

**RURAL LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT IN LUNGLEI DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

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**RURAL LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT IN LUNGLEI DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis “*Rural Leadership, Social Capital and Community Development in Lunglei District, Mizoram*”, submitted by Ms. Rebecca LP Lalnunhlui for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work is carried out under my guidance and incorporates the student’s Bonafide research and this has not been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other university or institute of learning.

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I **REBECCA LP LALNUNHLUI**, 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 the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

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CHAPTER	CONTENT	PAGE
	<i>Certificate</i>	i
	<i>Declaration</i>	ii
	<i>Acknowledgement</i>	iii
	<i>Contents</i>	iv
	<i>List of Tables</i>	v - vii
	<i>List of Figures</i>	viii
	<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	ix - x
I	Introduction	1-18
II	Review of Literature	19-52
III	Methodology	53-64
IV	Historical and Infrastructure Bases of Rural Communities in Lunglei District	65-90
V	Social Composition of Community Leaders	91-117
VI	Social Background of Community Leaders	118-154
VII	Community Leadership and Social Capital	155-189
VII	Community Leadership and Rural Development	190-208
IX	Integrated Discussion	209-221
X	Conclusion and Implications	222-228
	<i>Appendices</i>	
	<i>References</i>	
	<i>Bio-Data</i>	
	<i>Particulars</i>	

	List of Tables	
2.1	Conceptual Foundations of Rural Leadership	35
2.2	Conceptual Foundations of Rural Leadership	36
2.3	Conceptual Foundations of Community Development	37
2.4	Integrative Conceptual Triad – Rural Leadership, Social Capital, and Community Development	38
2.5	Global Perspectives on Rural Leadership	39
2.6	Global Perspectives on Rural Leadership	40
2.7	Global Perspectives on Rural Leadership	41
2.8	Integrative Global Triad: Leadership–Social Capital–Community Development	42
2.9	Rural Leadership, Power, and Governance in India	43
2.10	Rural Leadership and Governance in Northeast India	44
2.11	Rural Leadership, Moral Infrastructure, and Institutions in Mizoram	46
2.12	Integrative View: India, Northeast India, Mizoram	47
2.13	Themes in Rural Leadership and Community Power	48
2.14	Themes in Rural Leadership and Social Capital	49
2.15	Themes in Rural Leadership, Social Capital, and Development	50
2.16	Integrative Summary of Section 2.4	51
2.17	Research Gaps in Literature	52
3.1	Profile of Sample Village	61
4.1	Location of Sample Villages	68
4.2	Villages Access to Urban Areas	70
4.3	Type of Road Connectivity and Type of Facility	70
4.4	Quality of Communication Connectivity	74
4.5	Access to Physical Infrastructure: Distance to Service	76
4.6	Access to Health Care Infrastructure: Distance to Service	78
4.7	Access to Educational Infrastructure: Distance to Service	80
4.8	Population of Villages by Gender	82

4.9	Migration Inflow and Poverty	84
5.1	Demographic Profile of Respondents: Gender and Age Group	93
5.2	Demographic Profile of Respondents: Marital Status	94
5.3	Demographic Profile of Respondents: Education Status	96
5.44	Family Profile of Respondents: Type, Form and Size	98
5.5 (a)	Social Profile of Respondents: Subtribe and Type of Clan	100
5.5 (b)	Social Profile of Respondents: Denomination and Socio-Economic	101
5.6	Social Profile of Respondents: Political Affiliation	102
5.7.1	Agrarian Structure of Land Ownership: Households by Form of Land by Form of Land	104
5.7.2	Agrarian Structure: Distribution of Acres of Land Possessed	105
5.7.3.	Agrarian Structure of Land Ownership: Households Households by Size of Land	106
5.8.1	Pattern of Annual Household Income: Sources	109
5.8.2.	Pattern of Per capita Annual Household Income Distribution	111
5.9.1.	Pattern of Monthly Household Expenditure Distribution by Form	112
5.9.2.	Pattern of Monthly Household Expenditure Distribution by Level	114
6.1	Demographic Composition of Rural Leadership	124
6.2	Family Structure of Rural Leadership	127
6.3	Social Composition of Rural Leadership	131
6.4	Economic Composition of Community Leadership	136
6.5	Political Affiliation and Party Alignment of Rural Leaders	140
6.6	Organisational Background of Rural Leaders	144
6.7	Past Leadership Roles, and Cross Affiliations of Rural Leaders	149
6.8	Intergenerational Transmission of Leadership among Rural Leaders	152

