and a way to show devotion to God.

The study reveals that church elders place great value on flowers adorning the sacred spaces of the churches, believing they glorify God and enhance worship experience. Significant value is attached to special floral designs for festive occasions and conferences, which require extra funds from the church. The church members support landscaping of the church premises with flowers, viewing the church as a sacred place and flowers as glorifying God. This demonstrates the collective work and solidarity of the church's decoration committee.

The study reveals that skilled flower arrangers in churches are able to generate income as venue decorators for social events, highlighting the potential for floral designing to become a self-employment opportunity in Mizo society. This is due to the high demand for flowers in festive occasions and social events.

Flowers are a significant part of social events, creating a relaxed atmosphere and symbolizing gratitude and appreciation to dignitaries. They are also used in political gatherings and formal functions to create a positive mood. Government offices, hotels, restaurants, and institutions are increasingly purchasing cut flowers and green foliage plants. Educational institutions and government offices purchase annual flowering plants for landscaping, boosting floriculture business in the state. Hotels and restaurants also use cut flowers, arranging them in hotel lobbies and hallways, and adorning restaurants and cafes in the city.

Government offices, hotels, restaurants, and institutions are major consumers of cut flowers, while flowering plants are used for landscaping. The floriculture industry in Mizoram is expected to progress and thrive in the next decade, with self-sufficiency achieved through less import and more export of goods. This will lead to more flower shops opening livelihood opportunities and a flourishing industry.

8.2.3 Floriculture as livelihood option

Chapter VI discusses floriculture as livelihood option in Mizoram. The chapter has been discussed under the following heads: 1. Introduction 2. Floriculture as livelihood option 3. Floral designing as livelihood option 4. Culture of floriculture 5. Contribution of stakeholders: (a) Florist Associations in promotional action (b) Role of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) (c) Role of Government in floriculture. 6. Case Study: (a) Zopar Exports Private Limited (b) Laltei Nursery 7. Overview of findings.

Floriculture, a lucrative industry that uses flowers for decorative purposes, extraction of essential oils, and natural dyes, has gained significant commercial significance in the last 20-30 years due to evolving lifestyles and urban influence, offering farmers increased profits and employment opportunities for rural livelihoods. The growth of decorative horticulture has significantly improved livelihoods and opportunities in

floriculture farming, resulting in substantial economic prospects in related areas like specialized transport services and production of supplementary products such as nursery bags, pots and potting soil.

The Mizoram Florists' Association, founded in 1997, which helped floriculture to flourish in Mizoram aimed to promote flower cultivation. Its branches are located in various districts, including Lunglei, Champhai, Saiha, Kolasib, and Serchhip. The association initially procured ornamental and potted plants from outside the state, but has since grown into a family business, importing, procuring and propagating new varieties of foliage, indoor plants, flowering plants, perennials, and ornamental plants to meet local consumer demands.

In 2002, the Department of Horticulture in Mizoram initiated the first commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern India. The cultivation of Anthurium significantly transformed Mizoram's horticultural landscape, improved growers' living conditions, and provided employment and steady income for both growers and unskilled laborers. Anthurium cultivation in Aizawl city, Mizoram, has significant market potential due to its long vase life, vibrant colors, and high demand. It is a valuable and popular flower, sent outside to major cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore, and exported to the United Arab Emirates, Japan, and London.

Mizoram has successfully exported 1024 Anthurium cut flowers to Singapore, marking a significant achievement for the state's horticulture sectors. The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram, organized the export, demonstrating Mizoram's growing role in global floriculture and strengthening India's agricultural trade connections with Singapore.

The Anthurium Festival, hosted by the Tourism Department of the Government of Mizoram, is a prestigious event promoting tourism and Anthurium flowers. The annual two-day event takes place at the Tourist Resort Reiek in Reiek, aiming to advance agriculture, floriculture, and horticulture in the region. The festival also showcases Mizo women's extensive cultivation of Anthurium flowers, primarily due

to the Horticulture Department's initiatives. It also aims to empower homemakers with resources for financial independence.

Mizoram is transforming floriculture into a livelihood option, generating income for unemployed homemakers and women entrepreneurs. The Horticulture Department in the government of Mizoram is focusing on commercial cultivation of Anthurium flowers, while ornamental flowers and potted plants are grown at home. Annual and perennial cut flowers are grown in greenhouses. Men with aesthetic interests are also drawn to this business, showcasing the growing interest in floriculture in Mizoram.

Interest in flowers and floriculture since childhood drives the floriculturists to pursue the business as their means of livelihood. While for some homemakers, it is an alternative to paid jobs and floriculture is also pursued as a way out of the absence of paid jobs and some have inherited the business from parents. The floriculturists have been indulging in the business venture for more than 10 years, a few for over 30 years, having had experience in technical and social aspects of the floriculture business, and have faced ups and downs, remaining resilient in the face of stress. Others are new to the trade with less than five years of experience in the process of strengthening and reinforcing their business and learning resilience in times of shock.

The small- scale family business on floriculture carried out on rooftops, backyards, front yard and all available spaces around the residences of floriculturists is managed with the active support of their spouses, children and other relatives. Family members provide help and support to floriculturists in all the necessary tasks involved in the entrepreneurial activity.

The floriculture business established by floriculturists serves as an ancillary income source for families, which also derive income from government employment, private sector jobs and self-employment ventures. Some of the spouses and children are employed, while others are retired and get monthly pensions. Many floriculturists rely exclusively on the floriculture industry for their livelihood, lacking alternative means of income.

The approximate monthly income during the peak season of the floriculturists varies. Floriculturists who rely on floriculture for their livelihood generate income

amounting to Rs 2- 4 lakhs a month during the peak season, selling their goods to neighboring states, cities, and exporting to foreign country like Myanmar. Their goods are transported to other districts and district capitals of the state. They also sell their propagated goods at home, florist fairs, local markets, and using social media platforms to sell their goods. For those floriculturists having other regular income sources, who devote less time to the business, thus, the monthly income is usually lower than others.

Various methods are adopted by floriculturists to market their products and generate income for their households. The florist associations organize florist fairs three to four times annually creating an opportunity for members to showcase their products and make significant sales. Bulk selling to wholesalers and resellers is another important method used by floriculturists. Most floriculturists, though not highly educated, are familiar with modern technology and popularly use social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to market their floriculture goods.

Some make use of Saturday local markets to sell their goods and Anthurium cultivators make use of marketing agency run by Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-Operative Society to transport their products to other major cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore every week. Floriculturists on the whole sell their products regularly at home too.

Floriculture goods and products are sold and transported to different locations and destinations depending on the order received. Anthurium goods are regularly airlifted to other parts of the country to metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Kolkata and Bangalore. Floriculture goods are shipped to North Eastern parts of India; they are also transported to other districts and district capitals of the state. A small number of floriculturists export their products to Myanmar very often. Most of the floriculturists make use of all the available opportunities to transport and sell their goods.

Floriculturists claim that floriculture goods sold within the state is much more profitable than those sold outside the state. Floriculture products if sold in bulk have good returns which is experienced by floriculturists when they market their goods to

other districts of the state regularly. While for some, plants sold outside the state have good returns. Greenhouse facility is utilized by most of the floriculturists in their business venture on floriculture. Greenhouses are constructed according to the size of available land near their residences, roof tops, rented roof tops or on open ground, to control the temperature and protect plants from the harsh weather. A few of the floriculturists do not make use of greenhouse facility in their floriculture business.

Floriculturists, except a few, do not receive government aid or grants for greenhouse construction. The study reveals that small-time floriculturists believe the government should provide more aid and inputs more often. They also argue that the government is not equally distributing inputs to all floriculture entrepreneurs due to lack of funds and schemes. The government is however, vigilant in catering to the needs of Anthurium cultivators providing necessary incentives and inputs regularly to the farmers. Floriculturists claim the government does not provide awareness about available incentives and inputs. They are mainly informed about available incentives through the leaders of their associations and fellow members. Florist associations work closely with the government to develop floriculture and farmers.

The government plays a crucial role in marketing the products of floriculturists by frequently sponsoring florist fairs and flower shows, particularly those organized by the Mizoram Florist Association (MFA). The annual Horticulture Fair provides an opportunity for floriculturists to showcase their products and make significant sales.

The study demonstrates that floriculture is a viable business venture for self-employment, particularly among floriculturists who rely on it as their primary means of livelihood. These individuals would advocate for the business and encourage their offsprings to pursue the entrepreneurship as a livelihood option. The study also shows that floriculturists enjoy a decent standard of living through their indulgence in floriculture, as it generates regular income for the household and helps meet basic household requirements. As a passion and hobby, floriculturists would never abandon the business even if given another livelihood option.

Enrolling as members of florist associations like Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA), and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-

Operative Society (ZAGCS) has greatly benefited floriculturists. These associations help build confidence, creativity, capacity, taking risks, and strengthening their businesses. They sharpen their entrepreneurial skills and marketing abilities, leading to increased sales and profit. They also establish social relations with fellow members and customers, fostering deep bonds and affinity manifested in times of Mizo *chhiatni* and *thatni* (day of joy and sorrow) where members support each other in such times. Despite their success, floriculturists still have higher goals for expanding and strengthening their ventures. They primarily deal with perennial flowers and plants, including propagation, seed germination and cut flower cultivation, and those involved in procuring and distributing directly to customers and resellers.

Floral Designing as livelihood option: Floral design involves the art of arranging flowers and other plant elements to create visually appealing designs, considering shape, texture, and color. It involves working with event decorators to transform spaces and occasions, resulting in memorable experiences and beautiful ambiances.

Floral designing is becoming a livelihood option for skilled florists, generating income through the activity. Despite having an inborn skill since childhood and some training, most designers are not enrolled in florist associations or have collaborative roles. They collaborate with the government on events and occasions, often working with hired workers and recruiting helpers depending on the type of event they decorate.

Floral designing is a viable self-employment option, but floral designers emphasize the importance of perseverance, courage, and good acquaintance. They suggest that the government should implement policies or grants to support florists in establishing themselves and prosper, and encourage unemployed youths to enter this entrepreneurial activity for self-reliance.

Mizo funeral practices have embraced the use of flower arrangements and bouquets as a form of condolence. Floral designers, who often work in their locality or outside, generate income by decorating coffins with fresh flowers. They also arrange funeral

bouquets and baskets on request, which also serve as a source of income. The professional skill of floral designers is also utilized in decorating graves for festive occasions like Christmas. The importance placed on flowers in Mizo society's funerary practices has led to increased income for these designers.

The role of floral decorations in bride price rituals and send-off ceremonies is significant. Floral designers are hired to decorate pre-wedding venues, earning a significant income. They specialize in church flower arrangements, wedding reception venue decorations, bridal bouquets, and the entire package. They promote themselves on social media platforms and advertise their work. They usually work within the budget set by families for weddings. They are well-equipped with the necessary tools and accessories to decorate wedding reception venues, thereby earning a significant income on each event.

The study reveals that the income generated from floral decoration at wedding events varies depending on the budget and thus, the income range differs for floral designers. Floral designers in Mizo wedding venues support the use of floral decorations as it serves as a significant source of income for them and are willing to invest in their children's weddings.

Floral designers regularly arrange church flowers for Sunday service and also occasionally on church's festive events and conferences, earning income which varies depending on the amount sanctioned by different churches. The total annual income generated by floral designers also depends on the number of work appointments they receive. This entrepreneurial activity serves as the primary means of generating income for floral designers, who believe it is viable for self-employment and for supporting their families, although the entrepreneurship does not involve regular work on a daily basis.

Culture of floriculture: Floriculture in Mizoram involves various aspects, involving cultivation and production of various flower crops, including annual or seasonal flowers, cut flowers in open fields and greenhouses, perennial flowering plants, house plants, ornamental plants, and foliage plants cultivated in containers and

nursery pots. Floriculture activities also include distributing procured goods from outside the state and resellers of goods.

Floriculturists have been engaged in annual or seasonal flower seed germination for over a decade, with some having been doing it for over three decades. The continuous process of seed germination and selling seedlings brings good returns and provides a secure livelihood for those involved. Anthurium flowers are the most popular cut flower, and farmers have been cultivating them for more than two decades. Anthurium products are shipped to other cities, with rejected products consumed locally. This provides a stable income for the households involved in Anthurium cultivation.

Propagation of plants and flowers is a crucial aspect of floriculture, with many floriculturists pursuing this method due to its profitability and low-cost nature. They propagate stem and leaf cuttings of imported flowering and non-flowering plants, which are then marketed individually or in bulk, generating regular income for households.

Floriculturists in Mizoram have been importing and procuring floricultural goods from other countries and other states for over a decade, which have better returns providing a secure livelihood for them and their families. This continuous process has led to the replacement of Mizo indigenous flowers with imported ones, and people's preference has shifted to international and national exotic plants.

Floriculture involves the cultivation of seasonal cut flowers, which are germinated and cultivated in open field and greenhouse facility, and harvested for local consumption. This business generates profitable income for households during the season, benefiting entrepreneurs and meeting household requirements. The cut flower business is beneficial for entrepreneurs and household needs are met through the business venture.

Floriculturists engaged in the reselling of goods are not actually involved in flower cultivation. They obtain goods from actual floriculturists and importers, sell them to local customers and ship them overseas and to other districts and other states. This

profitable business generates income and is considered a viable livelihood for these individuals.

Contribution of Stakeholders: Non-Governmental Organisations play a crucial role in development by linking the state to grassroot communities, promoting local mobilization and enabling environmental change. Floriculture in Mizoram has grown due to the demand for cut flowers in hotel and wedding events, and the sector offers profitable self-employment opportunities especially for women, and helping them improve their entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

Florist Associations in Promotional Action: The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), the *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) are the prominent florist associations selected as key informants for the study.

The Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA) was established in 1997 with the motto 'Blooming Mizoram with Flowers'. It was registered in 1998 and has its own constitution and rules. As the first florist association in Mizoram, it focuses on holistic development of floriculture and promotes members shared objectives. Members pay membership and an annual fee to become members, prioritizing their own creations and propagated products and encouraging entrepreneurship in floriculture.

The Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) was established in 2002 following the introduction of commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers by 24 farmers by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. The society, registered under the Mizoram Co-operative Societies Act, accepts members possessing at least 1000 Anthurium plants and harvesting 50 cut flowers per month. The Department of Horticulture provides necessary inputs and planting material to beneficiaries of Anthurium cultivation, the Anthurium flowers are then sent to big cities and exported to countries like Singapore. The number of beneficiaries has increased annually, with Anthurium flowers being shipped regularly to metropolitan cities in the country.

The *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA), established in 2017, aims to uplift the economic condition of the floriculturists especially those relying on the business for their livelihood. With 180 enrolled members as of 2020, members pay a membership and an annual fee to join. The association is yet to be registered.

The two florist associations namely MFA and PPZA each organize flower shows and fairs quarterly in a year, providing opportunities for floriculturists to showcase their products and make significant sales. Such florist fairs serve as important platform for floriculturists to make tremendous sales per day. The leaders of these associations also participate in these fairs, which are economically and socially beneficial and conducive to floriculture growth. ZAGCS however, organizes an annual Anthurium flower exhibition and showcases their products at the government-organized Anthurium festival. Floriculturists make significant sales within a few days which is impossible to achieve at home and florist fairs prove to be more beneficial for those relying on the business for their livelihood. The leaders of the associations are also actively engaged in floricultural activities for additional source of income.

Florist associations are actively promoting floriculture entrepreneurship and taking steps to develop and advance floriculture business. The florist associations take significant steps by requesting the government for inputs and incentives and to provide subsidized infrastructure such as greenhouse structure and material to needy floriculturists. The MFA offers frequent trainings on seed germination, propagation, plant care, health, post-harvest management, and flower arrangement technique. These efforts are crucial in fostering a thriving floriculture industry.

The florist associations provide financial and in-kind assistance to needy floriculturists. In such a situation, the spirit of *tlawmngaihna*, the Mizo moral code of conduct and selflessness is seen in action among the leaders and members. Office bearers and committee members contribute money to help ailing floriculturists, particularly those suffering from terminal illness or accidents. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the associations provided support in cash and in kind. They also support each other during times of sorrow and joy, gifting condolence flowers and presenting

wedding gifts. Such actions manifest the importance of florist associations in benevolent works beyond their floricultural activities.

The floriculture sector demonstrates promising potential for generating income and livelihood. The leaders of the florist associations also assert that floriculture provides consistent income and is a feasible option for self-employment.

All the three florist associations maintain cordial relations with each other, but in reality, MFA and ZAGCS have strained relationships with PPZA due to conflicting interests. MFA promotes propagation of flowering plants and houseplants, while PPZA procures and sells them directly to customers. MFA promotes floriculturists' own creations and products, and teaches its members the importance of cash flow within the state, while PPZA focus on imports and procures plants from abroad and outside the state. PPZA is a recently formed association, not yet registered or recognized by the government, and ZAGCS too does not collaborate with PPZA. The two associations that is, MFA and PPZA have different interests and follows different paths in the floriculture business.

The Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram provides support and aid to florist associations on a need-basis, sponsoring florist fairs and *Chapchar Kut* flower shows organized by MFA. The government also arranges special tours to metropolitan cities and abroad for MFA members. ZAGCS members regularly receive incentives and inputs free of cost and at a subsidised rate, as Anthurium cultivation is initiated under a centrally sponsored scheme. Florist fairs organized by PPZA have been occasionally sponsored by the government.

Florist associations frequently seek aid from the government for their members' interests. The government fulfills these demands by providing incentives and inputs, depending on available funds and schemes. The government as far as possible aims to provide aid to needy floriculturists and subsidize infrastructure materials. Associations having collaborative work with the government often get their demands fulfilled, while PPZA struggles to receive their requests.

The florist associations frequently assume the role of a pressure group when the needs of their members are not met. The leaders engage with the government to

reiterate and urge the provision of the requested incentives for the disadvantaged members.

Considering the challenges faced by florist associations, MFA leaders cite their lack of space to display and showcase their floriculture products and absence of a flower house to sell their goods for the whole week. They have approached the government for such a space, but have not been successful. PPZA, on the other hand, lacks a registration number which hinders their association to advance and is unable to meet the pre-requisite for registration, which is an office with a signboard. ZAGCS, on the other hand, struggles with weather changes limiting their ability to harvest as many flowers as they would like within a week and high airfreight costs at the time of shipping their products to other states.

Thus, the florist associations in their promotional action on floriculture function towards the economic success of their respective organisation members. Each entity collaborates for the advancement of floriculture, creating income for its sustenance despite divergent interests and ideologies. The florist organisations operate synchronously with a shared objective: the development of floriculture entrepreneurship.

Role of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP): The Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP), established in 1974, is a large voluntary organization focusing on the development and upliftment of weaker sections of society, particularly women and children. As a non-governmental organization, MHIP has made significant contributions to the community, including helping needy women and empowering them through various schemes. MHIP leaders are not enrolled in any of the florist associations and does not work for the promotion of floriculture entrepreneurship. Despite not having any collaboration with the government or any of the florist associations in floriculture activities, MHIP supports and encourages floriculture businesses, which are primarily pursued by women, and the NGO advocates for the upliftment of women's economic and social status. MHIP provides emotional support to floriculture entrepreneurs rather than give direct practical aid.

Role of government in floriculture: The Horticulture Department became independent from Agriculture Department under Government of Mizoram in 1993 and became a full-fledged department in 1997. It had floriculture as one of its objectives since its inception.

The government has been actively promoting floriculture since 2001 through central schemes introducing new variety of flowers and plants and providing incentives and resources to improve and develop entrepreneurship in the industry. The Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), a centrally sponsored scheme, has been implemented by selecting beneficiaries to cultivate new variety of flowers and foliage plants in 2021 and 2023. Training is also provided to floriculturists on plant care, pest management, packaging practices, and flower arrangement. This initiative aims to expand the area and introduce new varieties of flowers and foliage plants.

The government initiated Anthurium cultivation initially with 24 beneficiaries under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North Eastern region in 2002. Over time, the number of cultivators increased, and inputs were provided free of charge and also on need base. The government also initiated Curcuma flower plantation in 2023, providing subsidies to 20 beneficiaries, who are actual floriculturists. From 2021 onwards, beneficiaries cultivated imported foliage plants to meet local demand, not to be exported or shipped to other places. The government's efforts aim to meet local demands and meet local needs.

The government receives numerous requests for inputs like greenhouse and shade net materials, but not all of these requests are met. However, under schemes like Integrated Pest Management Scheme and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), inputs are distributed to needy floriculturists. The government also receives requests from florist associations for various inputs and incentives and sponsorships for the florist fairs held quarterly. When these requests are not met, the associations remain dormant, not pressing or pushing the government to fulfill their demands. Unwanted strained relationship does not develop in such situation between the government and the florist associations.