7.1	Role Perception of Community Leaders	158
7.2	Dimensions of Role Perception of Community Leaders: Rotated Factor	161
7.3	Inter village Variations in Role Perception of Community Leaders : ANOVA	163
7.4	People's Interaction with Community Leaders	169
7.5	Rotated Component Matrix - People's Interaction People's Interaction with Community Leaders	169
7.6	People's Interaction with Community Leaders - ANOVA and LSD Test	171
7.7	Properties of Community Leaders' Internal	175
7.8	Social Network Measures of Bonding Social Capital: Internal Network	176
7.9	Typology of Bonding Social Capital in Leaders' Internal Networks	177
7.10	Community Leaders' External Linkages	181
7.11	Rotated Component Matrix: Leaders' External Linkages	184
7.12	Intervillage Differences in External Linkages of Community Leaders	188
8.1	Households Access to Amenities and Facilities across Villages	192
8.2	Objective Indicators of Community Development: ANOVA and LSD of Income & Expenditure	198
8.3	Rotated Factor Matrix for Community Service Satisfaction	199
8.4	People's Community Service Satisfaction: ANOVA and LSD	201
8.5	Objective and Subjective Aspects of Community Development: Pearson Correlation Matrix	203
8.6	Leadership, Social Capital and Community Development: Pearson's r	205

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures

- 3.1 Settings of the present study
- 4.1 Map of Mualcheng ‘S’
- 4.2 Timeline of Mualcheng ‘S’
- 4.3 Services and Opportunities map of Mualcheng ‘S’
- 4.4 Map of Tawipui ‘S’
- 4.5 Timeline of Tawipui ‘S’
- 4.6 Services and Opportunities map of Tawipui ‘S’
- 4.7 Map of S. Vanlaiphai
- 4.8 Timeline of S. Vanlaiphai
- 4.9 Services and Opportunities map of S. Vanlaiphai
- 4.10 Map of Tuipui ‘D’
- 4.11 Timeline of Tuipui ‘D’
- 4.12 Services and Opportunities map of Tuipui ‘D’
- 4.13 Map of Leite
- 4.14 Timeline of Leite
- 4.15 Services and Opportunities map of Leite
- 4.16 Map of Rawpui
- 4.17 Timeline of Rawpui
- 4.18 Services and Opportunities map of Rawpui
- 4.19 Map of Zotuitlang
- 4.20 Timeline of Zotuitlang
- 4.21 Services and Opportunities map of Zotuitlang

ABBREVIATIONS

AAY	Antyodaya Anna Yojana
ACPF	Approximate Core- Periphery Fit
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
APL	Above Poverty Line
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
BCM	Baptist Church of Mizoram
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BRTF	Border Roads Task Force
FPDCD	Foundational Phrases for Community Development
INC	Indian National Congress
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (Measure of Sampling Adequacy)
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LSC	Land Settlement Certificate
LSD	Least Significant Difference
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MHIP	Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl
MNF	Mizo National Front
MS	Microsoft
MUP	Mizo Upa Pawl
NEI	North East India
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
ODR	Other District Road
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PCI	Presbyterian Church of India
PDR	People's Democratic Republic
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
PLSC	Permanent Land Settlement Certificate
RD	Rural Development
SD	Standard Deviation
SEC	Socio-Economic Category

SED	Socioeconomic Development Index
SLR	Systematic Literature Review
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SPSSWIN	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for Windows
TV	Television
UK	United Kingdom
UNICET	Social Network Analysis Software (UCINET package by Borgatti, Everett & Freeman)
VC	Village Council
YMA	Young Mizo Association
ZPM	Zoram People's Movement

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

This study explores the dynamic interplay of rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Lunglei District, Mizoram. Its central claim is that development outcomes at the village level both tangible, such as infrastructure and amenities, and intangible, such as collective well-being and trust are not simply the by-products of state intervention but arise from the synergy of leadership role perceptions and social capital networks. In Mizoram's unique socio-cultural context, these dynamics are mediated by traditional values of *tlawmngaihna* (altruistic self-sacrifice) and practices such as *hnatlang* (collective labour), which together weave cultural obligation into developmental action (Lalchungnunga, 2020).

The cultural embedding of Development in Mizoram resonates with comparative evidence from around the world. Globally, scholars have demonstrated that effective rural leadership is indispensable for mobilising collective action, fostering resilience, and linking communities with broader governance frameworks (Pretty, 2003; Warren, 2016). Similarly, social capital has been identified as a decisive factor in strengthening cooperation, democratic participation, and sustainable Development (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993; Woolcock, 1998).

However, despite a substantial body of literature on decentralisation and the Panchayati Raj system in India (Oommen, 2010; Prasad & Modi, 2020), little is known about how Mizo village leadership, following the abolition of hereditary chieftainship, has adapted within hybrid institutional arrangements. This study, therefore, situates Lunglei's leadership practices within a comparative theoretical framework that integrates social capital theory, leadership studies, and community-driven development perspectives. To operationalise this promise, the chapter begins with an exploration of rural leadership as the first strand of the triad.

1.1 Rural Leadership

Rural leadership, as both a practice and a scholarly construct, must be understood across multiple scales global patterns, national frameworks, and regional

specificities if its role in governance and Development is to be fully appreciated. In agrarian and village-based societies, leadership extends beyond administrative or bureaucratic functions. Leaders serve as custodians of collective identity, mediators of disputes, and mobilisers of community resources (Pretty, 2003). In this sense, leaders embody relational legitimacy, deriving authority less from formal office and more from their ability to cultivate trust, reciprocity, and service. Such relational foundations, however, are not uniform across contexts.

Comparative scholarship underscores both commonalities and variations. In Sub-Saharan Africa, rural leaders mobilise communities for agricultural innovation and natural resource stewardship (Pretty, 2003). In Latin America, they are central to indigenous rights movements and participatory governance initiatives (Bebbington & Carroll, 2000). In Southeast Asia, they contribute to resilience-building in regions vulnerable to environmental risks (Adger, 2003). Despite these differences, a shared theme emerges: village-level leadership consistently shapes collective well-being (Warren, 2016). This pattern highlights that leadership is not a marginal concern but an integral element of development strategies worldwide.

In India, the institutionalisation of decentralised governance through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and the Panchayati Raj system brought rural leadership renewed significance by entrusting local leaders with developmental responsibility. Panchayat representatives are tasked with implementing schemes, creating participatory spaces, and ensuring accountability. However, their effectiveness is often uneven, shaped by caste, kinship, and gender hierarchies (Oommen, 2010; Mishra, 2012). This unevenness, although widespread, is particularly evident in Northeast India, where customary norms, ethnic diversity, and cultural traditions have a strong influence on leadership practices.

Within this regional landscape, Mizoram offers a unique case. Historically governed by hereditary chiefs, Mizo villages underwent a radical transformation when the institution of chieftainship was abolished in the mid-twentieth century. The emergence of Village Councils (VCs) marked the transition to democratic governance. At the same time, voluntary organisations such as the Young Mizo

Association (YMA) and the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) assumed prominent developmental roles. Despite formal change, elements of the older ethos especially deference to communal authority and respect for *tlawmngaihna* continue to inform leadership legitimacy (Kanagaraj & Zonunkima, 2004; 2014; Lalnunhlui, 2018). The result is a hybrid model of leadership that blends tradition with democratic institutions, generating distinctive practices of community mobilisation.

From a theoretical perspective, this hybridity remains underexplored. Nelson (2019) characterises rural leadership as a dynamic process of mobilising collective action and fostering community well-being, while Hemalata & Kumar (2020) emphasise how socio-economic, cultural, and geographical constraints profoundly shape it. Globally, the persistence of disparities in Development between urban and rural areas has reinforced the salience of grassroots leadership (Roldan et al., 2023). In contexts characterised by limited institutional capacity and scarce resources, leaders have a direct influence on the quality-of-service delivery, resilience, and innovation (Stanley & Stanley, 2019; Yu et al., 2024).

This under exploitation is significant because community mobilisation itself is central to Mizoram's developmental landscape. Leaders act as brokers, converting cultural values into collective action, weaving together bonding ties of solidarity and bridging ties to external agencies. However, as existing studies reveal, this process is neither uniform nor automatic. The challenge lies in identifying how leadership perceptions, cultural norms, and institutional practices converge to shape developmental outcomes in Lunglei District.

Rural leadership in Lunglei is best understood as a hybrid, relational process where legitimacy, cultural ethos, and institutional practice converge to mobilise communities and mediate development outcomes.