The study reveals that the government prioritizes requests from florist associations which have been formed under the supervision of Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram namely the MFA and ZAGCS. The government collaborates with these two associations on important events and functions, promoting floriculture and providing a platform for floriculturists to showcase and market their products in the form of Horticulture Fair annually. The government also approaches the MFA and ZAGCS to collaborate on important government events and functions, hosting dignitaries and guests. For example, the successful G20 Chapchar Kut Flower Show in 2023 was a collaborative effort between the government, MFA, and ZAGCS.

As per requests by florist associations, the florist fairs are frequently sponsored by the government, which are crucial for floriculture growth and development. These fairs provide a platform for floriculturists to make significant sales, which they cannot do at home. The government provides incentives and necessary inputs to floriculturists, either free or subsidized, to boost production. The government identifies needy farmers as beneficiaries and provides aids those producers. The government frequently responds to the needs of floriculturists and continuously promotes and develops the floriculture industry.

Case Study I: Zopar Export Private Limited- Zopar Export Private Limited, a Bangalore-based company, was founded in 2002 as an outlet by Mr. Rajesh Prasad and Lianzami Leivang (L). Zopar farm was started in 2006. The company has a 40-acre farm, with 22 acres dedicated to flower crop cultivation and 2 acres for open cultivation. Prasad began his floriculture journey with Tata Industries and later built his own farm in Bangalore. He later moved to Mizoram in 2002, catering to the aesthetic needs of local people. Zopar farm currently employs 150 workers from mainland India and North East India, including Burmese immigrants. The farm generates employment opportunities and provides livelihoods to employees from poor economic backgrounds. The farm has a standardized daily routine, managed by eight supervisors who ensure the work is completed. Zopar Export Private Limited is a flower farm that harvest flowers daily, grades them, and stores them in cold storage for shipment to Zopar outlets in Mizoram and other North East India. The flowers are

available six days a week, meeting high local demand. The farm also provides accommodation for hired workers, including family quarters, dormitories, and a mess for girls. The company provides Employee Social Insurance and Provident Fund for workers, and a small Christian chapel caters to their spiritual needs. Despite facing setbacks and bankruptcy, the owner's entrepreneurial skills and determination have helped the company recover and is now debt-free. The farm products are transported to Zopar outlets in Mizoram and other parts of NE India, catering to the religious and cultural needs of the local people on weekends and festive events.

Case Study II: Laltei Nursery- Laltei Nursery, a family business in Ramthar Veng, Aizawl city, has been in operation for 30 years. Mrs Laltei, a widow, runs the business with her three sons, The nursery produces various flower seedlings based on the different seasons, employing two to three workers daily for tasks like soil preparation, germination, and transplanting. The owner uses marketing strategies, selling products in local markets and florist fairs, and online through social media platforms. She has constructed the RCC building in which they are residing from her earnings through her floriculture business. She also shares her knowledge and experiences in seminars and talks organized by the Mizoram Florist Association, of which is an executive committee member. Laltei nursery owner has been featured in radio discussions, in Doordarshan Kendra, and local television. The owner has written articles and trained workers, leading to the establishment of independent businesses. Despite facing losses during the Covid-19 pandemic, the nursery has recovered and continues to produce flowers popular for landscaping resorts, picnic spots, and office buildings. The nursery flowers are used to beautify residential surroundings, picnic spots, resorts and office buildings. The nursery owner's determination, hard work, and perseverance have contributed to its success.

8.2.4 Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced

Chapter VII deals with floriculture as entrepreneurial pursuits and constraints faced by floriculturists. The chapter is discussed under the following four heads: 1. Introduction 2. Entrepreneurial pursuits (a) Training and Skill Development (b)

Innovations (c) Risk taking and Income Promotions 3. Constraints Faced 4. An overview

Entrepreneurial pursuits:

Entrepreneurship is a fundamental catalyst for a nation's economic advancement, as it generates employment opportunities and fosters innovation. Entrepreneurial achievement provides autonomy, independence, and fulfilment. It creates job opportunities, reduces unemployment, and fosters economic development. Entrepreneurs establish, oversee, and expand enterprises, introducing novel products, services, or systems. Motivation entails the identification and exploitation of opportunities, necessitating innovation, risk-taking, and the overcoming of challenges.

Training and Skill Development: Developing skills in floriculture is essential for production and efficiency. Individuals can acquire training through certificate or diploma programs, encompassing subjects such as cultivation techniques, nursery management, and plant care. Floriculture presents considerable prospects for skill enhancement and revenue production, particularly in areas such as Northeast India.

The floriculturists have not received training on floriculture, despite frequent training sessions on care and maintenance of flowers and plants organized by the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, and Mizoram Florist Association. However, some have attended the training sessions on floriculture and flower arrangements organized by them.

Engaging in the floriculture business for several years has fostered entrepreneurial skills for the floriculturists, including risk-taking, innovation, adaptability, marketing skill, and financial management. Floriculturists recognise opportunities, manage resources, and skilfully negotiate the challenges of a competitive floriculture industry.

Experienced floriculturists have developed social skills, effective communication, empathy, conflict resolution, and confidence in their dealings with clients and fellow floriculturists, demonstrating their ability to connect positively and effectively.

Innovations: Innovation enables entrepreneurs to enhance products, processes, or services by generating innovative concepts and values, often requiring a clear strategy and continuous self-challenge for creative ideas.

Floriculture demands significant time from floriculturists; being labour-intensive, family members actively assist those who are fully engaged in the industry to attain success and enhance income. Some engage in it as a supplementary source of income and do not dedicate themselves full-time to the activity.

Floriculturists often innovate their products and goods to boost market value, focusing on improving the appearance of their flowering and foliage plants. They also take risks by procuring exotic plants and repotting them in containers to enhance their appeal and increase sale value. This approach is a popular routine among floriculturists.

Floriculturists mostly focus on cultivating flower and foliage plants, but some also sell related items like potting media, manure, nutrients, plant boosters, fungicides, pots, containers, and gardening tools. This helps generate income, provide a decent standard of living, and meet household needs, while maintaining a decent standard of living.

The floriculturists rapidly react to the trending demands of their clients. Particular kinds of flowers and plants, akin to fashion trends, are in vogue and much sought after. Floriculturists adapt and keep in touch with the prevailing trends in floriculture and promptly adapt to fulfil their consumers' expectations.

Risk Taking and Income Promotions: Entrepreneurship involves risk-taking, offering financial independence, multiple income streams, and a sense of success. Successful entrepreneurs balance failure with success, generating employment, promoting innovation, and alleviating unemployment, ultimately promoting economic growth.

Floriculturists who have been involved in the floriculture business for years have developed entrepreneurial skills where they are cautious in risk-taking and avoid financial loss. However, some are also skilled in risk taking, innovative ideas,

adaptability, marketing, and financial management. These skills enable them to identify opportunities, manage resources, and successfully navigate the challenges of a competitive floriculture business, despite the potential financial loss if goods arrive damaged.

The floriculture industry has rendered floriculturists financially autonomous, allowing them to allocate their earnings towards home necessities and personal preferences. They possess the authority to determine the allocation of income generated from the floriculture business and can utilise it as they deem appropriate.

The floriculture business in Mizo society significantly boosts the status of floriculturists through the income generated, overcoming patriarchy where men hold dominant roles. This venture benefits them by ensuring their voices are heard and considered important by their spouses and family members, and their decisions are considered important for the household.

Floriculturists generate income for their households, providing economic independence and enabling them to make important decisions for their families. They build confidence and strengthen their decision-making capabilities. After years of business ventures, floriculturists gain entrepreneurial skills and experience, making them more productive in family and household matters and better able to shoulder responsibility.

Gaining experience and confidence through their business, floriculturists have enhanced their self-worth and abilities. This has led to a better well-being, as they have increased self-esteem, confidence in business dealings, and built healthy relationships. They face challenges with perseverance.

Constraints faced: Mizoram's floriculture faces production-related challenges, market-related issues, and financial obstacles. Production issues include insufficient quality planting material, poor infrastructure, and limited access to innovative technologies. Market-related issues and insufficient infrastructure are also major constraints.

Floriculturists face numerous challenges in their business venture, such as limited water supply, space for activity, product marketing, institutional support, and plant care. These issues require expert assistance to ensure the success of their venture.

Floriculturists in Mizoram express inadequacy of government assistance in their business, citing inadequate greenhouse structures and infra structure materials. They also seek government assistance in terms of incentives and inputs for businesses, as well as a flower showroom for daily display and marketing of their products. However, not all of these requests for resources and inputs have been successful.

Floriculturists are adapting to changing trends in the floriculture business due to technological advancements and consumer aesthetic preferences. They are adjusting to contemporary flower and plant preferences, using social media platforms for marketing and self-promotion. Google Pay is a popular choice for online transactions among floriculturists, demonstrating their proficiency in technological innovation and adaptability in the industry.

In procuring high demand plants and flowers from outside the state, floriculturists do not possess strong competitive spirit, they do it in good spirit. A few floriculturists being ambitious do manifest strong competitive determined to be the lone seller of exotic rare plants.

Strong unhealthy competition for customers is absent amongst the floriculturists and jealousy of any kind is not encountered resulting in unhealthy situation by the floriculturists in their line of business. Though a few have encountered situations where their potential customers are won over by over ambitious fellow floriculturists.

Imported and procured floriculture goods from outside the state often arrive in stressful and damaged conditions resulting in huge financial loss. However, stressed plants are rejuvenated within a few days and floriculturists have been fortunate in receiving goods in healthy condition, which fetch good income.

The floriculturists are at liberty in pricing their self-propagated products and plants, no institution or individuals control the market price, but they usually enquire the price set by others on similar products.

Floriculturists are satisfied with the current market infrastructure for local product marketing, with online platforms becoming increasingly popular. However, some argue that the current market infrastructure is insufficient, as saturday local markets are too crowded with vegetable vendors, making it difficult for interested floriculturists to showcase and market their products.

Floriculturists face infrastructure limitations, including inadequate greenhouse facilities and polyhouses, for temperature regulation and heat shielding. Insufficient space for product storage is a significant challenge faced by nearly all floriculturists.

Small-time floriculture entrepreneurs often manage their businesses without hired labor, supported by family members. However, some face challenges in hiring skilled labor and often is a constraint, as they require knowledge in various aspects of floriculture, such as plant care, potting media preparation, seed bed preparation, transplanting, and propagation.

Pests and disease problems are often faced by floriculturists, that lowers the market value and in extreme cases lead to severe plant losses. With years of experience, however, they can effectively manage these diseases and save their flower crops reviving their health.

Floriculturists store water in huge water tanks and do not face water crisis during the dry season, but however, a few of them do encounter water problem and frequently purchases water to meet their daily requirements.

The most significant challenge faced by the floriculturists which is preventing them from expanding their business is the congested and limited area they operate in, which significantly hinders their ability to extend their entrepreneurial endeavors.

Florist associations maintain healthy relationships by supporting each other during *chhiatni/thatni* (day of sorrow and joy), strengthening bonds through gifting and exchanging potted flowers and plants. However, some floriculturists have experienced negative experiences due to unhealthy competition and jealousy from their fellow floriculturists, affecting their overall relationships.

Mizoram's florist associations set strict regulations for members to follow. The Mizoram Florist Association promotes self-propagated, properly rooted items and controls financial flow beyond the state. The association encourages members to appreciate their own products and engage in trading with one another. Direct marketing of imported and procured floriculture products is prohibited. However, the *Pangpar Zuar* Association allows members to market items sourced from outside the state without prior propagation, and expects members to market healthily rooted products. The Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society also establishes regulations for its members in terms of marketing, quality of flowers and rate of flowers.

8.3 Contextualization of findings

Chapter V which discusses ‘**Flowers in Mizo socio-cultural context**’ includes discussions on gift exchange, gift giving and the moral standards of reciprocity. is found aligning with the works of Charles Homans, 1958; Alvin Gouldner, 1960 and Marcel Mauss, 1966). The findings on these areas have been contextualized in the literature surveyed under Chapter II.

Homans’ notion of social exchange (1958) could be contextualized with the present study. According to Homans (1958:606), social behavior is viewed as a transaction involving the exchange of products, which can be both tangible and intangible, such as symbols of approval or prestige. According to him, individuals who are generous towards others have an expectation of receiving a significant amount in return, whereas those who receive a lot from others feel obligated to reciprocate by giving a substantial amount back. He states that this process of influence typically results in an equilibrium in the interactions. Floriculturists and the prospective buyers in Mizoram are frequently involved in exchanging their propagated potted plants and flowers as gifts to facilitate cultured extension of sentiments. Exchange of products are both tangible and intangible in this case. Gift giving in the form of potted plants and flowers is reciprocated by the recipients who usually are also florists themselves. This mutual exchange of floricultural goods serves as an extension of sentiments and as a way of expressing deep emotions and feelings towards each other creating a

strong bond and deeper connection and maintaining relationship among the Mizos. This is evident in cultured manifestation in times of *chhiatni/thatni* (Day of sorrow/joy) in the society resulting in an equilibrium in the interactions.

Similar to the arguments made by Alvin Gouldner (1960:170-171), our respondents equivocally accepted the universal principle of reciprocity that the moral standard of reciprocity establishes specific behaviors and obligations as payback for benefits received. “We have some obligations towards others due to their past contributions and the history of our previous interactions with them”. The reciprocity norm, according to Gouldner, is a social rule that mandates, among other things, that people should repay favours and other acts of goodwill. Gouldner’s concept of reciprocity norm is contextualized with the present study in that floriculturists indulge in gift giving in the form of potted live plants and flowers with their friends and fellow floriculturists. Reciprocity between the concerned individuals through the exchange of floral gifts indicates that they repay favours and the act of goodwill they received. The satisfaction of the respondents as a giver is determined when the gift, they receive from their friends is considered as equivalent to what is initially given to their friends. Floriculturists keep this culture element in mind while carrying forward their entrepreneurial pursuits and business venture.

Marcel Mauss (1966:9-11) argues that giving creates a social bond between the giver and the receiver, with the recipient having an obligation to reciprocate. His gift giving theory is more than exchange of goods, they are not just objects but are imbued with symbolic meanings and cultural values deeply embedded in social fabric of society.

Mauss’ gift giving theory could be contextualized with the present study where the clients and floriculturists themselves indulge in gift giving in the form of potted plants and flowers. Giving gifts in the form of potted flowers and plants by the floriculturists is more or less reciprocated by the receiver in the same equivalent value given. Mutual exchange of tangible goods in the form of potted plants and flowers serves as symbols of sentiments and feelings and the act is embedded in the social fabric of the Mizo society, drawing them closer to each other building strong

relationship and social bonds and maintaining network of relationship among themselves.

Chapter VI which deals with ‘**Floriculture as a livelihood option**’ discusses the concept of livelihood (Niehof & Price, 2001; Long, 1997; De Haan and Zoomers, 2003 and Carney 1998); social capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993a, 1993b) and Tzanakis, 2013) and sociology of entrepreneurship (Nguyen et.al, 2020 and Randerson et.al, 2015). Livelihood is what individuals do (given their resources and assets) and what they accomplish through these actions, including the activities, resources, and assets utilised by individuals to fulfil their fundamental needs. Livelihood is the outcome of people’s endeavours. Social capital evolves into a collective reality through group affiliations. Likewise, the viability of the family enterprise relies on individual or collective entrepreneurial actions. These concepts have been contextualised as follows-

Livelihood: The theoretical framework provided by Niehof and Price (2001:9) on the concept of livelihood could be contextualized on floriculture as a livelihood option by the floriculturists in the present study. Floriculture consisting of different nature and aspect is pursued by floriculturists in Mizoram such as flower seed germination, perennial cut flowers (Anthurium), perennial flowers and plant propagations, seasonal cut flowers, importers of perennial flowers and plants and resellers of floriculture goods. Such cultivation of flower crops in Mizoram is normally carried out under mini greenhouse facilities, where such small poly houses and greenhouses are constructed on available spaces around their residences and on roof tops, and some even construct on rented land and rented roof tops. The floriculturists are engaged in such income generating livelihood endeavours, it is what floriculturists do, given their resources and assets. Floriculturists accomplish flower cultivation, propagations, seed germinations and cultivate cut flowers through their constant activities and work utilising their resources and assets to fulfil their fundamental requirements and needs. The outcome of the floriculturists’ endeavours is their livelihood.

In consonance with the ideas of Niehof and Price (2001), it is evident from the study that floriculture is a family household business venture where livelihood is generated. The household of floriculturists is the immediate environment for livelihood and the household characteristics of the floriculturists to a great extent influence income generation opportunities and limits. Long's concept of livelihood (1997 cited in De Haan and Zoomers, 2003:352) could be contextualized in the present study on the floriculturists and their family members who are actively supporting them and working to sustain themselves and the family, determined to meet their economic and basic needs, floriculturists through experiences are resilient and are able to manage stress and shock, they are quick to seize new chances to procure, propagate and market products and adjust to changes and make choices based on the aesthetic values of their customers.

In tune with Carney (1998: 2), a sustainable livelihood is one that has the ability to withstand and recover from pressures and unexpected events, while also preserving or improving its resources and capacities, without depleting the natural environment. This study reveals that the floriculturists' livelihood system which consists of their capabilities or competence in handling floriculture activities, the material assets that they have such as land, rooftop space and the greenhouses and the social resources such as the support they get from family members and fellow-floriculturists and the actual work they do necessary for their means of livelihood. As the study reveals floriculture activities as a livelihood has the ability to withstand and be resilient in the face of shock like the Covid-19 pandemic, and floriculturists have recovered from such pressure, preserving and improving their resources and capabilities of floriculture endeavour, without harming the natural environment.

Social Capital: Bourdieu (1986) cited in (Tzanakis, 2013:3-6) defines social capital as the collective sum of tangible resources that are associated with having a stable network of relationships characterized by mutual familiarity or acknowledgment, which may be more or less formalized. Bourdieu contends that individuals engage in and sustain connections within a network primarily for specific economic benefits, and it is possible to simplify it to economic profit, even if that profit is not always purely economic.

Bourdieu's notion of social capital could be contextualized with the present study where floriculturists who engage in floriculture activity and business for livelihood sustain social connections and inter-relations with other fellow floriculturists and clients creating a network of relations primarily for economic benefits sometimes extending beyond economic profit. The social capital of the floriculturists consists of the collective sum of tangible resources like land, greenhouse structure, polyhouse, flower seeds and the flower seedlings and propagated products with the stable network of relationships they built with their family members, other floriculturists, social connections and their clients which is characterized by mutual familiarity more or less formalized.

Tzanakis (2013:4) cites Putnam (1993a, 1993b) who defines social capital as the attributes of social groups, such as connections, shared beliefs, and confidence, that facilitate individuals to collaborate and cooperate for their mutual benefit. Putnam's concept of social capital is conceptualized with the study where the attributes of social capital are found to be possessed by the floriculturists such as network of connections and ties with fellow floriculturists, connections with others, clients and family members, sharing beliefs and ideas on floriculture activity, built a confidence over the years facilitating the individual floriculturists to collaborate as an association and co-operate for their mutual benefit.

Sociology of Entrepreneurship: Gibb and Ritchie (1982) cited in (Nguyen et.al, 2020:5) explains that people's perceptions of their capacity for entrepreneurship and the behaviour that results from those perceptions can be understood in terms of the kinds of situations they encounter and the social (reference) groups to which they relate throughout their lives. Similarly, floriculturists' perceptions of their capacity for small scale floricultural entrepreneurship and the behaviour and activity that arise and results from those perceptions in this study can be understood in the daily situations they encounter within the family and with other people and the successful floriculturists who serve as reference group to which new floriculture entrepreneurs relate throughout their lives.

The present study matches with the work by Randerson et.al (2015:143) in the sense that the entrepreneurial activity and behaviour of the floriculturists are often rooted in the familial context, such as flower seed germination, caring and transplanting the seedling for sale, stem and leaf cutting propagations of flowers and plants, transplanting such plant-lings in poly pots for sale and the marketing skill needed for trading. These are some of the entrepreneurial actions rooted in the familial setting as a collective family entrepreneurial activity. Thus, both the entrepreneurial behaviours and the success or failure impact the family unit as a whole.

Constraints faced: In accordance with the findings of Sharma,et.al (2020: 3416) and Kunuku, et.al (2013:180) the present study reveals that floriculturists face constraints related to inadequate infrastructure facility, monetary issues, unavailability of skilled labour, pest and disease problems, inadequate local market and inadequate availability of sufficient water for irrigation.

Kalita, (2019) identifies in his study of problems of growth of floriculture business in Assam that among others such problems faced by the flower growers are in line with the present study's constraints of the floriculturists which are problem of irrigation, skilled labour problem, non-response of the government towards the flower farmers, shortage of land and fluctuating price for saplings.

The findings of Chittibomma, et.al., (2023:1344) study is in consonance with the constraints faced in the present study by floriculturists such as inadequate infrastructure, and quality control and standardization in respect of Anthurium cut flowers, problem in accessing wider markets due to limited market linkages, shortage of skilled laborers and unpredictable weather patterns disrupting cultivation cycle of annual cut flowers.

The findings of Bhaskar, et.al., (2020:51) is in line with the constraints faced in the present study in areas such as inadequate availability of labour, attack of pests and diseases, inadequate market facility, lack of marketing facilities for export and lack of appropriate marketing channel.

Nigade, et.al., (2023:271) in their study on 'Constraints faced by the floriculture growers and suggestions given to overcome it' identifies the constraints faced by

floriculturists which is in tune with the findings of the present study, in areas such as financial constraint for initial investment, labour constraint in terms of skilled labour, technical constraint in areas like pest and diseases and lack of training, marketing constraints like marketing facilities, storage facilities and transportation facilities for cut flowers.

8.4 Sociological Implications

As pointed out under the research gap in our chapter on review of literature, most of the studies were from the discipline of economics and commerce and most of the explanations were with quantitative sophistications. This study attempted to fill the gap in lack of adequate sociological research works on the implications of tedious *Anthurium* cultivation by farmers in Mizoram. Accordingly, care was taken to add new knowledge and contribute insights on floricultural activity as livelihood options, the factors influencing people to pursue it and as entrepreneurial activities in Mizoram to add input to sociological literature on the subject. Moreover, the sociological works of Charles Homans (1958), Alvin Gouldner (1960) and Marcel Mauss (1966) have been contextualized as relevant.

The entrepreneurial activity associated with the aesthetic values attached to flowers and the importance flowers, assume great significance in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society, as elaborated in this study.

Flowers have always occupied a significant place in the socio-cultural life of the Mizos as evident from the different genres of writings portraying flowers as symbols of beauty, love and sentiments, indigenous flowers featured in folktales and folklores of the Mizo people too. Different intricate floral motifs adorn traditional as well as modern Mizo textiles. Traditional floral motifs for instance, *naia sawm par* (ten paise coin flower) and *arsi par* (star flower), which are reflections of the Mizo culture and identity are being fused with contemporary fashion and designs. Such traditional elements and floral motifs still adorn Mizo *puan* transcending into modern version of the floral motif woven with reishmi yarn and silk. Thus, here is a fusion of tradition and modernity, a harmonious integration of traditional motifs and ideas with contemporary designs and motifs on Mizo textiles.

Christianity accelerated the popularity of floriculture and flowers attained importance and became ever more indispensable in the socio-religious context, which in turn boost floriculture in the state. The increasing popularity of the use of flowers in the church, weddings, funerals, birthdays, anniversaries, festive occasions and secular events have all helped boost floriculture business and in turn creates an opportunity to floriculturists for a livelihood generating income and built a network of social relations.

There are several occasions needing use of flowers in the Mizo society. Occasions such as Christian festivals, cultural traditions as pre-wedding, marriage, anniversaries, birthdays, funeral rituals, gravestone laying day, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day and government functions. Flowers represent and symbolize love, feelings, emotions, tranquility, peace and is an extension of sentiments and love when gifted as a bouquet and as a basket. Relationship close and intimate one and social bond and connection is built with use of flowers in the society.

The church institutions too, play a significant role in supporting the presence of flowers in the church's sacred place. This can be discerned from the fact that churches in the state sanction money for the purchase of fresh flowers for arrangement every weekend for Sunday church service, thereby being the largest consumer of cut flowers on weekends. The church elders believe that the presence of flowers in the church not only creates a beautiful ambience but they exalt the creator and glorifies God the creator of all things. The decoration committee and the church flower arrangers too support the presence of flowers in the church's sacred space; they believe flowers glorify the creator and create a beautiful atmosphere for worship. The decoration committee of the church collectively work planting flowers and foliage plants to beautify the church area thereby resulting in social order and cohesion among the congregation members. Flower arrangers belonging to the different denomination churches too, consider their appointment as flower arrangers on Sundays as their personal ministry and are willing to contribute money for flowers when the sanctioned amount is not adequate.

Again, the gender component missing in the context of those floriculturists who adopt this as one of their livelihood options in the reviewed literatures has been established as none the less significant as, most of the entrepreneurs covered in the study were women (145) and there were 8 men. Women entrepreneurs are pursuing floriculture entrepreneurship as a small micro family enterprise in an effort to empower themselves, generate additional income for the family. The floriculture business venture has in turn produced economically independent women entrepreneurs who are empowered and tend to become more productive with rising experience.

Sociologically, floriculture as a livelihood option is pursued as a family enterprise and it has not only helped meet the entrepreneurs' basic household requirements and enjoy a decent standard of living, establishing network of relations with fellow floriculturists through florist associations and clients. This finding connects to the ideas of Niehof and Price (2001), De Haan and Zoomers (2003) and Carney (1998). Such social relationships are manifested in times of *chhiatni* and *thatni* (day of joy and sorrow), offering condolence gifts in the form floral bouquet and cash. It is manifested in exchange of potted flowers and potted plants which strengthens their relationship cohesively, learning the technical skill of the business and building up social capital necessary for the success of the business. The floriculture business as livelihood option has in turn helped improve position of women entrepreneurs within the household and enhance economic independence, increase purchasing power and be more confident and gain self-esteem.

The studies on entrepreneurship are seen with intellectual distance from the mainstream sociology. This study depicted that the sociology of entrepreneurship requires a nuanced Weberian approach to understand the context, process, and the very effects of entrepreneurial activity. The entrepreneurs prepared and processed themselves to meet the culture driven needs and requirements of flower loving Mizo society in addition to the business venture towards self-sufficiency, self-reliance and as a refuge against unemployment (Nguyen et.al, 2020 and Randerson et.al, 2015).

The floriculturists have created their own commune through formation of associations to meet business related adversities and eventualities. More so, florist associations in Mizoram act as catalysts fostering an environment conducive for the continuous growth of floriculture. The florist associations encourage floriculture entrepreneurship and work in tandem with the government for provision of necessary inputs and incentives to develop floriculture. The association leadership constantly encourage, motivate and train interested entrepreneurs in the skill and art of floriculture entrepreneurship through trainings and seminars and also publicity through print media. They also very frequently create a platform in the form of florist fairs and flower shows to market their own products and goods and generate significant income.

The floriculturists have tried to make their network with GOs and NGOs very strong for success in their business venture. The Horticulture Department, government of Mizoram initiated the commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers in the state under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India, now known as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). Under this scheme, with availability of funds the government regularly provide necessary inputs and incentives for the growth of floriculture at lower prices and free of cost at the request of floriculturists. Besides, the government sponsors florist fairs and flower shows organized by florist associations and annually organizes Anthurium festival to encourage the Anthurium farmers and promote tourism at the same time, and Horticulture fair to provide a market platform for floriculturists too, to exhibit and make significant sales of their propagated products and floriculture goods. The government organizes trainings frequently for floriculture entrepreneurs on plant care, plant health, germination of seeds and flower arrangement. Thus, the government also act as catalyst for the growth of floriculture. It plays a tremendous role in providing opportunities for generating income through Anthurium cultivation for livelihood to entrepreneurs, and also encourage and promote floriculture among women entrepreneurs who in turn takes the opportunity to generate income for the household.

Thus, in the flower loving Mizo society in particular and in Mizo socio-cultural context in general, the larger sociological implications of the study are depicted through recognizing the relevance of gift exchange, the moral standards of reciprocity and the symbolic extension of sentiment, being facilitated through flourishing floriculture business in Mizoram. Floriculture in Mizoram not only provides a bare option of livelihood but also a need- based culture driven entrepreneurial pursuits.

8.5 Recommendations

The present research brings to the forefront the need for recommendations on the entrepreneurial activities involved in floriculture in Mizoram. The relationship between the floriculturists and the Government though cordial and healthy on the outside, needs to be looked into. The recent trend and emergence of floriculture as livelihood option and considering the growing popularity and progress of floriculture industry in Mizoram, the following points would serve as recommendations-

1. Anthurium cultivation was initiated in 2002 in Mizoram under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India by the Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram. 24 farmers were initially selected to cultivate Anthurium, the number of farmers rose increasingly due to the diligent efforts of the Horticulture Department, where the Government is still providing and catering to the needs of Anthurium cultivators. The Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram should also focus its attention more and cater to the needs and problems of floriculturists holistically, just as it provides promptly to the needs of and address the problems of Anthurium cultivators in the state.
2. As one of the most prominent Non-Government Organizations existing in Mizoram Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) should frequently organize holistic basic training on floriculture for unemployed young women to develop entrepreneurial interest and initiate business in the field. Considering the high unemployment rate in 2023 (11.9%) and female unemployment rate in Mizoram (16.4%) (Devi,2024:1048) organizing a

holistic training or sensitization programme for unemployed women on floriculture business would motivate and inspire many housewives and homemakers in the path of self-employment and in the process generate income achieving financial independence which could upgrade their status and be more productive within the family and in the community. Young Mizo Association, the largest NGO in the state frequently take steps in organizing training sessions on cement masonry skill development for unemployed youths. The NGO which encompasses all ages should also focus its attention to organizing frequent basic training sessions on floriculture to motivate unemployed youths to start entrepreneurship endeavour in floriculture too. Since floriculture is becoming an increasingly popular industry, it would be feasible if the NGO take steps in training unemployed youths to be self-employed through floriculture entrepreneurship to achieve economic independence.

3. The market infra structure existing in Mizoram is insufficient as far as the floriculturists belonging to the different prominent florist associations namely, Mizoram Florist Association and *Pangpar Zuar* Association and Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society are concerned. Floriculturists pursuing the business as their primary and secondary source of income largely depend on the flower show cum florist fair organized three to four times annually by their respective associations to market their products significantly. Only a few floriculturists are able to secure seats in their local Saturday markets to sell their goods. As such, floriculturists prepare and wait eagerly for the next florist fair of their respective associations. The floriculturists' earnest dream and need of the hour is a regular space for showcasing their floricultural goods, a flower showroom /flower house according to their term, where they could exhibit and sell their goods throughout the whole week. The Government should take initiative in arranging to provide a market space to the floriculturists to showcase their products similar to the ample space provided to vegetable and fish vendors in the main Bazaar area and in other local Saturday markets of the city.

4. Introduction of basic courses on skill enhancement which encompasses primary courses on floriculture in higher educational institutions or sensitization programme on floriculture as livelihood option could be initiated for interested students to motivate and inspire them in the path of self-employment and entrepreneurial initiative of students.
5. The Government should take keen interest and take initiative steps in helping to boost holistic production of floriculture goods in the state by providing necessary inputs and incentives to floriculturists and arrange the export of floriculture products of Mizoram to other countries, and transport and ship the state's floriculture products to other neighbouring states and mainland India. Institutional support is the need of the hour for floriculture farmers who depend on the business for their livelihood.
6. The Government should create awareness so as to include the floriculture entrepreneurs in its entrepreneurship awareness and outreach programme. The Government should initiate and include separate start up loan at lower interest for needy floriculture entrepreneurs and for those interested in starting new floriculture business. This start- up loan would indeed support and help procure the necessary inputs and infrastructure needed for the initial start of floriculture entrepreneurship.
7. As one of the implementing departments responsible for the implementation of the *Bana Kaih* (Handholding) Scheme, the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram should take initiative in organizing an awareness programme or campaign not only for farmers but for the needy floriculturists, who could avail and benefit from the current Mizoram Government's flagship initiative on *Bana Kaih* (Handholding) Scheme to promote economic growth and self-sufficiency. The scheme aims to empower citizens by providing financial, technical and institutional support. The Handholding Scheme aims to support progress partners who may be an individual or group or organization selected to receive comprehensive assistance aimed at fostering sustainable livelihood and socio-economic advancement. The needy

floriculturists could avail the opportunity offered by the Scheme to individual entrepreneurs if they are made aware of the potential benefits they could gain through Sensitization or Awareness Programmes.

8.6 Suggestions for further research

The present study brings to the forefront the need for suggestions for further research on the topic in Mizoram. Suggestions for further research may be made on the following areas:

1. A sociological perspective and approach of the study of Anthurium cultivation in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society may be extended to other sister states of North East.
2. Further evaluative research on the Government schemes, NGO collaboration and funds utilization required to monitor and promote floriculture is suggested.
3. A need is felt to study the regional variations in Mizoram itself, the study being limited to Aizawl. A comparative sociological study between Aizawl city and Lunglei town in Mizoram on floriculture as livelihood options would explain the actual condition of floriculturists in the socio-cultural context of the northern and southern part of Mizoram.
4. Further research on how gender centric is floriculture in the domain of Mizo society could be explored.

Schedule No:

Date:

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM**

(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)

Socio-Economic profile

- A. Name:
- B. Locality:
- 1. Which florist association are you affiliated to?
 - a) Mizoram Florist Association (MFA)
 - b) Pangpar Zuar Association (PZA)
 - c) Zo Anthurium Grower's Society (ZAGS)
 - d) Any other
- 2. Gender:
 - a) Male
 - b) Female
 - c) Other
- 3. Age:
 - a) 20 – 30 years
 - b) 31 – 40 years
 - c) 41 – 50 years
 - d) 51 – 60 years
 - e) 60 years +
- 4. Marital status:
 - a) Married
 - b) Unmarried
 - c) Divorced
 - d) Single
 - e) Separated
 - f) Widow
- 5. Educational status:
 - a) Primary
 - b) Middle school
 - c) High school
 - d) Higher secondary
 - e) Graduate
 - f) Post graduate and above
- 6. Occupation:
 - a) Government service
 - b) Unemployed
 - c) Self-employed

- d) Housewife
 - e) Private organization/firm
7. If unemployed, is your spouse working/employed?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
8. If yes, what is his/her occupation?
- a) Government service
 - b) Private organization
 - c) Self – employed
9. How many members of your family earn income monthly?
- a) One
 - b) Two
 - c) Three
 - d) Four
 - e) None
10. Family income per month:
- a) Rs 10000 – 20000
 - b) Rs 20000 – 30000
 - c) Rs 30000 - 40000
 - d) Rs 40000 +
11. Religious denomination:
- a) Presbyterian
 - b) Baptist
 - c) Salvation Army
 - d) United Pentecostal church
 - e) Roman catholic
 - f) Seventh Day Adventist
 - g) IKK
 - h) Nunna Lalchhungkua
 - i) Rinna Kohhran
 - j) Kohhran Thianghlim
 - k) Others
12. Are you residing in your own house?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 12 (A). If no, how long have you been residing in rented house?
- a) 1- 5 years
 - b) 6 -10 years
 - c) 10-15 years
 - d) 15 years +
13. If residing in own house, how long have you been staying in the house?
- a) 1-5 years
 - b) 5-10 years
 - c) 10-15 years
 - d) 15 years +

C. Demographic and other particulars of household members:

Sl. No	Name	Relationship with head of the house	Gender	Age	Marital status	Edu. Qfn.	Occupation	Income
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								

14. Do you have a bank account?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
15. When did you open the bank account?
 - a) Before Marriage
 - b) After Marriage
 - c) After starting the Floriculture business
 - d) Any other. Please specify
16. What kind of an account do you have?
 - a) Private account
 - b) Joint account
17. If private account, are you able to deposit money regularly?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
18. How much are you able to save and deposit money monthly?
 - a) Below 10000
 - b) 10000 – 20000
 - c) 20000 – 30000
 - d) 30000 – 40000
 - e) 40000+
19. The money deposited in your account, is it solely from the profit that you gain from your business?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Any other, please specify
20. Any other personal savings...
 - a) Post office
 - b) LIC
 - c) Other Insurance policies
 - d) Banks
 - e) Any other. Please specify
21. Do you possess land in your name?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

21(A). If yes, when did you possess land?

- a) Before marriage
- b) After marriage
- c) Others. Please specify_____

22. Land possessed:

Area in hectare			Code
Less than 0.005		_____	01
0.005	-	0.002 _____	02
0.002	-	0.21 _____	03
0.21	-	0.41 _____	04
0.41	-	1.01 _____	05
1.01	-	2.01 _____	06
2.01	-	3.01 _____	07
3.01	-	4.01 _____	08
4.01	-	5.01 _____	09
5.01	-	6.01 _____	10
6.01	-	7.01 _____	11

Note: 1 acre = 0.4047 hectare, 1 hectare=10,000 square metre

Importance of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

Funeral

23. When somebody dies in the locality or any of your near and dear ones, what would you prefer to give as a mark of condolence?

- a) Flower bouquets/wreaths
- b) Traditional *Puan*
- c) Any other. Please specify

23 (A). If a) Why do you prefer giving bouquet/ wreath?

- a) Flowers are the right gifts to give to bid farewell to the departed
- b) They symbolize love and affection
- c) Because flowers have been given as a mark of condolence for a long time.
- d) Any other. Please give your reason

23 (B). If b) Why do you prefer giving puan?

- a) Because it is a traditional practice of the Mizos
- b) It is cheaper
- c) Puan symbolizes our affinity with the deceased family
- d) Flowers will wither but puan lasts longer and is more useful
- e) Any other. Please specify

24. Do you think replacing traditional puan with wreath and flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos?

- a) Yes
- b) No

24 (A) If Yes/No Please give your reason

25. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers is a good practice?
a) Yes b) No
 - 25 (A). If yes/ no, please give your reason
-
26. Do you think the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?
a) Yes b) No
 27. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?
a) Yes b) No
 28. Decorating graves of loved ones with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas is popular. Do you support this practice?
a) Yes b) No
 29. Do you think our society should continue this new trend of placing importance to flowers on the occasion of death/funeral?
a) Yes b) No

- C. Before a Mizo marriage, handing over of bride price/send-off ceremony is conducted. What is your opinion on the floral decorations of the venue nowadays?
30. Do you feel that such floral decorations should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo pre-wedding bride price distribution/send-off ceremony?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
31. In terms of decoration in Mizo Church wedding, do you notice any change recently?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 31(A). If yes, what kind of changes do you notice in wedding receptions nowadays?
 - a) More simple
 - b) Moderately decorated
 - c) Over decorated/ lavish decoration
 - d) Any other. Please specify
32. Are you willing to spend much on floral decorations for your children's wedding reception?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 32(A). If yes, why?
 - a) Signifies social standing
 - b) It is a trend

44. Do you think the church should continue to have separate budget for fresh flower arrangements at the altar?

45. Does the church respond well in terms of floral decoration on important festivals like Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter and occasional conferences and meets?

45(A). If no, what is your personal feeling about it?

Social events

Floriculture as Livelihood Option in Mizoram.

51. Are you supported by your family members in the business?

67. Has it helped you in establishing network of relations with other florists?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
68. Do you have higher goals or aims for the growth of your business?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

68 (A). If yes, please specify the goals you would like to achieve.
69. What aspect of floriculture do you engage yourself in?
 - a) Germinating seasonal flower seeds
 - b) Perennial cut flowers
 - c) Perennial flowers and plants propagations
 - d) Importers of flowers and plants
 - e) Resellers
 - f) Any other, please specify

Seed germinators

- F. When did you start your business on seed germination?
70. Do you think the process of seed germination is time consuming and expensive?
a) Yes b) No
71. Do you have a nursery for the seedlings?
a) Yes b) No
- 71 (A). If no, where do you prepare seeds for germination?
72. Does germinating flower seeds and marketing the seedlings generate better income than other type of floricultural business?
a) Yes b) No
73. How many times do you germinate flower seeds in a week?
a) Once
b) Twice
c) Thrice
d) Four times
e) Any other, please specify
74. How do you procure the flower seeds?
a) Import from abroad
b) Import from other states
c) Local florists
d) Any other. Please specify
75. Do you think it is a secure livelihood option for self- entrepreneurs?
a) Yes b) No
- 75 (A). If yes, would you encourage other people to pursue the business as a means of livelihood?