1.2 Social Capital

Social capital has been one of the most widely debated concepts in sociology, political science, development studies, and social work over the past three decades. At its core, social capital refers to the social structures, networks, norms, and trust that facilitate cooperation and coordination among individuals and groups for mutual

benefit (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). Coleman (1988) approached the concept in terms of resources embedded in social relationships that could be mobilised for action, while Putnam (1993) framed it in terms of civic traditions and trust, demonstrating its role in explaining the performance of democratic institutions in Italy. Bourdieu (1986) added a critical dimension by situating social capital within power relations, highlighting how it may reproduce inequality if concentrated among elites. Taken together, these perspectives establish that social capital is not a unidimensional asset but a multifaceted construct with both inclusive and exclusionary implications.

Building on this multifaceted nature, scholars have refined the concept into three interrelated forms: bonding, bridging, and linking (Woolcock, 1998). Bonding refers to relationships within homogenous groups, such as kinship networks or close community ties, which strengthen solidarity but may also limit openness to outsiders. Bridging highlights connections across heterogeneous groups, allowing for greater diversity of ideas, resources, and opportunities and linking points to vertical connections between communities and formal institutions, such as government agencies, NGOs, and markets. This tripartite framework demonstrates how different social ties can either facilitate or constrain collective action and development outcomes. For example, bonding capital is often crucial in times of crisis, while bridging and linking forms determine whether communities can access external resources for long-term Development.

Complementing this typology, scholars also analyse social capital through three interrelated dimensions: structural, relational, and cognitive (Bassett & Moore, 2013; Cheng et al., 2024). The structural dimension refers to the organisation of networks and roles that enable information flow and collective mobilisation. The relational dimension emphasises the quality of ties, particularly trust, reciprocity, and enforceable obligations. The cognitive dimension highlights shared values, cultural codes, and collective identities that foster cooperation. Together, these three dimensions and three forms create a diagnostic grid that clarifies how social capital can be measured and interpreted in authentic contexts.

These dimensions find resonance in empirical studies worldwide, where social capital has been recognised as a decisive factor in promoting community resilience, sustainable Development, and democratic participation. In Sub-Saharan Africa, it underpins community-based resource management, agricultural innovations, and cooperative labour (Pretty, 2003). In Latin America, networks of solidarity have empowered grassroots movements to influence state policy and secure indigenous rights (Bebbington & Carroll, 2000). In Southeast Asia, particularly in disaster-prone regions, strong networks have enabled collective risk reduction, resource sharing, and resilience-building (Adger, 2003). These examples demonstrate that social capital is not only a community asset but also a mediator between local agency and structural constraints, shaping the effectiveness of development interventions.

In extending from global experiences to the Indian context, the salience of social capital becomes especially visible in the framework of decentralisation. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment of 1992 granted constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions, designed to bring governance closer to the people and empower marginalised groups. Social capital in this setting operates through both formal mechanisms, such as Gram Sabhas, and informal networks of kinship, caste, and neighbourhood relations (Prasad & Modi, 2020). These informal ties can strengthen participation when mobilising people around shared concerns, but may also weaken it when clientelism and factionalism dominate (Oommen, 2010). Regional variations remain striking: Kerala's participatory planning traditions have enhanced the value of social capital, while in other states, entrenched hierarchies have constrained its egalitarian potential (Mishra, 2012). This uneven landscape illustrates that social capital in India is neither uniformly distributed nor uniformly beneficial.

This unevenness is particularly marked in the Northeastern region, where distinctive cultural and historical conditions shape its forms. Mizoram, for example, has long cultivated community solidarity through the ethic of *tlawmngaihna*, which emphasises altruism, self-sacrifice, and collective responsibility (Lalchungnunga, 2020). Even after the abolition of hereditary chieftainship, this ethos continued to shape social interactions, ensuring that cooperation remained a cornerstone of village

life. Village Councils and local organisations today build upon this cultural inheritance, integrating modern governance structures with traditional values of solidarity. Social capital in rural Mizoram thus manifests in both formal and informal practices ranging from cooperative farming and collective labour to church-based welfare initiatives. During periods of crisis, such as past insurgencies or present environmental challenges, these networks of trust and reciprocity have proven indispensable to resilience and recovery.