- a) Yes b) No
76. Do you manage the business independently?
- a) Yes b) No
- 76 (A). If yes, are you the sole decision maker in the business?
- a) Yes b) No

Annual/seasonal cut flowers

77. How do you procure the seasonal flower seeds?
 - a) Import from other countries
 - b) Import from other states
 - c) Local florists
 - d) Any other. Please specify
78. Do you cultivate the flower plants in open land?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 78 (A). If yes, are they grown under greenhouse facility?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
79. How often do you cut the flowers for sale?
 - a) Once a week
 - b) Twice a week
 - c) Thrice a week
80. Is cut flower business more gainful than other activities?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 80 (A). If yes, do you think it is beneficial as a source of income?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
81. Are you able to cut the flowers you grow the whole year?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
82. Do you plant new cut flower plants to replace the old one or are they grown only according to their particular season?
 - a) Plant new ones
 - b) Grown according to their season
83. Are you able to earn good income through the cut flowers during their season?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 83 (A). If yes, does the income generated benefit the family?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

Anthurium cultivation

84. Have you been selected as beneficiary for Anthurium cultivation by the state Horticulture Department?
- a) Yes b) No
- 84 (A). If yes, when were you selected?
85. Were you provided planting materials and necessary inputs for Anthurium cultivation free of cost by the government, Horticulture Department?
- a) Yes b) No

- 85 (A). If yes, were they sufficient for the cultivation?
a) Yes b) No
- 85 (B). If no, how did you manage?
86. Do you have other source of income other than Anthurium cultivation?
a) Yes b) No
- 86(A). If no, does the business provide a stable source of income?
a) Yes b) No
87. Are you able to cut anthurium flowers regularly?
a) Yes b) No
88. Do you participate in the annual Anthurium festival organized by the government?
a) Yes b) No
- 88 (A). If yes, do you participate in decorating the venue with your Anthurium products?
a) Yes b) No
89. In your opinion, does anthurium festival boost the cultivation of Anthurium?
a) Yes b) No
90. Do you think Anthurium festival generate good revenue for the government as well as for the entrepreneurs?
a) Only for the Government
b) Only for the entrepreneurs
c) For both

- G. When did you start your business on growing perennial flowers and plants?
91. Do you think this particular business is more profitable than other types of floriculture?
a) Yes b) No
92. How do you procure the plants and flowers you are growing?
a) Imported them from abroad
b) Imported from other states
c) Bought from other florists
d) Any other, please specify
93. Do you propagate the plants and flowers regularly?
a) Yes b) No
94. Are you able to sell them regularly?
a) Yes b) No
95. Do you include Mizo native flowers in your floriculture business?
a) Yes b) No
- 95 (A). If no, do you think native flowers have been replaced by other imported flowers?
a) Yes b) No

96. Do you think such native flowers should be made popular and continued to be propagated?

- a) Yes b) No

Importers of flowering plants and houseplants

H. When did you start importing flowers and plants?

97. Do you think importing flowers and plants is better in terms of profit than other aspects of floriculture?

- a) Yes b) No

97 (A). If yes, is it a secure means of livelihood?

- a) Yes b) No

98. Do you usually recover your expenses well?

- a) Yes b) No

98 (A). If no, what is the reason?

99. From where do you mostly import the goods?

- a) Different parts of the country
b) From other countries. Please specify

100. How often do you import floriculture goods from outside the state?

- a) Once a month
b) Twice a month
c) Thrice a month
d) Any other. Please specify

101. How is the sale of such imported floriculture goods?

- a) Very good
- b) Moderate
- c) Slow
- d) Not good

102. Do you think imported plants and flowers have replaced the native flowers of the state?

- a) Yes b) No

103. Considering the recent trend in import of flowers and houseplants, do you think that people's aesthetic sense in houseplants and flowers have shifted towards international and national ones?

- a) Yes b) No

Resellers

I. How long have you been involved in the business of reselling of floriculture products?

104. Are you able to regularly procure at wholesale rate floriculture products?

- a) Yes b) No

105. Is the reselling business worth pursuing as a means of livelihood?

- a) Yes b) No

115. Has this entrepreneurship helped you in capacity building and decision-making ability?
a) Yes b) No
116. Do you adjust yourself often to meet the trending demands of the customers/market?
a) Yes b) No
117. Does this business bring out your entrepreneurial skill over the years?
a) Yes b) No
118. Has the generation of income helped improve your position in the household?
a) Yes b) No
119. Does the floriculture business make you financially independent?
a) Yes b) No
120. Do you have the authority to decide how the income from the business should be spent?
a) Yes b) No
121. Does generating income for the household facilitate you to make important decisions for the family?
a) Yes b) No
122. Does it help you to be more productive in family matters?
a) Yes b) No
123. Has the business enabled you to develop social skills over the years?
a) Yes b) No
124. Has the entrepreneurial activity increased your self-esteem?
a) Yes b) No

The constraints faced.

125. As a floriculture entrepreneur, which part of the business gives you the most problem?
 - a) Procuring trending plants/flowering plants
 - b) Maintenance of plants/flowering plants
 - c) Successfully Propagating plants/flowering plants
 - d) Marketing of products
 - e) Price fluctuations
 - f) Limited water supply
 - g) None
 - h) Any other. Please specify.
126. Are you able to keep up with the changing trend in floriculture business?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
127. Do you compete with other floriculturists in terms of procuring new houseplants and flowering plants?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
128. Is there any unhealthy competition amongst the floriculturists with regard to customers?

- a) Yes b) No
129. While importing floricultural goods from outside, have you ever received them in damaged or stressful conditions?
- a) Yes b) No
130. Have you experienced any kind of misunderstanding or jealousy from other floriculturists?
- a) Yes b) No
131. Are you at liberty to put a price on your propagated products?
- a) Yes b) No
132. Do you feel that market infrastructure is sufficient for marketing your products?
- a) Yes b) No
133. Do you face constraints with regard to infra-structure in your business?
- a) Yes b) No
134. Do you face difficulty in procuring greenhouse or polyhouse for your plants?
- a) Yes b) No
135. Do you face problem in hiring skilled labour?
- a) Yes b) No
137. Do you often face pest and disease problems on your plants?
- a) Yes b) No
138. Have you experienced loss of plants due to such diseases?
- a) Yes b) No
139. Do you face water problem during the dry winter season?
- a) Yes b) No
140. Are you facing any constraints which is preventing you from expanding your business?
- a) Yes b) No
141. Do you face problem in maintaining network of relationship with other florist members?
- a) Yes b) No
142. Have you ever had any bad experience as member of Florist Association?
- a) Yes b) No
143. Are all floriculture entrepreneurs controlled by the association they are affiliated to?
- a) Yes b) No

Schedule No:
Date:

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM
(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)**

Date:

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM
(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)**

- e) 20000+
5. As an elder/officer of the church do you feel beautifying the church and its surroundings necessary?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
6. Does your church regularly arrange flowers at the altar on Sundays?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
7. How much does the church sanction money for Sunday flowers?
 - a) 500-1000
 - b) 1000-1500
 - c) 1500-2000
 - d) 2000 – 2500
 - e) 2500+
8. Do you think the Church should continue to sanction money for Sunday Church flower arrangement?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 8(A). If yes/no, what is the reason?
9. Does the Church respond well to the Decoration Committee's request for fund for decoration purposes on important festivals like Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter and occasional Conferences and Meets?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
10. Is the Church willing to sanction more money on such important festivals and occasions?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- L. What is your personal feeling about it?

Funeral

11. On the occasion of death in a locality, do you think replacing traditional puan with wreath and flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos?
a) Yes b) No
 12. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers is necessary?
a) Yes b) No
- 12(A). If yes/ no, please give your reason.
13. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers create division between the rich and the poor in the society?
a) Yes b) No
 14. Do you think the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?
a) Yes b) No
 15. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?

**DECORATION COMMITTEE/PANGPAR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN &
SECRETARY OF CHURCHES (PRESBYTERIAN, BAPTIST AND
SALVATION ARMY) IN AIZAWL**

Schedule No:

Date:

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM
(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)**

M. Name:

N. Age:

O. Locality:

P. Marital status:

Q. Educational qualification:

R. Occupation:

S. Denomination:

T. Position in the Decoration Committee:

U. Year of formation of Decoration Committee:

1. Does your church regularly arrange flowers at the altar on Sundays?
a) Yes b) No
2. Does your church arrange flowers on both sides of the church altar?
a) Yes b) No
3. As a member of the Decoration Committee of your Church, do you consider flower arrangement at the altar important?
a) Yes b) No
4. Do you appoint members to arrange flowers in your church?
a) Yes b) No
5. Do you appoint individually/singly or with a partner?
a) Individually
b) With partner
c) Any other, please specify
6. How much does the church sanction money for Sunday flowers?
f) 500-1000
g) 1000-1500
h) 1500-2000
i) 2000 – 2500
j) 2500+
7. Is the money sanctioned adequate to arrange flowers beautifully?
a) Yes b) No
8. If the money sanctioned is not adequate, what do you do?
a) Personal money added

- b) Partners contribute the rest
 - c) Additional money requested
 - d) Any other, please specify.
9. Are you ready to spend extra money besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers for Sunday church service?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- V. On an average how much do you think is usually spent besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers?
10. Are there members reluctant to spend extra money for the flowers?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
11. Do you think that the Church should continue to sanction money for Sunday Church flower arrangement?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
12. Does the decoration committee of your church actively work to beautify the church within and its surrounding areas?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
13. Is the church willing to spend funds regularly on flower plants and potted plants to add beauty to the church's surroundings?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
- 13(A). If yes, in average how much does the church spent on such flowering plants and other houseplants annually?
- f) 1000 – 5000
 - g) 5000 – 10000
 - h) 10000 – 15000
 - i) 15000 – 20000
 - j) 20000+
- W. What is your personal opinion on the beautification and landscaping of today's church surroundings?
14. Does the Church respond well to the Decoration Committee's request for fund for decoration purposes on important festivals like Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter and occasional Conferences and Meets?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
15. Is the Church willing to sanction more money on such important festivals and occasions?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
- X. What is your personal feeling about the money sanctioned on these festivals?

Funeral

16. When somebody dies in the locality or any of your near and dear ones, what would you prefer to give as a mark of condolence?
- e) Flower bouquets/wreaths
 - f) Traditional *Puan*
 - g) Any other. Please specify

- 16(A). If a) Why do you prefer giving bouquet/ wreath?
- d) Flowers are the right gifts to give to bid farewell to the departed
 - e) They symbolize love and affection
 - f) Because flowers have been given as a mark of condolence for a long time.
 - h) Any other. Please give your reason
- 16(B). If (b) Why do you prefer giving puan?
- f) Because it is a traditional practice of the Mizos
 - g) It is cheaper
 - h) Puan symbolizes our affinity with the deceased family
 - i) Flowers will wither but puan lasts longer and is more useful
 - j) Any other. Please specify
17. Do you think replacing traditional puan with wreath and flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 17(A). If yes/No Please give your reason
18. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers is a good practice?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 18(A). If yes/No please give your reason.
19. Do you think the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
20. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers create division between the rich and the poor in the society?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
21. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
22. Decorating graves of loved ones with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas is popular. Do you support this practice?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
23. Do you think our society should continue this new trend of placing importance to flowers on the occasion of death/funeral?
- a) Yes
 - b) No

Marriage

- Y. Before a Mizo marriage, handing over of bride price/send- off ceremony is conducted. What is your opinion on the floral decorations of the venue nowadays?
24. Do you feel that such floral decorations should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo pre-wedding bride price distribution/send- off ceremony?

- a) Yes b) No
25. In terms of decoration in Mizo Church wedding, do you notice any change recently?
- a) Yes b) No

25(A). If yes, what kind of changes do you notice in wedding receptions nowadays?

- e) Simple decoration
f) Moderate decoration
g) Over decorated/ lavish decoration
h) Any other. Please specify
26. Are you willing to spend much on floral decorations for your children's wedding reception?
- a) Yes b) No

26(A). If yes, why?

- d) Signifies social standing
- e) It is a trend
- f) It is valued by people
- g) It makes wedding venue beautiful

27. Do you think flower decorations, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are an influence of other cultures?

- a) Yes b) No

27(A). If yes, do you think this practice should continue to be incorporated in our culture?

- a) Yes b) No

28. Do you think our society should continue to place much importance to flower decorations?

- a) Yes b) No

28(A). If no, why? Please give your reason

Floral Designers/Event Decorators

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM

(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)

Socio-Economic profile

A. Name:

B. Locality:

C. Gender:

D. Age:

E. Marital status:

F. Educational status:

G. Occupation:

1. What prompted you to take up this occupation?
2. Have you undergone any training/course in floral designing?
3. When did you start your entrepreneurial activity as a floral designer/wedding planner?
4. Are you a member of any of the florist associations in Mizoram? If yes, are you an active member of the association?
5. Do these associations render help either financially or help to give social recognition to promote your business? If yes, in what way?
6. Do you collaborate with the association in your entrepreneurial activity?

7. Does floral designers function as an association in the city? If so, what is the name of the association(s)?
8. Do you have any collaborative work in your business with the government?
9. If so, in what way do you work with the government?
10. Do you work alone in your entrepreneurial work?
11. If not, do you have a team of workers to help you?
12. Do you believe that entrepreneurship on floral designing and arrangement is viable for self-employment?
13. Do you think that it is encouraging for other youths who have keen interest in this line of business to take up as their source of income?
14. Do you think that it is important on the part of the government to implement policies or introduce some kind of grants in order to help the entrepreneurs become more sufficient in their line of business and thereby encourage more abled unemployed youths to enter in to this kind of entrepreneurial activity?

Funeral

15. When somebody dies in the locality or any of your near and dear ones, what would you prefer to give as a mark of condolence?
 - a) Flower bouquets/wreaths
 - b) Traditional *Puan*
 - c) Both
 - d) Any other
16. Why do you prefer giving bouquet/ wreath?
 - g) Flowers are the right gifts to give to bid farewell to the departed
 - h) They symbolize love and affection
 - i) Because flowers have been given as a mark of condolence for a long time.

i) Any other. Please give your reason

17. Why do you prefer giving puan?

k) Because it is a traditional practice of the Mizos

l) It is cheaper

m) Puan symbolizes our affinity with the deceased family

n) Flowers will wither but puan lasts longer and is more useful

o) Any other. Please specify

18. Do you think replacing traditional puan with wreath and flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos?

19. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers is a good practice?

20. What is your view on YMA's prohibition on decorating coffins with flowers in some localities?

21. Are you often engaged in decorating coffins with flowers?

22. If so, do you arrange the flowers free of cost or do you charge money for the work?

23. Do you think the kind of floral decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?

24. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?

25. Decorating graves of loved ones with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas is popular. Do you support this practice?

26. Do you think our society should continue this new trend of placing importance to flowers on the occasion of death/funeral?

Marriage

27. Before a Mizo marriage, handing over of bride price/send-off ceremony is conducted. What is your opinion on the floral decorations of the venue nowadays?
28. Do you feel that such floral decorations should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo pre-wedding bride price distribution/send-off ceremony?
29. In terms of decoration in Mizo Church wedding, do you notice any significant changes compared to the past years recently?
30. If yes, what kind of changes do you notice in wedding reception venues nowadays?
31. Do you think floral decorations, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are an influence of other cultures?
32. How often do you get appointments to decorate wedding reception venues during the wedding season in a year?
33. In your opinion, is Mizo modern church wedding reception over decorated?
34. As a floral designer, are you usually confided by family members on the budget set for floral decorations in wedding receptions?
35. In your opinion, are people in general ready to spend on floral decorations on such occasion?
36. Are you equipped with the necessary tools and accessories needed for your entrepreneurship in wedding planning?
37. Approximately how much income does one wedding planning generate?
38. Do you think this practice of decorating wedding venues should continue to be incorporated in our culture?
39. Are you willing to spend much on floral decoration for your children's wedding?

Church

40. Do you consider flower arrangement at the altar necessary in the church?
41. Does your church sanction money to buy flowers?

42. Is the money sanctioned sufficient to beautifully arrange flowers?
43. Are you willing to spend extra money besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers for the church decoration on Sunday when your turn to arrange flowers comes?
44. Do you think the church should continue to have separate budget for fresh flower arrangements at the altar?
45. Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter are important festivals for most of the Christians in Mizoram. What is your personal view regarding the church's response in terms of decoration on these festive occasions?
46. Landscaping to beautify the surrounding area of churches is a popular activity of churches. What is your opinion on this?
47. Do you arrange flowers for the church on weekends? If so, how often?
48. On an average, how much do you earn per arrangement for Sunday church flowers?
49. Could you provide the total approximate income generated through floral designing in a year?

Empowerment

50. Is the income generated through your entrepreneurial skills help support your family?
51. Has this entrepreneurial activity help you in capacity building and decision- making ability?
52. Does it bring financial independence?
53. Does this entrepreneurial business help you to be more productive in your life?
54. Does it help you to develop social skills in communicating with others?
55. Does the business help in developing self- esteem and self -confidence?
56. Do your family members or spouse support you in your business venture?
57. Is this floral designing business thriving in your opinion in our society?
58. What is your vision for the floriculture industry in Mizoram 10 years from now?

**FLOWER ARRANGERS UNDER DECORATION/PANGPAR COMMITTEE
OF DIFFERENT CHURCHES (PRESBYTERIAN, BAPTIST AND
SALVATION ARMY) IN AIZAWL**

Schedule No:

Date:

**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM
(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)**

Z. Name:

AA. Age:

BB. Locality:

CC. Marital status:

DD. Educational qualification:

EE. Occupation:

FF. Denomination:

29. Does your church regularly arrange flowers at the altar on Sundays?

b) Yes

b) No

30. Does your church arrange flowers on both sides of the church altar?

b) Yes

b) No

31. As an appointee of arranging flowers in the church, do you consider flower arrangement at the altar necessary?

b) Yes

b) No

32. Are you appointed individually/singly or with a partner when your turn comes to arrange flowers?

d) Individually

e) With partner

f) Any other, please specify

33. How often are you appointed to arrange flowers in the church?

a) Once a year

b) Twice a year

c) Thrice a year

d) Any other.

34. Does your church sanction money for the purchase of fresh flowers for every Sunday?

a) Yes

b) No

6(A). If no, when does the church sanction money for fresh flowers?

35. If the Church sanction money, how much does the church sanction for Sunday flowers?
- k) 500-1000
 - l) 1000-1500
 - m) 1500-2000
 - n) 2000 – 2500
 - o) 2500+
 - p) None
36. If your answer is F none, what do you do when your turn to arrange flowers come?
- a) Those appointed to arrange flowers buy fresh flowers from their own pocket
 - b) We buy fresh flowers and reimburse the money spent from the church
 - c) We usually resort to arranging artificial flowers which the church already possess
 - d) Any other, please specify.....
37. If money is sanctioned is it adequate to arrange flowers beautifully?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
38. If the money sanctioned is not adequate, what do you do?
- e) Personal money added
 - f) Partners contribute the rest
 - g) Additional money requested
 - h) Any other, please specify.
39. Are you ready to spend extra money besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers for Sunday church service?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
- GG. On an average how much do you usually spent besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers?
40. Do you feel it is a burden on your part to be appointed as flower arranger for your church?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
- 12(A). If yes, please give your reason
41. Do you think that the Church should continue to sanction money for Sunday Church flower arrangement?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
42. Does the Church respond well in terms of floral decoration on important festivals like Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter and occasional Conferences and Meets?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
43. Is the Church willing to sanction more money on such important festivals and occasions?
- c) Yes
 - b) No

51. Do you think the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?

b) Yes b) No
52. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers create division between the rich and the poor in the society?

b) Yes b) No
53. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?

b) Yes b) No
54. Decorating graves of loved ones with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas is popular. Do you support this practice?

b) Yes b) No
55. Do you think our society should continue this new trend of placing importance to flowers on the occasion of death/funeral?

b) Yes b) No

Marriage

- II. Before a Mizo marriage, handing over of bride price/send- off ceremony is conducted. What is your opinion on the floral decorations of the venue nowadays?
56. Do you feel that such floral decorations should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo pre-wedding bride price distribution/send- off ceremony?
b) Yes b) No
57. In terms of decoration in Mizo Church wedding, do you notice any change recently?
b) Yes b) No
- 29(A). If yes, what kind of changes do you notice in wedding receptions nowadays?
i) Simple decorations
j) Moderately decorated
k) Over decorated/ lavish decoration
l) Any other. Please specify
58. Are you willing to spend money on floral decorations for your children's wedding reception?
b) Yes b) No
- 30(A). If yes, why?
h) Signifies social standing
i) It is a trend
j) It is valued by people
k) Makes wedding reception special and memorable
59. Do you think flower decorations, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are an influence of other cultures?
b) Yes b) No

31(A). Do you think this practice should continue to be incorporated in our culture?

b) Yes

b) No

31(B). If no, please give your reason why this practice should not be incorporated in our culture.

Social events

60. Have you ever gifted potted plants or flowers to your friends?

a) Yes

b) No

61. Have you ever received similar gifts from them?

a) Yes

b) No

62. On what occasion do you receive flower bouquets or potted plants as gifts?

f) Mother's Day

g) Birthday

h) Achievements

i) Anniversary

j) None

63. Do you support gifting fresh flowers or plants to friends on their achievements to felicitate them?

a) Yes

b) No

64. Do you think gifting of flower garlands and bouquets to chief guests, guest of honour and dignitaries on social functions appropriate?

b) Yes

b) No

65. Flower decorations in social events and political gatherings are becoming popular. Do you believe they are extra expenditures?

b) Yes

b) No

66. Do you think government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions are big consumers of plants and cut flowers?

b) Yes

b) No

38(A). If yes, do you think they boost floriculture business?

b) Yes

b) No

JJ. What is your vision for the floriculture industry in Mizoram 10 years from now?

Government Officials, Department of Horticulture, Government of Mizoram

Schedule No:

Date:

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM (Purely for academic purpose: confidential)

KK. Name: _____

LL.Age:_____

MM. Locality:_____

NN. Marital status:_____

00. Designation:_____

PP.Educational qualification:_____

1. Does the horticulture department take interest in the development of floriculture in the state?

- a) Yes b) No

1(A). If yes, when did the department develop such interest?

QQ. How does the department /government take initiatives for the development of floriculture in the state?

RR. What are the government's schemes to develop floriculture in the state?

SS. How does the government implement such schemes to develop the floriculture industry?

TT. Since when did the government take interest to promote Anthurium cultivation in the state?

UU. What prompted the government to initiate Anthurium cultivation in the state?

2. Does the government select beneficiaries for Anthurium cultivation?

- a) Yes b) No

VV. What are the criteria used to select the beneficiaries?

3. Does the government provide the initial necessary inputs for Anthurium cultivation to the beneficiaries free of cost?

- a) Yes b) No

4. Are those inputs provided again free of cost to the beneficiaries when the need arises again?

- a) Yes b) No

4(A). If no, do they have to procure the inputs from the market?

- a) Yes b) No

5. Apart from Anthurium cultivation, does the government provide subsidy to other flower plant cultivation?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

5(A). If yes, to what type of flower cultivation does the government provide subsidy?

5(B). If no, why?
6. Does the government have any future plans in initiating cultivation of other foreign variety of flowers in the state?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

6(A). If yes, what variety of flowers does it plan to initiate cultivation?
7. Does the government receive requests for aid in terms of greenhouse/polyhouse material and other inputs like flower seeds, insecticides, pesticides etc from the floriculturists?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

7(A). If yes, does the government entertain all such requests for aid?

 - a) Yes
 - b) No

WW. How does the government respond to such requests?
8. Does florist associations (MFA, PPZA, ZAGCS) request aid for the interest of their members from the government?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

XX. How does the government react to their demand?
9. If not fulfilled, how does the associations counter/react towards the government?
 - a) Pressurize the government
 - b) Remain dormant
 - c) Any other
10. Does any kind of conflict arise when such demand is not being fulfilled?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

10 (A). If conflict arise, how do you come to consensus?
11. Does the government give priority to the requests of the leaders of florist associations like MFA, PPZA or ZAGCS?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

11(A) Which of the association leaders does the government give most importance?

 - a) MFA
 - b) PPZA
 - c) ZAGCS

12. Does the department of horticulture often collaborate with the florist associations (MFA, PPZA, ZAGCS) of the state for the development of floriculture?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- YY. If collaborative work exists, how does the government and florist associations take steps together?
13. Which of the associations does the government usually approach on important government functions and events?
 - a) Mizoram Florist Association
 - b) Pangpar Zuar Association
 - c) Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society
 - d) Others, please specify
14. Was the Horticulture Department involved in organizing the G20 Summit Chapchar Kut Flower show held in March 2023?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 14.(A) If yes, which of the association did the government collaborate with?
 - a) Mizoram Florist Association
 - b) Pangpar Zuar Association
 - c) Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society
 - d) Any other, please specify
15. Did the Horticulture Department fully sponsor the G20 Summit Chapchar Kut Flower Show?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Yes partly
 - c) No
- 15(A) If the Horticulture Department partly sponsored the Flower Show, with whom did it collaborate?
16. Was the G20 Flower Show successful in your opinion?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
17. Does the government sponsor the MFA and PPZA florist fairs?
 - a) Yes, always
 - b) Sometimes depending on availability of funds
 - c) Occasionally
 - d) No, never
 - e) Only MFA florist fairs are sponsored
 - f) Only PPZA flower show cum fairs are sponsored.
18. Do the association leaders request the government to sponsor their flower show cum fairs often?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
19. Does the government provide incentives to the floriculturists to boost their production?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 19(A). If yes, what are the incentives provided?

20. Does the government identify needy floriculturists to be beneficiaries of available incentives?

a) Yes

b) No

20 (A) If no, how are available incentives distributed?

21. Is the government ready to promote and develop floriculture industry in the state?

a) Yes

b) No

ZZ. What is the vision of the government regarding floriculture industry 10 years from now?

LEADERS OF MIZO HMEICHHE INSUIHKHAWM PAWL (MHIP)

Schedule No:

Date:

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM

(Purely for academic purpose: confidential)

- AAA. Name:
 BBB. Age:
 CCC. Locality:
 DDD. Marital status:
 EEE. Designation in the Association:
 FFF. Educational qualification:
 GGG. Occupation:

1. Are you a member of any of the Florist Associations?

a) Yes b) No
2. As a member of MHIP, do you think floriculture has gained importance in the Mizo society?

a) Yes b) No
3. Do you support the increasing importance given to flowers and plants in the Mizo culture?

a) Yes b) No
4. Does MHIP work together with any of the Florist Associations for the promotion of entrepreneurs engaged in floriculture?

a) Yes b) No

4(A). If yes, what are the steps taken?

Funeral

5. When somebody dies in the locality or any of your near and dear ones, what would you prefer to give as a mark of condolence?
 - n) Flower bouquets/wreaths
 - o) Traditional *Puan*
 - p) Any other. Please specify
6. Why would you prefer giving flower bouquet/ wreath?
 - m) Flowers are the right gifts to give to bid farewell to the departed
 - n) They symbolize love and affection
 - o) Because flowers have been given as a mark of condolence for a long time.
 - q) Any other. Please give your reason
7. Why would you prefer giving puan?
 - u) Because it is a traditional practice of the Mizos
 - v) It is cheaper
 - w) Puan symbolizes our affinity with the deceased family

- x) Flowers will wither but puan lasts longer and is more useful
 - y) Any other. Please specify
8. Do you think replacing traditional puan with wreath and flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos?
 - b) Yes
 - b) No
- 8(A). Please give your reason
9. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers is necessary?
 - b) Yes
 - b) No
- 9 (A). If yes/ no, please give your reason
10. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers create division between the rich and the poor in the society?
 - b) Yes
 - b) No
11. Do you think the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?
 - b) Yes
 - b) No
12. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?
 - b) Yes
 - b) No
13. Does MHIP contribute for the decoration of coffin on occasion of death in a locality?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 13(A). If yes, in what way does it contribute?
 - a) Financially sponsoring fresh flowers
 - b) Arrange the flowers on the coffin
 - c) Let them borrow readymade arranged artificial flowers
 - d) Any other, please specify
14. If yes, does the Association contribute to all category of people?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
15. Decorating graves of loved ones with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas is popular. Do you support this practice?
 - c) Yes
 - b) No
16. Do you think our society should continue this new trend of placing importance to flowers on the occasion of death/funeral?
 - b) Yes
 - b) No

HHH. Before a Mizo marriage, handing over of bride price/send -off ceremony is conducted. What is your opinion on the floral decorations of the venue nowadays?

28. Does your church sanction money to buy flowers?

b) Yes

b) No

JJJ. How much does your church sanction for Sunday flowers?

29. Is the money sanctioned sufficient to beautifully arrange flowers?

b) Yes

b) No

29(A). If no, what do you do then?

d) Personal money added

e) Partners contribute

f) Ask for additional money

30. Are you willing to spend extra money besides the sanctioned amount to buy flowers for the church decoration on Sunday when your turn to arrange flowers comes?

b) Yes

b) No

30(A). If yes, how much do you usually spend besides the sanctioned amount?

31. Do you think the church should continue to have separate budget for fresh flower arrangements at the altar?

b) Yes

b) No

32. Christmas, New Year, Good Friday and Easter are important festivals for most of the Christians in Mizoram. Do you support the church's response in terms of decoration on these festive occasions?

b) Yes

b) No

32(A). If no, what is your personal feeling about it?

KKK. Landscaping to beautify the surrounding area of churches is a popular activity of churches. What is your opinion on this?

Social events

33. Do you think gifting of flower garlands and bouquets to chief guests, guest of honour and dignitaries on social functions appropriate?

c) Yes

b) No

34. Flower decorations in social events and political gatherings are becoming popular. Do you believe they are extra expenditures?

c) Yes

b) No

35. Do you think government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions are big consumers of plants and cut flowers?

c) Yes

b) No

35(A). If yes, do you think they boost floriculture business?

c) Yes

b) No

36. Are you a regular buyer of houseplants and flowers for home decoration?

a) Yes

b) No

LLL. What is your vision for the floriculture industry in Mizoram 10 years from now?

Office Bearers of the florist Associations

Schedule No:

Date:

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM (Purely for academic purpose: confidential)

MMM. Name: _____

NNN. Age:_____

000. Locality: _____

PPP. Marital status:

QQQ. Educational qualification:_____

RRR. Occupation: _____

SSS. Name of

Association: _____

TTT. Designation in the Association:_____

UUU. Year of formation of Association:_____

1. Is your association registered?

a) Yes b) No

1(A). If yes, under which Act is the Association registered?

VVV. How many members does the Association have?

2. Are those members actual floriculturists engaged in the activity for their livelihood?

a) Yes b) No

WWW. How does the Association conduct membership drive?

3. Do members pay membership fee as they enroll?

a) Yes b) No

4. As a member of the Association, do you think floriculture industry has gained importance over the years?

a) Yes b) No

5. Do you support the increasing importance given to flowers and plants in the Mizo culture?

a) Yes b) No

6. Does the Association organize flower show/florist fair to showcase /increase market for the products of the florists?

a) Yes b) No

6(A). If yes, how often does the Association organize such florist fairs?

a) Once a year

b) Twice a year

c) Thrice a year

d) Any other. Please specify

7. Do you participate in such florist fairs?

- s) Traditional *Puan*
 - t) Any other. Please specify
- 18(A). If (a). Why would you prefer giving flower bouquet/ wreath?
- p) Flowers are the right gifts to give to bid farewell to the departed
 - q) They symbolize love and affection
 - r) Because flowers have been given as a mark of condolence for a long time.
 - u) Any other. Please give your reason
- 18(B). If (b). Why would you prefer giving puan?
- z) Because it is a traditional practice of the Mizos
 - aa) It is cheaper
 - bb) Puan symbolizes our affinity with the deceased family
 - cc) Flowers will wither but puan lasts longer and is more useful
 - dd) Any other. Please specify
18. Do you think replacing traditional puan with wreath and flower bouquets will endanger the age long traditional practices of the Mizos?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
- 19(A). If Yes/No Please give your reason
19. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers is necessary?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
- 20(A). If yes/ no, please give your reason
20. Do you think decorating coffin with fresh flowers create division between the rich and the poor in the society?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
21. Do you think the kind of decorations on coffins and the amount of flower bouquets received show the social status of the deceased and the bereaved family?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
22. Do you believe decorating coffins and giving flower bouquets have been accepted as part of Mizo culture?
- c) Yes
 - b) No
23. Does the MFA/PZA/ ZAGS contribute for the decoration of coffin on occasion of death in a locality?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
24. If yes, does the Association contribute to all category of people?
- b) Yes
 - b) No
25. Decorating graves of loved ones with flowers on festive occasion like Christmas is popular. Do you support this practice?
- d) Yes
 - b) No
26. Do you think our society should continue this new trend of placing importance to flowers on the occasion of death/funeral?
- c) Yes
 - b) No

Marriage

AAAA. Before a Mizo marriage, handing over of bride price/send-off ceremony is conducted. What is your opinion on the floral decorations of the venue nowadays?

27. Do you feel that such floral decorations should continue to be incorporated in the Mizo pre-wedding bride price distribution/send-off ceremony?

c) Yes b) No

28. In terms of decoration in Mizo Church wedding, do you notice any change recently?

c) Yes b) No

- 29(A). If yes, what kind of changes do you notice?

q) More simple

r) Moderate decoration

s) Over decorated/ lavish decoration

t) Any other. Please specify

BBBB. In Mizo Church weddings, flowers have become an integral part of the decorations. What is your opinion on this?

29. Are you willing to spend much on floral decorations for your children's wedding reception?

d) Yes b) No

- 30(A). If yes, why?

o) Signifies social standing

p) It is a trend

q) It is valued by people

30. Do you think flower decorations, bridal bouquets and decoration of bridal cars are an influence of other cultures?

c) Yes b) No

- 31(A). If yes, do you think this practice should continue to be incorporated in our culture?

d) Yes b) No

Gift giving

31. Have you ever gifted potted plants or flowers to your friends?

c) Yes b) No

32. Have you ever received similar gifts from them?

c) Yes b) No

33. On what occasion do you receive flower bouquets or potted plants as gifts?

p) Mother's Day

q) Birthday

r) Achievements

s) Anniversary

t) None

34. Do you support gifting fresh flowers or plants to friends on their achievements to felicitate them?

45. Do you think government offices, hotels, restaurants and institutions are big consumers of plants and cut flowers?

d) Yes

b) No

46(A). If yes, do you think they boost floriculture business?

d) Yes

b) No

Research Diary

1.11.21

I am very happy and excited to have been admitted and accepted in the PhD program in the Department of Sociology MZU.

Course work class started on 1st of November 2021 in online mode via Google meet where the HoD Professor Mohanty conducted orientation on research and the importance of the maintenance of a research diary. The first lecture was on research methodology and theoretical dimensions.

2.11.21

Class was taken by Prof Mohanty summarizing the previous lecture. The second class was taken by Dr N William Singh on the core concepts of Karl Mannheim and Pitirim Sorokin.

3.11.21

Prof. Mohanty further explained the next layer of the research onion delving into theoretical perspectives and methodology. He also explained the three choices of research design – mono method, multi method and mixed method. The next class was taken by Dr Zara on the topic of Marxism and the Marxian perspective of social reality.

4.11.21

Prof Mohanty talked on methodology of social sciences. He elaborated on the three components ontology, epistemology and axiology.

5.11.21

Prof Mohanty continued his discussion on ontology and Dr B Zara gave a lecture on the Frankfurt School of Thought. He also discussed Marxism and Horkheimer's critical theory.

6.11.21

Dr William Singh took class and discussed three systems of thought, namely the 1915 period of thought, 1959 period and post-colonial writers 1990s onwards.

8.11.21

Prof Mohanty continued his class on critical realism, giving real life examples like dowry in mainland India and bride giving in North East India.

9.11.21

Prof Mohanty gave a lecture on Methodology of Social Sciences vis-à-vis Natural Science with discussion on epistemology. Dr William Singh took a class on Parsons and Merton's structural functional theory.

10.11.21

Prof Mohanty took class and introduced terms like objectivist, subjectivist and constructivist. Dr B Zara took the second class on individual thinkers of the Frankfurt School.

11.11.21

Prof Mohanty continued class on objectivism and subjectivism. Dr William discussed Max Weber's Economy and Society.

12.11.21

Prof Mohanty gave a lecture on constructivism and axiology. Dr B Zara had a discussion on structuralism and post-structuralism and Levi Strauss' structural anthropology.

15.11.21

Dr B Zara opened with discussion on Foucault and Anthony Giddens' views on structuralist and post-structuralist theories.

16.11.21

Prof Mohanty took class on how to write a research proposal highlighting 13 essential headings to be included.

17.11.21

Prof Mohanty took a class with a debate on objectivity, subjectivity and inter-subjectivity and highlighted Max Weber's notion of understanding. Dr B Zara discussed theory of structuration.

18.11.21

Prof Mohanty discussed questions on understanding through the view of objectivism and subjectivism via a debate. Dr William Singh took class on symbolic interactionism, macro and micro-sociology.

19.11.21

Prof Mohanty continued the discussion on subjectivity with Diana's view and also Max Weber's distinction between types of knowledge.

20.11.21

Prof Mohanty discussed different thinkers' views on subjectivity and objectivity.

22.11.21

The lecture was a continuation of the previous lecture on the debate between subjectivity and objectivity in social science. Dr B Zara gave lecture on Max Weber's ideal type social action with examples..

23.11.21

Prof Mohanty discussed Ethnomethodology by Garfinkel and phenomenology by Edmund Husserl. Dr William discussed phenomenological perspectives of Husserl and Schultz.

24.11.21

Dr William discussed ethnomethodology of Harold Garfinkel, and also Baudrillard's simulacra and simulation.

29.11.21

Prof Mohanty took class on how to review literature efficiently and how helpful it is. Dr B Zara gave lecture on modernity and gave an assignment.

30.11.21

Prof Mohanty continued his class on literature review and also on APA style citations.

1.12.21

Dr B Zara introduced concept of urban network society by Manuel Castell. Prof Mohanty continued his class on literature review. I also visited the first ever florist fair after Covid-19 at City Park organized by Florist's Association of Mizoram. Read Gramsci's theory on civil society and hegemony and wrote my assignment.

2.12.21

Prof Mohanty gave lecture on ethics in social research and publication ethics. Dr B Zara discussed Baudrillard's concept of simulacra and simulation. Continued with assignment writing.

3.12.21

Prof Mohanty said that we would need two articles published and two seminar/webinar certificates produced before submission of the thesis.

4.12.21

Prof Mohanty took class on the nature and nuances of thesis writing. Wrapped up writing of the assignment given by Dr B Zara.

10.12.21

Prof Zokaitluangi took class on the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences).

12.12.21

My research topic was modified to Social Life and Livelihood Options through Floriculture in Mizoram. He showed me how to review and download relevant materials. I proceeded with browsing the relevant literature on the internet, downloaded as many as possible. December was spent browsing, downloading and reviewing relevant materials.

February 2022

By the end of February, I started to work on my proposal collecting and sorting articles on floriculture studies. Then I started the literature review on sustainable livelihood approaches. My proposal title was modified to 'Social Life and Livelihood Options Through Floriculture in Mizoram'. Doing literature review on social life in this context perplexed me for a while, and I was not able to clarify these concepts with Prof Mohanty as he was out of station.

March 2022

I met with Prof Mohanty on 3rd March and informed him of my confusion regarding the proposal title. Sir then skillfully replaced the term social life with 'Entrepreneurial activity' and my research proposal title now became 'Entrepreneurial Activity and Livelihood Options Through Floriculture: A Study of Mizoram'. I was now able to focus on the theoretical and literature reviews. Reviewing various literature on sustainable livelihood and

social exchange theories. 'The Gift' by Marcel Mauss was reviewed and theories on the norm of reciprocity and sociology of entrepreneurship. I turned to thematic reviews and divided my reviews into four broad themes initially and added five more.

Went to MZU to meet with Sir to discuss my research proposal and showed him my progress so far, to which he advised me to shorten my reviews and he helped me with the research gap and rationale of the study and properly arranged the format of the proposal. Methodological reviews were also added to my literature review.

Synopsis presentation was conducted on 25th March and my synopsis was cleared for BOS with minor modifications only.

April 2022

In this month, Sir helped me format my proposal as well as the references. My proposal was cleaned and finalized to be submitted in the BOS which was to be held on 5th April. Sir defended all our proposals in the BOS and they were cleared. Sir sent a notice that our synopses were to undergo a plagiarism check.

May 2022

After the plagiarism check my proposal had a 24% similarity to which Sir instructed me to reduce it to 20% to be acceptable and submit the proposal by 12th May. Then I paraphrased my literature reviews once again which was a new experience for me and after that the proposal was sent to Sir via email who did the plagiarism check for me again, and the similarity came down to 12%. School board meeting was held and Sir defended all our proposals skillfully again.

July 2022

Progress Report presentation notice was issued from the office where the scholars should submit their progress report in writing and present their progress made during the semester. I reviewed more literature for my theoretical and thematic reviews.

I was advised by Sir to consolidate my references into used ones, read ones, and unused ones for future use. My research diary was updated and my progress report schedule was preponed due to NAAC Peer Team visit to our college.

Sir advised me to highlight key words in my thematic reviews and arrange them systematically in a new file. Such key points should be kept under each relevant objective which will be important for my interview schedule.

August 2022

Consolidated used references and arranged them in alphabetical order. Reviewed five more articles and downloaded more articles on livelihood studies. Highlighted important key words on my thematic reviews for framing interview schedule later on.

Summarised the theoretical reviews and overview of the theories was done. Thematic and methodological reviews were also summarized.

Arranged the relevant terms and concepts extracted under each objective of my thesis. I managed to write 25 or more terms and concepts relevant under each objective.

Social capital was identified as quite relevant for the topic as my supervisor suggested and a number of articles were downloaded and reviewed. Met Sir and he checked my work and instructed me to write on the approaches and theories which will be viable for my study. Worked on the theoretical framework for my study based on the livelihood approaches and studies reviewed. Sir advised me to write overview of the theoretical, thematic and methodological reviews which I have done.

September 2022

Continued working on the theoretical framework of my study based on the livelihood approaches reviewed. Showed my work to my supervisor who suggested some corrections. Prof Mohanty took class on 13th Sept on how to go about in framing interview schedule based on the key points we highlighted in the thematic review.

I worked on the overview of the theoretical, thematic and methodological reviews I had done. By the end of the month, I worked on framing the questions for the first objective of my study, and continued working on it.

October 2022

Continued with the framing of questions for interview schedule and mailed my work to Sir.

Sir checked my interview schedule and told me to write schedule no and date, and made suggestions. Editing was done and corrections made.

November 2022

Construction of questions was done. Went to meet sir and he went through my work. He advised me to carefully go through my questions, omit repeated ones and to serialise the questions. I was advised to go for Pilot Study. I started contacting floriculturists known to me and starting collecting contact number of the president of *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA).

Contacted the president of PPZA and met him at his residence and informed him of my purpose for meeting him. I requested the list members enlisted under PPZA. I was given the list of names and their contact numbers.

Printed out 15 copies of my interview schedule for pilot study and was ready for it. I contacted one of the leaders of Mizoram Florists Association informing her of my purpose. She advised me to meet the secretary of the association, who then helped me out with the list of members of actual floriculturists.

Pilot study was then started with members of the PPZA. Informed consent was taken from floriculturists and interviewed two of them, members of MFA at Mission vengthlang and one of them depend on the activity as their main means of income and the other as secondary source of income. Another at Chawlhmun, member of MFA was interviewed. Two other floriculturists were interviewed within the month.

December 2022

More floriculturists were approached and 13 of them were interacted upon for pilot study. Progress report and research experience presentation was due and preparation for the purpose was done. On the 13th Dec progress report presentation was conducted at the department.

February 2023

In this month, I revised the questions in my schedule, omitted irrelevant ones, added some more to add clarity, revised the answer options too. As advised by my supervisor, interview schedule for key informants was prepared for NGO MHIP, preparation of questions for flower arrangers of churches, and decoration committee members was also started. Similarly, interview schedule for church leaders and government officials including leaders of florist associations as key informants was also started. The interview schedules prepared needed

editing and serialized according to the standard and re-checking of all the questions was done.

March 2023

Field work started in March and I managed to interview more than 25 floriculturists belonging to Mizoram Florist Association and *Pangpar Zuar* Association obtaining consent from them in advance through phone call.

April 2023

Interviewed more than 40 floriculturists belonging to MFA and PPZA in April . Visited the florist fair organized by MFA from 10th-14th April. Interviewed the floriculturists at the florist fair who were willing to be interviewed. Since flower arrangers of churches are included in my universe and sample, I started interviewing them at the same time. Key informant interview was also conducted.

May 2023

Field work continued. Prior consent from floriculturists obtained. More than 40 floriculturists were interviewed belonging to MFA, PPZA and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS). I went to the Horticulture Department to interact with the director and officials. The director was out of station and I interacted with the Joint Director and Deputy Director of Floriculture section of the department. Progress report presentation was done on 24th May.

June 2023

Field work continued. With prior consent I managed to interview more than 45 floriculturists within the month belonging to the three associations.

July 2023

With the turn of July, I was able to wrap up field work on the floriculturists. Field work had to be done on the 60 church elders, 60 decoration committee leaders and 60 flower arrangers, key informants consisting of NGO MHIP members and leaders of florist associations are yet to be done. Field work on the mentioned universe started with the church elders, decoration committee leaders and flower arrangers of churches. Went out for field work and was able to interview more than 15 of the said universe obtaining prior consent from them.

September 2023

Obtaining prior consent most of the field work on the church elders, decoration committee leaders and flower arrangers of churches of different churches and different localities were done covering more than 80 of the respondents.

October 2023

Field work on all the different types of respondents was done including interview of KII that is, MHIP and florist association leaders. Field work was wrapped up in the month of October. Informed Prof Mohanty who suggested that I do case study on Zopar Export Private Limited. I went to talk to the manager who provided me with the contact details of the owner. The owner of the farm was contacted through Whatsapp message stating my purpose and requested permission to visit his farm which he readily granted.

November 2023

Having obtained permission from the owner of Zopar farm, I set off to visit the farm on 16th November. Met the supervisor as the owner was not in the station. Explored the greenhouses and met a few of the workers interacted with them. On the 27th November, the owner being available I set out again to interview him obtaining prior consent. During the interview permission was requested to record the interview and it was granted. The interview took nearly two hours.

December 2023

Progress report presentation was conducted at the department on 7th December.

January 2024

I made questions meant for the floral designers and artists in Aizawl city. Preparation of the interview schedule took three days and the questions were checked by my supervisor who added a few relevant questions and omitted the irrelevant ones.

Since this line of entrepreneurship is pursued by both men and women, using convenience sampling 5 males and 5 female floral artists were selected as sample.

February 2024

Began field work on floral artists from 5th February. My first respondent was Mr. Hruaia whom I met and interviewed at his flower shop. A popular florist and relies on flower

arrangement and event decoration as his main source of income. Mrs Muanpuii a government employee was the next respondent, she was interviewed at her residence, and she shared her experiences as floral artists and indulges in the art as supplementary income.

Mr. Mafaka Bawitlung was my next respondent whom I approached at his flower shop, a floral artist popular for his work, had a fruitful interaction with him.

In the same month, did a telephonic interview with floral artist Mrs Lianchhungi, currently one of the most sought after in the city. She is indulging in the work full time and is her main source of livelihood.

My next respondent Mr. Mawitea was met on 14th Feb, a male floral artist whom I contacted and he volunteered to approach me at my residence instead for the interview. He shared his experiences and he relies on the activity as his main source of livelihood.

On Valentine's Day I stepped out and visited some of the florist shops selling flowers and every florist shops were crowded with men mostly rushing to buy flowers for their loved ones.

The next respondent was Mrs. Muanpuii, a computer operator in the government who indulges in floral designing as a secondary source of livelihood. She volunteered to approach me at my residence for the interview, we had a good interaction.

Next, I interviewed Mrs. Mapuii a housewife cum floral designer, who however, did not rely on the activity as her main source of income.

The next respondent was Ms Sangtei a floral designer engaged in the activity as the main source of income, a PhD student doing research at the same time.

March 2024

With the turn of March, I interviewed the owner of Nunthar florals at at her flower shop. She is an interior designer but turned entrepreneur in floristry.

In the same evening, Mr. Freddy Varte the famous male floral artist who volunteered to approach me came to my residence to be interviewed. He has tight schedules every week and relies on the work for his livelihood.

I started writing the chapter on Methodology which is chapter II. It took 2 to 3 weeks to write the chapter. Sir checked the write-up. Corrections were done. After the third week I

managed to complete writing the chapter. I went to MZU and showed my work to Prof. Mohanty, who approved of the work.

April 2024

Visited PPZA florist fair at city park. Spoke and interacted with a few the floriculturists who said that they made significant sales.

Did a case study on Laltei Nursery at Ramthar Veng. We had an interaction session at her roof top greenhouse repotting her floriculture seedlings. Her eldest son too is an entrepreneur, who help his mother in the floriculture business. Mrs. Laltei narrated her story of how she started her floriculture business. She earns Rs 15-16 lakhs of through her germination of flower seeds.

May 2024

After several attempts I was finally able to interact with the last male floral artist. Staying in a rented house, he used to work for Ferns and Petals and is now working independently.

I started writing on the introduction of chapter V, which is on the importance of flowers in the socio-cultural context of Mizoram. It was a great experience for me and it was also a challenging one. It took a couple of weeks to compile the introduction of the chapter.

Next, I started analysing the socio-economic profile of the respondents. It was another great experience for me. I showed my work to my supervisor, who made suggestions and corrections to be made.

I prepared and wrote one article to be published. Article writing took a lot of time too after that. I showed the article to my supervisor who offered suggestions and corrections. I incorporated them and submit it to a peer reviewed journal for publication.

July 2024

As advised by Sir, I started writing the introduction for Chapter one which I planned to complete within two weeks. At the same time, I prepared another article on Exploring the 'rich tapestry and cultural significance of flowers in the socio-cultural context of Mizoram'. My time was spent on writing the first chapter and the article to be published. The article was checked by my supervisor who advised me to make some minor changes and add relevant points.

As per Sir's advice and suggestions I need to make corrections and write on the overview of literature review for Chapter II.

30th July - Did Progress Report presentation at MZU.

August & September 2024

As per Sir's instruction and advice, in the month of August I made corrections in the overview of literature review for Chapter II. After completion of the writing, I approached Sir and he checked my write-up on overview of literature review and approved it with minor corrections.

I was advised to complete writing Chapter one for my thesis. He advised me to write the chapter systematically and the chapter should be based on the objectives of the study prepared in the synopsis. Showed my write-up to Sir several times who suggested many corrections and the errors I made were corrected. After several corrections and rewritings, my write-up on chapter one was approved by Sir.

October 2024

With the completion of chapter one, Sir advised me to tackle chapter IV which is the Socio - economic profile of the respondents. Details of the heading under the Socio - economic profile are described clearly and the tables analysed and lastly, an overview of the findings. The writing on the chapter took some weeks and corrections and additions had to be made. The whole month was utilized for finalizing chapter III.

November 2024

In the month of November, I started writing Chapter IV of my thesis. First of all, I started working on the introductory part of the chapter. I collected and borrowed relevant books for the chapter from the college library. The chapter is on Floriculture in Mizo socio-cultural context. The whole chapter will deal with the introduction, flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context, gift giving and extension of sentiments, funerary rituals, marriage ceremony, church occasions, social events and lastly the summary or overview of all the sub-headings of the chapter. Sir advised me to look into the Biblical use of flowers and the significance flowers have in the Bible. I worked on the pre-colonial and after independence writers and poets' writings on indigenous flowers in Mizo poetry.

January & February 2025

In the month of January, I started analysing flowers in the Mizo socio- cultural context. I analysed the Mizo folklore and folktales which features flowers. With the advent of Christianity, Christian values and way of life provided a changed outlook.

With advancement in urbanization and standard of living, demand for cut flowers has increased. Analysis of occasions needing use of flowers was done. Next, I analysed gift giving - the occasions in which floral gifts are received. Next, I started writing on the funerary rituals, how flowers are utilized at funerals in the Mizo society.

Met Sir and he made suggestions and gave advice on how to interpret the tables and that the analysis should be sociological. Corrections were made and continued work on this chapter.

Analysis on the role of flowers in marriage ceremonies and wedding reception venues was done. Next, I worked on the church occasions and analysed the importance of flowers in the church and narratives.

March & April 2025

In the month of March, I wrote the overview of the Chapter IV. Suggestions were given to me. Correction was then made on the overview and re-summarized the whole chapter.

Writing on the last part of the chapter and overview took nearly two weeks. When I completed the chapter, I met sir who checked and approved my write-up on the chapter. I was advised to start chapter VI on the third week of March. I started reading relevant articles for the chapter on Floriculture as livelihood option. Next, I wrote the introduction for chapter VI. After completion of introduction for the chapter, I started analysing the responses of the respondents on the particular topic. I started with the motivating factors for opting floriculture as a means of livelihood and continued analysing the responses on the interview schedule. Then, I analysed floral designing as livelihood option.

I approached Sir and he made relevant corrections on the headings of my chapter and gave me helpful suggestions on how to sociologically analyse the tables. I met Sir with my work so far, he suggested some corrections in the tables and he advised me to finish and complete the whole chapter.

April & May 2025

In the month of April, I was working on the case studies I did on Zopar export private limited and Laltei Nursery. It took me the whole month of April and a bit of May transcribing the narratives on the case studies and writing and analysis both the cases. By the end of April, I was able to complete the write up on the two case studies. The overview of the chapter was started from the month of May. I was not able to sit and write much in the month of May because I was busy in the church Jubilee meetings and social work one after the other for the celebration of church silver jubilee. The month passed and the overview was incomplete.

June 2025

With the turn of the second week of June, I started continuing my work on Chapter VI, the overview of the chapter. It was tough but I was able to finish the overview by the second week of June. I met Sir and showed him my work on Chapter VI. He checked and commented the work was okay.

He gave suggestions which were to add relevant points on the sociological implications of the present chapter, which is floriculture as livelihood option. He also advised me to sociologically relate the role of florist associations, government and NGO MHIP in the state. Lastly, contextualising the findings through literature was also suggested.

I then worked on the sociological implications of floriculture as livelihood option. I managed to complete the writing and the chapter is completed.

July 2025

After completion of Chapter VI on Floriculture based livelihood options, Sir checked my write-up on the chapter and the overview and the sociological significance of the Floriculture as livelihood options. Sir suggested some corrections and modifications in my writing. He also suggested that I include the last two objectives of my study in the chapter. I worked on the analysis of the tables data on entrepreneurial pursuits and the constraints faced by the floriculturists. I approached Sir and he checked and decided that since the chapter was too bulky and long, I extracted the write-ups on entrepreneurial pursuits and constraints faced. I made a new chapter, Chapter VI which is named entrepreneurial pursuits and constraints faced. I then, worked on the overview of the findings of the chapters.

August 2025

In the month of August Sir checked my chapter on entrepreneurial pursuits and constraints faced and approved of the chapter. He then advised me to work on the last chapter which is Summary and Conclusion. Sir helped me with the chapter categorization and headings. I then worked on the summary and conclusion of all the chapters of the thesis. Contextualization of findings was worked upon all the chapters. I also worked on the sociological implications of the study. I then showed my work so far to Sir, who helped me with the correct way of writing the conclusion. Sir suggested I make the recommendations and future areas of research too. I followed Sir's advice and finished the write up on these areas and Sir checked and approved my last chapter by the last week of August.

Sir advised that I go through pre- submission seminar on 4th September and it was fixed. I am thankful and grateful to God Almighty for his constant guidance and grace. I am deeply grateful to Prof. Mohanty for his selfless guidance and insightful and supervision from start to finish.

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DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

ABSTRACT

ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY**

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**ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY AND LIVELIHOOD OPTIONS
THROUGH FLORICULTURE: A STUDY IN MIZORAM**

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**In partial fulfilment of the requirement of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Sociology of Mizoram University, Aizawl**

The present thesis examines and elaborates on the use of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context, floriculture as livelihood options of people, the various entrepreneurial activities carried out through the use of flowers, the entrepreneurial pursuits and the constraints faced by the floriculturists. For centuries, flowers have served as symbols in Mizo literature and poetry, representing emotions, ideas, and ethical attributes. Flowers have profound significance for the Mizo people, who disregard the related expenses, regardless of their socio-economic status, during celebrations or observance of events or occasions. Flowers are employed extensively at funerals to honour the departed soul, sympathise with the grieving family and coffins are embellished with flowers as symbols of love and affection which manifests the social standing of the deceased and the family. Usage of flowers in Mizo pre-wedding rituals and church weddings which are lavish and trending are manifestations of social and financial status, indicating the presence of social hierarchy and a display of superiority. Flowers hold significance place on every Sunday church service and during Christian festivals like Christmas, New Year's Day, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday in Mizoram. Christianity accelerated the popularity of floriculture and flowers attained importance and became ever more indispensable in the socio-religious context, which in turn boost floriculture in Mizoram. In Mizo society, floriculture is engaged in as a primary and additional source of livelihood, stemming from a cultivated aesthetic interest since early childhood, which has evolved into small-scale individual and family commercial endeavours on accessible land, rooftops, and backyards. Floriculturists with a longstanding interest since childhood have engaged in flower cultivation for over a decade, with some exceeding three decades of experience, possessing decades of experience in both the technical and social dimensions of floriculture entrepreneurship. Floriculturists attain an adequate standard of living through their engagement in floriculture, which yields a substantial and consistent income for the household, they continuously meet essential household needs and sustain themselves with the income generated. Floral designing and event decoration constitute the principal source of income for flower designers. The entrepreneurial venture on floral designing is viable for self-employment and sustenance of families, but it does not entail a daily regular job. Florist associations in Mizoram are in constant promotional

action. The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA) founded in 1997, as the pioneer association has holistic development of floriculture as its objective, similarly, the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-Operative Society established in 2002 has development of Anthurium farmers as its aim and Pangpar Zuar Association formed in 2017 has upliftment of floriculturists as its main objective. The florist associations work in tandem with the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram for the development of floriculture. The Government provide infrastructure materials and inputs at subsidized rate on need base to floriculturists depending on the availability of funds and schemes.

Floriculture, regarded as a traditional agricultural practice possess considerable potential to generate lucrative self-employment and entrepreneurial prospects for small and marginal farmers. Entrepreneurship functions as a mechanism to improve the quality of life for individuals and families. Skill development is necessary in floriculture techniques, nursery administration, pest and disease control, post-harvest processing, and marketing strategies. Furthermore, developing skills in entrepreneurship, financial management, customer relationship building, adaptability, and creativity, as well as responding to changing consumer expectations, is crucial for success in the floriculture industry. In the entrepreneurial pursuit in floriculture, floriculturists have taken training sessions organized by the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram and Mizoram Florist Association. In their entrepreneurial journey, floriculturists over the years have developed social skills and entrepreneurial skills like innovation, risk-taking, adaptability, marketing strategies and financial management which are crucial for the success of their business. They tend to devote their whole time in the business venture and adopt innovative ideas on products to enhance appearance and increase the market value. They adjust and adapt readily to trending demands of clients and are ready to take risks if the need arises for generating more income. Income generated through self-employment in floriculture results in income promotions within the family in terms of decision making, improvement in status, self-esteem, productivity within the family and capacity building. Despite its potential, the floriculture business in the state encounters limits and problems that significantly impede its development and expansion. The

floriculture industry encounters limitations due to insufficient infrastructure, restricted land availability, inadequate market facilities, and challenges pertaining to quality control.

Chapter I deals with the introduction portion while Chapter II discusses the Review of Literature. Chapter III covers the Methodology of the Study with all the procedural details. Chapter IV concentrates on the Socio-Economic Profile of Floriculturists. Chapter V details Flowers in the Mizo Socio-Cultural Context, while Chapter VI discusses Floriculture as a Livelihood. Chapter VII deals with Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced and the last Chapter VIII is about Summary and Conclusion.

Chapter I: Introduction

Chapter 1 which is on Introduction presents a general outline of the present study. Eight distinct sections have been used to discuss the chapter. A brief introduction of the importance of flowers and floriculture opens the chapter. The second part of the chapter discusses the global floriculture situation, including how the industry has grown to be an export-oriented agroindustry, the rising demand for ornamental plants, how commercial floriculture has emerged as the most profitable sector globally, and how flowers have significant cultural and emotional value in social and religious ceremonies all over the world. The third section discusses floriculture in the Indian context, discussing how the industry is steadily growing and focusing on exporting goods, as well as the aesthetic value of flowers for social gatherings and religious ceremonies. The fourth segment discusses floriculture in northeastern India, where while having a good agroclimatic climate and a wealth of biodiversity, the area lacks the infrastructure needed for commercial floriculture to flourish, leading to a small number of well-established commercial floriculture enterprises. The fifth section discusses floriculture in Mizoram, where flower crops are produced on verandahs, roof tops, and any other accessible space around homes. The first commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers, which has produced promising results and revolutionised the Mizoram horticultural sector, is covered in this section. The part emphasises the state's significant demand for cut flowers for church

services, weddings, funerals, birthday celebrations, special occasions, and home décor. This section focusses on the rise of floral associations in Mizoram, including the pioneering Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), established in 1997. When Anthurium cultivation began in 2002, the growers established the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) the same year. The Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA), another florist association, was established in 2017. The social significance of flowers and floriculture, which are important in many cultures around the world, are covered in the sixth segment. This section also discusses how flowers are used as a means of emotional expression by people all around the world and how they are symbolic objects or items that serve as extensions of sentiments and feelings. The section also discusses the religious and cultural significance of flowers in India. The seventh section discusses floriculture as a means of subsistence, highlighting how it has emerged as a viable choice in light of its capacity to provide small and marginal farmers with lucrative opportunities for self-employment. The section also covers value-added products made from flowers as a significant commercial floriculture business, as well as floristry as another job that can generate a sizable profit. The eighth and final section discusses floriculture as a means of empowering women and promoting entrepreneurship. The section emphasises how women's empowerment is not only necessary but essential to the overall growth of society and the country. The part also discusses how women's economic empowerment is essential to their ability to support their families and become financially independent.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter II includes review of literature, and is sub-divided into three headings namely theoretical review, thematic review and a methodological review. The theoretical review centres on the sustainable livelihood approach, emphasising the definition, significance, and opinions of various researchers and thinkers about the livelihood framework, ideas, and tactics and the variety of ways people support themselves. It discusses how the implementation of sustainable livelihood as a strategic approach to development can accelerate the eradication of poverty. The report also discusses social capital as a livelihood asset, emphasising how important

it is for the poor in both urban and rural settings. Sociologists' perspectives on how social capital, like other forms of capital, is productive and makes it possible to achieve particular goals that would not be feasible without it are also examined. Additionally, this section examines how social capital is dependent on being effectively assimilated into social networks, which are the interpersonal relationships that form the basis of social capital. According to some experts, the exchange process governs most human conduct and serves as the foundation for interpersonal and group relationships. The theoretical review incorporates social exchange theories from various scientists and philosophers. Understanding these relationships and how they shape, evolve, and change the networks and organisations in which they are deeply embedded is important to certain people. Others, however, believe that continuous social interaction can contribute to the establishment of a pattern of trust that makes it easier to build strong bonds. The study's theoretical review also covers the norm of reciprocity, which scholars define as a social law that requires people to return favours and other acts of kindness. The review discusses the concept of internalized social norms, which suggest that morally correct actions and reciprocating favors can lead to self-satisfaction. It also discusses gift giving theory, which emphasizes the social bond between the giver and receiver, and the sociology of entrepreneurship, which involves discovering and acting on opportunities that create value. It also delves into family entrepreneurship, focusing on entrepreneurial behaviors among family members, companies, and enterprises.

The thematic review discusses the aspects of floriculture, including employment generation, self-sufficiency, livelihood, cost and labor efficiency, market potential, entrepreneurial opportunities, women's entrepreneurship, sustainability, socio-cultural importance of flowers, and constraints faced. It highlights the role of floriculture in generating income, improving livelihoods, and promoting self-employment. The review also highlights the market potential of floriculture products and its potential as an entrepreneurial venture. It also addresses the sustainability of the business, the socio-cultural significance of flowers and the constraints faced.

The methodological review, which highlights the various approaches taken by various researchers in their individual studies, is also included in the literature

review. The study covers the research tools that the researchers used to collect data, including the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology, the interview method, the participatory learning method, a predetermined schedule inquiry, semi structured questionnaire, case studies, and observations. To choose samples, the researchers used a multi-stage stratified random sampling technique and simple random sampling. The aspects of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies has been examined, which is pertinent to the current study.

Majority of the reviewed literature are all the research works of scholars from other countries and from different parts of India, though Mizoram has created a space for itself in the context of floriculture innovations. A few research works on the tedious Anthurium cultivation by farmers in Mizoram exists, but there is little or lack of holistic research on floriculture and its viability as a means of livelihood for the Mizo people. The study hopes to add new knowledge and contribute insights on floricultural activity in Mizoram to add input to sociological literature on the subject. Previous research works have focused on the economic aspect of the floricultural activity and the commercial potentiality of floriculture leaving aside social dimensions of floriculture which includes gift exchange, festive occasions and aesthetic values associated with flowers and how it encourages the florists to become entrepreneurs. The study focuses on the growth of floriculture to understand the neglected social aspect; the entrepreneurial activity associated with the aesthetic values attached to flowers in the socio-cultural context of the Mizo society. The deficiency of comprehensive sociological study on floriculture in Mizoram would be met by the present study in this regard.

Chapter III: Methodology

Chapter III is about the methodology adopted for this study. This study has five objectives which are shown as under:

1. To prepare a socio-economic profile of floriculturists of Mizoram.
2. To study the importance of flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context
3. To find out recent trends and growth of floriculture as livelihood option in Mizoram.

4. To analyze the growth of floriculture as a form of women entrepreneurship.
5. To study the constraints faced by the floriculturists in Mizoram.

The present research represents an exploratory cum descriptive research design and uses the mix method of mainly qualitative and need based quantitative design. The universe of the present study is Aizawl, the capital city of Mizoram. The universe of the study comprises of the following categories of respondents:

1. Those floriculturists involved in the business as their livelihood options belonging to the three large florist associations in Mizoram namely, Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS).
2. Church elders belonging to the three church denominations in Mizoram namely The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
3. Leaders of Decoration Committee / Women's Wing belonging to the three denominations such as The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
4. Flower arrangers in the three church denominations: The Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and the Salvation Army.
5. Floral artists/designers in Aizawl, Mizoram
6. Leaders of the three florist associations in Mizoram as Key Informants such as Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), *Pangpar Zuar Association* (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS).
7. Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram as Key Informants.
8. Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or the Mizo Women's Organization as Key Informants.

Purposive sampling is adopted to identify the stakeholders from the total population in Aizawl city. Convenience sampling is followed in identifying the floriculturists. Using purposive and convenience sampling, 51 floriculturists, that is, 30% have been selected as sample from the total members of Mizoram Florist Association, but

exceeded by 19 at the time of field work, which came to 70 floriculturists. 54 floriculturists amounting to 30% from *Pangpar Zuar* Association have been selected as sample, but exceeded by 4 which came to 58 in total. From the Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society, 16 Anthurium growers amounting to 20% have been taken as sample, but exceeded by 7 which came to 23 in total. The total sample of floriculturists after the completion of field work was 153.

Using the same sampling method, 60 church elders/Salvation Army Officers have been selected from 10 different churches each namely of Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church of Mizoram and Salvation Army from 10 different localities were selected as sample. Using the same sampling design, 60 Decoration Committee members and 60 flower arrangers of the same denomination churches and same localities have also been selected as sample. The total sample representing the church elders/ Salvation Army Officers, Decoration Committee members and flower arrangers came to 180, with the aim of shedding light on the study's second objective.

Using convenience sampling, 10 floral artists/ floral designers of Aizawl city were taken as sample to shed light on the third objective of the study. Key Informants Interview have been conducted with (a) the Government officials of the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, (b) leaders of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) or Mizo Women's Organisation and (c) leaders of the three Florists' Associations. The total sample of the study is 343.

The present study is based on the mix method focused more on the qualitative analysis which includes data collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data have been collected through administering interview schedule, observation, case study and key informants' interview.

Chapter IV: Socio-Economic Profile

The socioeconomic profile of the floriculturist respondents is covered in Chapter IV, which provides a thorough picture of the current study's universe in Aizawl City. The necessary information about the respondents' diverse backgrounds is provided by socioeconomic profile data. Gender composition, age distribution, marital status,

educational attainment, floriculture training, occupation of respondents and their spouses, family size and type, family income, religious affiliation, respondents' housing status, bank account and savings and deposit ownership, land ownership and the amount of land utilised for floriculture, and an overview conclude this chapter's analysis of the variables used to understand the socioeconomic status of the floriculturists.

Considering the entire sample of 153 floriculturists in Aizawl City, women make up the majority of the floriculturists' gender makeup. In Mizo society, floriculture is still viewed as a stereotypically feminine entrepreneurial endeavour. Because men avoid floriculture because they think it is a feminine endeavour, despite their aesthetic interest in flowers, this consideration stems from patriarchal sentiments. However, males now have more options, which is why they are becoming more and more interested in starting their own business.

Looking at the age group, the majority of people who are actively involved in floriculture are between the ages of 41 and 60, when their kids are grown and they have more spare time to follow their passions and make extra money for the family. Because married women must focus their time and attention on raising and caring for their children, fewer women under 40 attempt floriculture.

The marital status ranges from married to single, widowed, divorced, unmarried, and separated. Nonetheless, married women made up the majority of respondents, indicating that their spouse and children help them with their business. The majority of respondents in the unmarried category are men. It is evident that widows pursue floriculture after their spouses' deaths, and some are divorcees who rely on their children to support them in their businesses. Single and separated people make up a minor portion of the respondents.

The majority of respondents have only completed high school and are matriculates, choosing to work for themselves and follow their passion in floriculture. In addition to their normal government work, several of the graduates and postgraduate respondents undertake floriculture as a source of additional income. A few of the

respondents who have primary or middle school education are engaged in the floriculture industry.

Majority of the respondents are self-taught, gaining the information and skills necessary to operate a floriculture business independently, and have not received any training in the field. A few of the respondents have participated in floriculture training sessions and seminars.

The analysis of the occupations of the respondents and their spouses indicates that the respondents predominantly consist of self-employed floriculture entrepreneurs. A significant portion of the respondents depend only on floriculture for their livelihood, and the majority engage in the business for supplementary income. A minor proportion of the respondents are engaged in governmental and commercial enterprises with a monthly income. Several of their spouses are self-employed, a substantial proportion are employed in government positions with stable incomes, and a significant portion are unemployed. Individuals without spouses, including singles, unmarried persons, divorcees, and widows, are self-employed and serve as the primary earners for their households.

The participants adhere to the nuclear family structure. In Mizo society, the nuclear family consists of a husband, wife, and their unmarried offspring living together under one roof. The joint family structure, characterised by the cohabitation of three or four generations, is not practiced in Mizo society. The extended family structure is also hardly observed. Some respondents adhere to the stem family model, wherein parents select one of their sons, either the eldest or youngest, to remain in the parental home post-marriage to sustain the family bloodline.

The Mizo society typically has small families, consisting of four to five members, predominantly organised as nuclear families with two generations cohabiting. The coexistence of a three-generation family is also a prevalent characteristic, wherein one or both grandparents reside with the family.

The respondents' households possess two to seven dependent individuals, primarily consisting of children, students, and elderly grandparents, while additional dependents, such as aunts and uncles, contribute to the maintenance of the

floriculture enterprise. The number of income-generating members in the respondents' families varies from one to four, with employment in government service, commercial enterprises, and self-employment across diverse sectors.

The study indicates that the majority of respondents have a monthly household income of Rs 40,000 or more. This indicates that the respondents do not rely exclusively on the floriculture industry but have additional sources of monthly income. A few numbers of respondents with low income rely on the floriculture industry and various odd jobs for their monthly income.

The study indicates that most respondents are affiliated with the Presbyterian religion, the largest and predominant denomination in Aizawl city. This suggests that Presbyterians are more inclined towards floriculture entrepreneurship and income generation through this sector compared to other denominations.

The study indicates that the majority of respondents own their homes, while others live in rented housing. The study indicates that the majority of respondents inhabit Assam-type houses, while the rest stay in pucca (RCC) houses. The majority of respondents dwelling in their own homes predominantly own Assam-type houses, but a minority also possess and rent pucca-type houses.

Almost all respondents are proprietors of their floriculture enterprises, although a minimal percentage are hired workers who also own floriculture businesses. Hired individuals work for floriculturists to generate supplementary income while simultaneously being floriculture entrepreneurs themselves.

The majority of respondents have bank accounts for financial stability and savings, with florists depositing earnings and profits through online transfers. These accounts were opened after marriage or business establishment, and bank accounts are required for government service and self-employment. Most maintain individual accounts independently.

The respondents save from below Rs 10,000 and above Rs 40,000 per month, contingent upon their product sales. They indicate that their savings and deposits derive exclusively from profits obtained via product sales. Moreover, majority of

respondents do not engage in additional personal savings besides depositing it into their accounts. Only a minority allocate their funds to postal savings plans, some to life insurance policies, while others conserve in household treasury to address household requirements.

The study indicates that most respondents do not possess land registered in their name. This is ascribed to the existence of patriarchy in Mizo society, evident in the ownership of immovable property, deemed a privilege of the male family head. Women, however, are not prohibited from owning land in their name. Individuals who have land in their name acquired the property post-marriage, suggesting it may be a parental gift or jointly acquired by spouses via home loans, with ownership registered in the wife's name.

The study emphasises that the land area owned by some respondents and the extent of land utilised for floriculture ranges from 0.005 hectares to 16.01 hectares. Only a limited number of floriculturists engage in open field cultivation, opting instead to build greenhouses for flower production.

Chapter V: Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context

Chapter V deals with flowers in Mizo socio-cultural context emphasising the significance flowers occupy in the Mizo society as a whole. The chapter has been discussed under the following heads: 1. Introduction 2. Flowers in the Mizo socio-cultural context 3. Gift giving and extension of sentiments 4. Funerary rituals 5. Marriage ceremony 6. Church occasions 7. Social events 8. Overview

Flowers have played a crucial role in human culture throughout history, fulfilling social, cultural, and religious functions due to their intrinsic qualities and perfume. They symbolise love, emotions, and spirituality in both conventional and contemporary rituals, and are seen as artistic contributions and vital elements of society. Flowers have been utilised to mark significant events and express sentiments and emotions.

The Bible uses flowers as symbols of beauty, transience, and God's creation. The lily symbolizes purity and care for God's creation, while the rose symbolizes love and

beauty, equating to Christ's love for the church. These flowers offer insights into God's nature, creation, and spiritual truths, highlighting the beauty and impermanence of nature.

Flowers have long been associated with love, romance, and deep emotions. They have been used as emblems in literature and poetry, often representing sentiments and moral qualities. Floriography, the secret language of flowers, allows writers to express intricate feelings through specific arrangements.

Mizoram's indigenous flowers hold significant cultural significance for the Mizo people, often featured in folktales and folklores. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Mizo writers and poets used these flowers as symbols in love songs and sentimental songs. Both traditional and modern Mizo writers and poets value flowers in various genres and hymns, symbolizing deep emotions, romantic attraction, beauty, and sentiments.

Mizoram's state flower is the red vanda orchid, *senhri*. Mizo forefathers were drawn to indigenous flowers like marigold, zinnia, and cockscomb, which surrounded their jhum fields. These vibrant flowers brought positive emotions to Mizo women, who worked hard in the fields. Evidence suggests that Mizo women brought cut flowers home after work, arranging them in their homes. Indigenous flowers are significant in Mizo folklore and folktales.

Mizo culture values flowers as symbols of emotions and beliefs, and their textiles are known for their intricate designs and vibrant colors. Handloom weaving, particularly the *puan*, is a prevalent handicraft worn by women during festivals and occasions. Traditional motifs on *puan* feature designs from indigenous flora and fauna, with some of these motifs transcending into modern versions of the *puan* and is highly valued by older generations.

Mizo society's urbanization and standard of living have increased demand for cut flowers for social events like weddings, anniversaries, and funerals. Floral arrangements in churches and wedding reception venues are becoming more lavish and expensive, boosting the floriculture wave in Mizoram's socio-cultural and religious context.

The study explores the significance of flowers in Mizo society's Christian festivals, revealing their role in symbolizing emotions, beauty, love, sentiments, and romantic attraction. Respondents emphasize the cultural values, beliefs, and practices that contribute to the social construction of symbolism, regardless of the cost involved in using flowers during such events as weddings, funerals, Valentine's Day and birthdays.

Flowers play a significant role in human history, connecting people through symbolism. Gifting flowers conveys various emotions and thoughts, expressing personal feelings. The vivid colors and fragrance of flowers can instantly activate happy emotions, forming bonds with the recipient, extending sentiments to close ones.

The exchange of live plants and flowers between Mizo respondents is based on altruistic behavior, rooted in justice and fairness. The satisfaction of the giver is determined when the gift is equivalent to what was initially given. This reciprocity extends sentiments, expresses deep emotions, and creates a strong bond among Mizo florists. During times of mourning or joy, florists use their products as '*inralna*', a Mizo tradition of giving money to bereaved families. Mizo society gifts potted plants or flowering plants as farewell gifts, symbolizing ties and relationships between giver and receiver. This act of benevolence creates trust and may not be reciprocated equally. Floral bouquets are significant in Mizo society's socio-cultural context on important occasions like birthdays and anniversaries, symbolizing love, emotions, and deep feelings. These gifts are reciprocated by the recipient to maintain a balanced and sustained relationship.

Flower giving is a popular way to celebrate achievements, especially for friends and colleagues. Floriculturists often give potted plants as housewarming gifts, symbolizing emotions and appreciation. A flower bouquet makes recipients feel cherished and loved, conveying congratulations to family members and colleagues.

The Mizo people are heavily influenced by Western practices, particularly the use of flower bouquets as condolence gifts in funerary rituals. Tradition remains intact, as flower giving will not replace the traditional practice of giving *puan* as a condolence

gift. People also prefer to give flowers and *puan* alternately to express sympathy and sentiments at funerals. The practice of giving flowers symbolizes love, sympathy, and compassion, making it the right gift to bid farewell to the deceased.

The study indicates that the adornment of coffins with flowers is accepted by society, as it is perceived as the final, touching gesture by the bereaved family to express their affection and bid farewell to the deceased. The bereaved relatives find solace and serenity in their hearts when the coffins are adorned with flowers.

The study reveals that Western practices influence the floral decoration of coffins and floral gifts in Mizo funerary rituals. The arrangement of flowers on the coffin and the number of bouquets received as condolence gifts reflect the social status of the deceased and the grieving family, indicating the existence of social hierarchy in Mizo society. The study shows that despite the Young Mizo Association's (YMA) efforts to promote equality by banning coffin decoration and limiting floral displays, the community's preference for flower bouquets to express sympathy towards bereaved families remains unabated, as flowers are widely used in Mizo funerary customs and an integral part of Mizo culture.

The study explores the significance of flowers in Mizo society's pre-wedding rituals, highlighting the lavish use in payment and distribution of bride price ceremonies. While some view flowers as a symbol of wealth and social hierarchy, others see them as a symbol of love and emotions shared by the married couple. Mizos are willing to make their children's wedding events memorable and special, while maintaining moderate but elegant decorations.

The study reveals that the use of flowers in matrimonial events and accessories reflects the social and financial status of the families involved. Floral decorations, bridal bouquets, and car decorations are influenced by other cultures, with Western aesthetics and advancements in outlook. The use of flowers has become increasingly indispensable and integral to Mizo culture.

Churches often have a decoration or *pangpar* (flower) committee responsible for maintaining flower arrangements during Sundays and events like festivals, and conferences. They also care for potted plants and flowers. The women wing of the

church Some women may take on this responsibility, viewing it as a personal ministry to God. Despite modernity's limitations, tradition remains high in churches, with some elders objecting to lavish expenditure.

The church decoration committee engages in *hnatlang* (social work) to enhance the aesthetic appeal of their church grounds, promoting solidarity and unity. Flowers are regarded as a manifestation of divine glory, prompting churches to finance the procurement of flowering plants. Church committees approve budget estimates for flowers, highlighting the significance of enhancing the church's aesthetic appeal. Decoration committees in churches maintain flower arrangement on Sundays, primarily involving women members. Some churches do this voluntarily, with volunteers covering expenses. Churches often sanction funds for fresh flowers, and members contribute to purchase flowers if needed, viewing it as a personal ministry and a way to show devotion to God.

The study reveals that church elders value flowers adorning sacred spaces, believing they glorify God and enhance worship. Significant value is attached to special floral designs for festive occasions and conferences, which require extra funds. Church members support landscaping with flowers, viewing the church as a sacred place and flowers as glorifying God. This demonstrates the collective work and solidarity of the church's decoration committee.

The study reveals that skilled flower arrangers in churches can earn income as venue decorators for social events, indicating the potential for floral designing to become a self-employment opportunity in Mizo society due to high demand for flowers.

Flowers are increasingly used in various settings, including social events, political gatherings, and formal functions, to create a relaxed atmosphere and express gratitude. Government offices, hotels, restaurants, and institutions are purchasing cut flowers and green foliage plants to boost floriculture business, adorn hotel lobbies, hallways, and city cafes.

Chapter VI: Floriculture as livelihood option

Chapter VI discusses floriculture as livelihood option in Mizoram. The chapter has been discussed under the following heads: 1. Introduction 2. Floriculture as livelihood option 3. Floral designing as livelihood option 4. Culture of floriculture 5. Contribution of stakeholders: (a) Florist Associations in promotional action (b) Role of Mizo *Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl* (MHIP) (c) Role of Government in floriculture. 6. Case Study: (a) Zopar Exports Private Limited (b) Laltei Nursery 7. An Overview

Mizoram is transforming floriculture into a livelihood option, generating income for unemployed homemakers and women entrepreneurs. The Horticulture Department focuses on commercial cultivation of Anthurium flowers, while ornamental and potted plants are grown at home. Annual and perennial cut flowers are grown in greenhouses.

Floriculturists, who have been passionate about flowers since childhood, pursue the business as a means of livelihood. Some homemakers find it an alternative to paid jobs, while others have inherited the business from their parents. Some have been in the business for over 10 years, with some having over 30 years of experience. They have faced challenges and remain resilient, while others are new to the trade, learning resilience in times of stress. The industry is constantly evolving and strengthening to meet the needs of its growing community.

Small-scale family businesses in floriculture, managed with support by spouses, children, and relatives, are carried out on rooftops, backyards, and other spaces around residences. These businesses serve as an ancillary income source for families, which also derive income from government employment, private sector jobs, and self-employment ventures. Some spouses and children are employed, while others are retired and receive monthly pensions. Many floriculturists rely solely on the industry for their livelihood, lacking alternative income sources.

During the peak season, floriculturists earn between Rs 2-4 lakhs a month by selling their goods to neighboring states, cities, and exporting to foreign countries like Myanmar. Their goods are transported to other districts and district capitals of the

state. They also sell their goods at home, florist fairs, local markets, and through social media platforms. However, those with other income sources and less time to the business typically earn lower monthly incomes.

Floriculturists use various methods to market their products and generate income for their households. They organize florist fairs quarterly a year, bulk selling to wholesalers and resellers, and use modern technology like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Despite not being highly educated, most floriculturists are familiar with modern technology.

Some use Saturday local markets, while others use marketing agencies like Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-Operative Society to transport their products to major cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore. Floriculturists also sell their products regularly at home.

Floriculture goods are transported to various locations, including metropolitan cities like Delhi, Kolkata, and Bangalore, North Eastern India, and other districts and capitals. Anthurium goods are regularly airlifted to these areas. A few floriculturists export their products to Myanmar, and most utilize all available transportation and selling opportunities. The majority of floriculturists utilize these opportunities to sell their products. Floriculturists argue that selling floriculture goods within the state is more profitable than selling outside. Bulk sales yield good returns, especially when marketed to other districts. Some plants are sold outside the state. Most floriculturists use greenhouse facilities, constructed on land, roof tops, or open ground, to control temperature and protect plants from harsh weather. Some do not use greenhouses in their business.

Floriculturists, except a few, do not receive government aid or grants for greenhouse construction. They argue that the government is not providing equal inputs due to lack of funds. The government is vigilant in catering to Anthurium cultivators' needs, providing necessary incentives and inputs regularly. Floriculturists are mainly informed about available incentives through their associations and fellow members, who work closely with the government to develop floriculture and farmers.

The government sponsors florist fairs and flower shows, especially those organized by the Mizoram Florist Association, which enable floriculturists to showcase their products and boost sales.

The study reveals that floriculture is a profitable self-employment venture, especially among floriculturists who rely on it as their primary livelihood. These individuals advocate for the business and encourage their children to pursue entrepreneurship. They enjoy a decent standard of living, generate income, and help meet basic household requirements.

Florist associations like Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA), and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-Operative Society (ZAGCS) have significantly benefited floriculturists by building confidence, creativity, capacity, taking risks, and strengthening their businesses. These associations sharpen entrepreneurial skills and marketing abilities, leading to increased sales and profit. They also establish social relations with fellow members and customers, fostering bonds and affinity during times of joy and sorrow. Despite their success, floriculturists still aim to expand and strengthen their ventures.

Floral Designing as livelihood option: Floral designing is becoming a viable self-employment option for skilled florists, despite floral designers not being enrolled in florist associations or having collaborative roles. They collaborate with the government on events and occasions, often working with hired workers and recruiting helpers. Floral designers emphasize perseverance, courage, and good acquaintance in their line of business. They suggest the government implement policies or grants to support florists and encourage unemployed youths to enter this entrepreneurial activity for self-reliance.

Mizo funeral practices have embraced flower arrangements and bouquets as a form of condolence. Floral designers, who work locally or outside, generate income by decorating coffins with fresh flowers and arranging funeral bouquets and baskets on request. They also use their professional skills to decorate graves for festive occasions like Christmas, highlighting the importance of flowers in Mizo society's funerary practices.

Floral decorations play a crucial role in bride price rituals and send-off ceremonies. Floral designers, specializing in church flower arrangements and wedding reception decorations, earn a significant income by promoting themselves on social media and working within family budgets. They are well-equipped with necessary tools and accessories for each event. The study reveals that floral decoration income at wedding events varies based on budget, impacting floral designers' income range. Mizo wedding venues support floral decorations as a significant income source and willing to invest in children's weddings. Floral designers arrange church flowers for Sunday services and festive events, earning income varying based on church sanctioned amounts. Their annual income depends on work appointments and is the primary source of income for these designers, who believe it's viable for self-employment and family support, although it doesn't involve daily work.

Culture of floriculture: Floriculture in Mizoram involves various aspects, involving cultivation and production of various flower crops, including annual or seasonal flowers, cut flowers in open fields and greenhouses, perennial flowering plants, house plants, ornamental plants, and foliage plants cultivated in containers and nursery pots. Floriculture activities also include distributing procured goods from outside the state and resellers of goods.

Contribution of Stakeholders: NGOs play a crucial role in development by linking the state to grassroot communities, promoting local mobilization and enabling environmental change.

Florist Associations in Promotional Action: The Mizoram Florist Association (MFA), the *Pangpar Zuar* Association (PPZA) and Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) are the prominent florist associations selected as key informants for the study.

The Mizoram Florists' Association (MFA), established in 1997, aims to promote holistic floriculture development in Mizoram. Registered in 1998, it encourages entrepreneurship and encourages members to pay an annual fee to become members, prioritizing their own creations and propagated products. The Zo-Anthurium Growers' Co-operative Society (ZAGCS) was established in 2002 by the Department

of Horticulture in Mizoram. It accepts members with at least 1000 Anthurium plants and 50 cut flowers per month. The government provides inputs and planting material to beneficiaries. The number of beneficiaries has grown annually. The Pangpar Zuar Association (PPZA), founded in 2017, aims to improve the economic situation of floriculturists, it has 180 members as of 2020, but is yet to be registered.

MFA and PPZA organize flower show and fairs quarterly, providing opportunities for floriculturists to showcase their products and make significant sales. These florist fairs are economically and socially beneficial, promoting floriculture growth. ZAGCS organizes an annual Anthurium flower exhibition and government-organized festival, allowing floriculturists to make significant sales quickly. They are particularly beneficial for those relying on the business for their livelihood, and their leaders are actively engaged in floricultural activities for additional income.

Florist associations are promoting floriculture entrepreneurship and advancing the business. They request government inputs, incentives, and subsidized infrastructure. The MFA offers training on seed germination, propagation, plant care, health, post-harvest management, and flower arrangement technique, fostering a thriving industry.

Florist associations in the Mizo community provide financial and in-kind assistance to needy floriculturists, embodying the Mizo moral code of conduct and selflessness known as '*tlawmngaihna*'. During the Covid-19 pandemic, they provided support in cash and kind, as well as support each other during times of sorrow and joy, demonstrating the importance of florist associations in benevolent works beyond their floricultural activities.

The three florist associations, MFA, ZAGCS, and PPZA, maintain friendly relations but MFA and PPZA have strained relationships due to conflicting interests. MFA promotes self- propagation of plants, while PPZA procures and sells plants directly to customers. MFA emphasizes cash flow within the state, while PPZA focuses on imports and international markets. The two associations that is, MFA and PPZA have different interests and follows different paths in their business venture. The

Horticulture Department of Mizoram support and aid florist associations, sponsors flower show and florist fair, arranges tours for MFA members, and provides incentives and inputs to florist associations on a need basis. Associations also act as pressure groups when members' needs are not met, urging for necessary incentives.

Florist associations face challenges such as lack of space to showcase their products and absence of a flower house, MFA leaders have attempted to contact the government for space but have not been successful. PPZA lacks a registration number hindering their advancement, while ZAGCS struggles with weather changes limiting their harvest and high airfreight costs at the time of shipping their products.

Role of Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP): Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), established in 1974, is a non-governmental organization that focuses on the development and upliftment of weaker sections of society, particularly women and children. Despite not collaborating with the government or florist associations, MHIP supports and encourages floriculture businesses, primarily pursued by women, and advocates for women's economic and social status. The organization provides emotional support to floriculture entrepreneurs rather than give direct practical aid.

Role of government in floriculture: The Horticulture Department in Mizoram, established in 1993, has been promoting floriculture since 2001 through central schemes and incentives. The Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) is a centrally sponsored initiative, selecting beneficiaries to cultivate new flowers and foliage plants in 2021 and 2023. Training is provided to floriculturists on plant care, pest management, packaging practices, and flower arrangement, aiming to expand the area and introduce new varieties of plants. The government started Anthurium cultivation in 2002 with 24 beneficiaries, providing free inputs and on-demand inputs. In 2023, it started Curcuma flower plantation with 20 beneficiaries, providing subsidies. From 2021, beneficiaries cultivated imported foliage plants to meet local demand, aiming to meet local needs and demands.

The government receives numerous requests for inputs like greenhouse and shade net materials, but not all are met. Schemes like Integrated Pest Management Scheme and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture distribute these to needy

floriculturists. Florist associations also request inputs and incentives, but when these requests are not met, they remain dormant, avoiding strained relationships with the florist associations.

The government prioritizes requests from MFA and ZAGCS, florist associations formed under Mizoram's Horticulture Department, and collaborate with them on events and functions promoting floriculture and provide a platform in the form of Horticulture Fair annually. The government also seeks collaborations with these associations for government events, hosting dignitaries and guests. For instance, the successful G20 Chapchar Kut Flower Show in 2023 was a collaborative effort.

Florist fairs, sponsored by the government, are crucial for floriculture growth and development. They offer a platform for floriculturists to make significant sales, and the government provides incentives and inputs to boost production. It also aids needy farmers and continuously promotes and develops the floriculture industry.

Chapter VII: Entrepreneurial Pursuits and Constraints Faced

Chapter VII deals with floriculture as entrepreneurial pursuits and constraints faced by floriculturists. The chapter is discussed under the following four heads: 1. Introduction 2. Entrepreneurial pursuits (a) Training and Skill Development (b) Innovations (c) Risk taking and Income Promotions 3. Constraints Faced 4. An overview

Entrepreneurial pursuits: Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth, generating employment and fostering innovation. It provides autonomy, independence, and fulfillment, while reducing unemployment and promoting economic development. Motivation for entrepreneurship involves identifying opportunities, risk-taking, and overcoming challenges.

Training and Skill Development: Developing skills in floriculture is crucial for production efficiency and revenue production, especially in Northeast India. Certificate or diploma programs can teach cultivation techniques, nursery management, and plant care. Despite frequent training sessions on floriculture

organised by the Horticulture Department, Government of Mizoram, and Mizoram Florist Association, only a few floriculturists have received and attended training.

Experience in the floriculture industry has developed entrepreneurial skills like risk-taking, innovation, adaptability, marketing, and financial management. Floriculturists recognize opportunities, manage resources, and negotiate challenges. They also develop social skills, communication, empathy, conflict resolution, and confidence, demonstrating positive and effective connections with clients and others.

Innovations: Innovation is crucial for entrepreneurs to improve products, processes, or services by generating innovative concepts and values. Floriculture is a labor-intensive industry that requires significant time and effort from floriculturists. Family members help those engaged in the industry achieve success and enhance income.

Floriculturists innovate products and goods to increase market value by improving plant appearance and taking risks by purchasing exotic plants and repotting them in containers to enhance their appeal and value, a popular routine among them.

Floriculturists focus on cultivating flower and foliage plants, some indulge in selling related items like potting media, manure, nutrients, plant boosters, fungicides, pots, containers, and gardening tools, generating income and meeting household needs. Floriculturists rapidly adapt to client demands to specific types of flowers and plants which are in vogue similar to fashion trends, to meet consumer expectations, ensuring they stay updated with the latest trends in floriculture.

Risk Taking and Income Promotions: Floriculturists with years of experience in the floriculture business have developed entrepreneurial skills, including risk-taking, innovative ideas, adaptability, marketing, and financial management. These skills enable them to identify opportunities, manage resources, and navigate challenges in a competitive business.

The floriculture industry empowers floriculturists with financial autonomy, enabling them to allocate earnings towards household necessities and personal preferences, allowing them to use their income as needed. The floriculture industry in Mizo

society boosts the status of floriculturists by providing income and ensuring their voices are heard and considered important by their spouses and family members.

Floriculture business generate income for the floriculturists' households, providing economic independence and decision-making power to them. With years of experience, they gain entrepreneurial skills, making them more productive and responsible in family and household matters. Floriculturists' business experience and confidence have improved their self-worth, abilities, and well-being, leading to increased self-esteem, confidence in business, and healthy relationships, facing challenges with perseverance.

Constraints faced: Floriculturists in Mizoram face challenges like limited water supply, space, product marketing, institutional support, and plant care highlighting the need for expert assistance to ensure the success of their venture. They seek government assistance in greenhouse structures, infra structure materials, incentives, and a flower showroom for daily display and marketing. However, not all requests for resources and inputs have been successful.

Floriculturists are adapting to technological advancements and consumer aesthetic preferences in the floriculture industry. They are using social media for marketing and self-promotion, and Google Pay is a popular choice for online transactions, showcasing their proficiency in technological innovation. But such advancements in technology is a constraint for a number of floriculturists unable to adapt easily to the trending business.

Floriculturists often do not possess a stiff competitive spirit in procuring high-demand plants and flowers from outside the state. However, some ambitious floriculturists may exhibit strong competitive determination to sell exotic rare plants. They do not face strong unhealthy competition for customers or jealousy, which can lead to unhealthy situations in their business. A few have encountered situations where their potential customers are won over by over ambitious fellow floriculturists.

Foreign imported floriculture goods often arrive in damaged and stressful conditions, leading to significant financial losses. However, these plants can be rejuvenated quickly, resulting in healthy, profitable goods for floriculturists.

Floriculturists are satisfied with the current market infrastructure for local product marketing, with online platforms becoming popular. However, some argue that the current market is insufficient, as saturday local markets are too crowded with vegetable vendors with less space for floriculturists.

Floriculturists face infrastructure limitations, such as inadequate greenhouse facilities and polyhouses, and insufficient space for product storage. Small-time entrepreneurs often manage their businesses without hired labor, but some face challenges in hiring skilled labor, as they require knowledge in various aspects of floriculture, such as plant care, potting media preparation, seed bed preparation, transplanting, and propagation.

Floriculturists often face pests and disease problems, which can lower market value and lead to severe plant losses. With experience, they can manage these diseases and revive flower crops. Despite not facing water crises during the dry season, some however, floriculturists frequently purchase water to meet their daily needs, ensuring their flower crops' health and market value.

The primary obstacle confronting floriculturists, impeding their business expansion, is the restricted and overcrowded space in which they operate, severely limiting their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Florist associations foster healthy relationships by supporting each other during *chhiatni/thatni*, strengthening bonds through gifting, and exchanging potted flowers and plants. However, some floriculturists face negative experiences due to unhealthy competition and jealousy from fellow floriculturists.

Mizoram's florist associations set strict regulations for members, promoting self-propagated, properly rooted items and controlling financial flow beyond the state. They encourage members to appreciate their own products and engage in trading. Direct marketing of imported floriculture products is prohibited. However, the *Pangpar Zuar* Association allows members to market items sourced outside the state without prior propagation, and expects healthily rooted products. The Zo-Anthurium Growers Co-operative Society also establishes regulations for its members.

Sociological Implications: As indicated in the research gap section of our literature review chapter, the majority of studies were from the fields of economics and business, with most explanations use quantitative methodologies. This study aimed to address the deficiency of comprehensive sociological research regarding the implications of laborious Anthurium farming by farmers in Mizoram. Consequently, efforts were made to incorporate new knowledge and provide insights on floricultural activities as livelihood options, the factors motivating individuals to engage in them, and their role as entrepreneurial ventures in Mizoram, thereby enriching the sociological literature on the topic. Furthermore, the sociological contributions of Charles Homans (1958), Alvin Gouldner (1960), and Marcel Mauss (1966) have been deemed pertinent.

The entrepreneurial endeavours linked to the aesthetic values of flowers and their symbolism hold considerable importance within the socio-cultural framework of Mizo society, as explained in this study.

Mizos have a deep connection to flowers, with intricate floral motifs adorning both traditional and modern textiles. These traditional floral motifs, such as the ten paise coin flower and star flower, reflect Mizo culture and identity are fused with contemporary *puan* designs blending tradition with modernity in a harmonious way.

The increasing use of flowers in various events, including church, weddings, funerals, and birthdays, has boosted floriculture business, providing livelihood opportunities for floriculturists and fostering social relations and income generation. In Mizo society, flowers are used on various occasions such as Christian festivals, cultural traditions, and government functions. They symbolize love, emotions, tranquility, and peace, and are often gifted as bouquets or baskets. The use of flowers builds close, intimate relationships and social bonds within the society, fostering a sense of connection and love.

Church institutions play a crucial role in supporting the presence of flowers in their sacred spaces, with churches sanctioning money for fresh flowers for Sunday church services. Church elders believe that flowers create a beautiful atmosphere and glorify God, the creator of all things. The decoration committee and flower arrangers also

support this, planting flowers and foliage to beautify the church area and promote social order and cohesion among congregation members. Different denomination church flower arrangers consider their Sunday arrangements as personal ministry and contribute funds when the sanctioned amount is insufficient.

The study reveals that the majority of floriculture entrepreneurs are women (145), with 8 men. These women are pursuing this as a small micro family enterprise in an effort to empower themselves and generate additional income for their families. The floriculture business venture has produced economically independent women entrepreneurs who are empowered and become more productive with experience.

Floriculture as a livelihood option is a family enterprise that meets basic household requirements and provides a decent standard of living. This finding connects to the ideas of Niehof and Price (2001), De Haan and Zoomers (2003) and Carney (1998). It establishes social relationships with fellow floriculturists through florist associations and clients, fostering a sense of community during times of joy and sorrow. The exchange of plants strengthens these relationships, learning technical skills, and building social capital. This livelihood option improves the position of women entrepreneurs, enhances economic independence, increases purchasing power, and boosts self-esteem.

This study highlights that the sociology of entrepreneurship requires a nuanced Weberian approach in understanding the context, process and effects of entrepreneurial activity. The entrepreneurs prepared and processed themselves to meet the culture driven needs and requirements of flower loving Mizo society, as well as their business ventures, to achieve self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and as a refuge against unemployment (Nguyen et.al, 2020 and Randerson et.al, 2015).

Florist associations in Mizoram have formed communes to address business challenges and they act as catalysts to foster a conducive environment for floriculture growth. They work with the government to provide necessary inputs and incentives for development. The association leadership encourages and trains entrepreneurs in floriculture entrepreneurship through training, seminars, and publicity. They also create platforms like florist fairs and flower shows to market their products and

generate income. This collaboration fosters a supportive environment for the continuous growth of floriculture in Mizoram.

The floriculturists have tried to make their network with GOs and NGOs very strong for success in their business venture. The Mizoram government's Horticulture Department initiated commercial scale cultivation of Anthurium flowers under the Technology Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture in North-Eastern states of India, now known as Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). The government provides inputs and incentives for floriculture growth at lower prices and free of cost. It sponsors florist fairs, flower shows, and annual Anthurium festivals to encourage farmers and promote tourism. The government also organizes trainings for floriculture entrepreneurs on plant care, health, seed germination, and flower arrangement. This initiative serves as a catalyst for the growth of floriculture, providing income opportunities for entrepreneurs.

In the flower-loving Mizo society specifically, and within the broader Mizo socio-cultural framework, the study illustrates significant sociological implications by acknowledging the importance of gift exchange, the ethical norms of reciprocity, and the symbolic expression of sentiment, all facilitated by the thriving floriculture industry in Mizoram. Floriculture in Mizoram offers not just a basic livelihood choice but also entrepreneurial endeavours inspired by cultural needs.

Recommendations: The research emphasizes the need for recommendations on entrepreneurial activities in floriculture in Mizoram, highlighting the need to examine the relationship between floriculturists and the government. Given the growing popularity and progress of the industry, as well as the constraints faced by entrepreneurs, the following points should be considered:

1. The Horticulture Department should focus on holistically catering to the needs and problems of floriculturists, just as it provides timely assistance to Anthurium cultivators in the state.
2. Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), a prominent Non-Government Organization in Mizoram, should regularly organize comprehensive training on floriculture for unemployed young women to develop entrepreneurial

interests and initiate businesses in the field. This would motivate housewives and homemakers to self-employment, generate income, and achieve financial independence, ultimately upgrading their status and productivity within the family and community. The high unemployment rate (11.9%) in 2023 and female unemployment rate (16.4%) (Devi,2024:1048) in Mizoram highlight the importance of such initiatives.

3. The Young Mizo Association (YMA), the largest NGO in the state, regularly organizes training sessions for unemployed youths in cement masonry skills. They should also focus on training youths in floriculture to motivate them to start entrepreneurship in this growing industry. By training unemployed youths in floriculture, they can achieve economic independence and become self-employed in the growing industry.
4. The existing market infrastructure in Mizoram is inadequate for floriculturists who rely on annual flower shows and fairs to market their products. Only a few can secure seats in local Saturday markets, leading to keenness for future fairs. The floriculturists' dream is for a regular space to showcase their floricultural goods, such as a flower showroom or flower house, where they can exhibit and sell their goods throughout the week. The government should take initiative to provide a market space similar to vegetable and fish vendors in the main bazaar area and in other local Saturday markets.
5. Introducing basic courses on skill enhancement, including primary courses on floriculture in higher educational institutions, or sensitization programs on floriculture as a livelihood option, to encourage students towards self-employment and entrepreneurial initiatives.
6. The government should support Mizoram's floriculture production by providing necessary inputs and incentives to floriculturists, arranging exports, and facilitating transportation of products to neighboring states and mainland India. Institutional support is crucial for farmers who rely on the business for their livelihood, as it is essential for the holistic production of floriculture goods in the state.
7. The government should include floriculture entrepreneurs in its entrepreneurship awareness and outreach program, offering a separate start-

up loan at lower interest for needy entrepreneurs and those interested in starting new businesses. This would help procure necessary inputs and infrastructure for the initial start of floriculture entrepreneurship.

8. The Horticulture Department of the Mizoram Government should organize an awareness campaign for farmers and needy floriculturists to benefit from the *Bana Kaih* (Handholding) Scheme initiated by the Government. This initiative aims to promote economic growth and self-sufficiency by providing financial, technical, and institutional support. The *Bana Kaih* scheme supports progress partners, fostering sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic advancement. By making needy floriculturists aware of the potential benefits, they can take advantage of the scheme's opportunities.

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