The regional distinctiveness of Mizoram underscores the importance of context-specific studies. While the frameworks of bonding, bridging, and linking are analytically useful, they require interpretation in light of cultural traditions and historical legacies. The ethic of *tlawmngaihna*, for instance, cannot be reduced to bonding ties alone, as it extends obligation beyond kinship and fosters wider cohesion. Similarly, the transition from hereditary chiefs to elected village councils illustrates how traditional and modern forms of leadership coexist, mediated through networks of trust and cooperation. What emerges is a picture of social capital as both cultural inheritance and developmental resource, simultaneously rooted in tradition and adaptable to contemporary governance.

From global theory to Indian decentralisation and finally Mizoram's *tlawmngaihna* ethos, social capital emerges as a multidimensional construct that sustains cooperation, mediates between agency and structure, and enables community development. This recognition serves as the logical foundation for the subsequent discussion of community development, where these relational resources are translated into collective outcomes.

1.3 Community Development

Community development can be understood as both a philosophy and a practice that emphasises empowering communities to collaborate in improving their living conditions and social well-being. The United Nations, in its early formulation, described community development as a process designed to create conditions for economic and social progress through the active participation of the entire community (United Nations, 1963). Over time, the concept evolved to highlight not

only growth in economic and material terms but also the significance of participation, inclusion, and ownership of decisions by local populations (Ledwith, 2011). This emphasis on community agency establishes that community development is not merely the implementation of externally driven projects, but rather the active shaping of collective futures by communities themselves.

In continuation of this shift, contemporary scholarship positions community development as a crucial mechanism for translating global commitments into local practice. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations in 2015, reaffirm that inclusive and sustainable growth cannot be achieved without grassroots involvement. At this level, community development serves as the operational bridge, transforming macro-level goals, such as education, health, gender equality, and climate action, into tangible, people-centred initiatives. Thus, while leadership supplies vision and mobilisation, and social capital sustains cooperation and trust, it is community development that materialises these forces into structured, participatory, and enduring outcomes.

This participatory model found early expression in post-independence India, where the Community Development Programme of 1952 institutionalised participatory Development through village-level planning. Although its achievements were uneven, the programme left an enduring legacy: it firmly established the principle that Development must be locally grounded and people-centred. These lessons informed the later introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions, which sought to decentralise governance by entrusting elected representatives with authority at the village level (Mathew, 1994). Over time, Panchayati Raj has become the bedrock of rural governance in India, providing a platform where leadership, social capital, and community aspirations can converge. The multidimensional nature of community development in this context goes beyond economic growth to encompass improvements in social cohesion, education, health, and gender equity (Prasad & Modi, 2020).

This convergence at the national level sets the stage for understanding how regional variations such as those in Northeast India mediate these processes. The

region's diverse ethnic composition, strong village-based institutions, and reliance on customary governance systems have fostered distinctive models of participatory Development. Traditional clan-based decision-making structures continue to coexist with formal state institutions, resulting in hybrid governance practices. However, geographic isolation, infrastructural deficits, and economic marginalisation place additional burdens on local communities, making community-driven initiatives essential for sustainable progress. This combination of structural constraint and cultural vitality underscores why Northeast India requires context-sensitive approaches to Development.

Within this regional mosaic, Mizoram provides a particularly illustrative case. Here, community development is deeply intertwined with social capital and leadership practices rooted in local institutions. Village Councils act as statutory governing bodies, while voluntary organisations such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP), and Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP) play active roles in mobilising collective labour, resolving conflicts, and implementing welfare initiatives. The Church also provides a robust moral and organisational foundation, shaping values of cooperation and offering platforms for community engagement. In practice, community development in Mizoram often extends beyond state-directed schemes, drawing on *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* as indigenous modes of solidarity and collective action (Lalchungnunga, 2020). However, persistent challenges such as economic dependency, inadequate infrastructure, and limited employment opportunities demand innovative strategies that combine these traditions with contemporary governance frameworks.

Beyond regional practices, theoretical perspectives clarify the enduring significance of community development. Its import lies in its threefold emphasis on participation, empowerment, and local ownership (Kabeer, 1999; Cornwall, 2008). Participation ensures that communities are active agents rather than passive recipients, supported by bonding and bridging forms of social capital. Empowerment expands individual and collective capacities to influence decisions, access resources, and challenge hierarchies. Local ownership, finally, guarantees sustainability by rooting initiatives in community priorities rather than external agendas (Chambers,

1997). Each of these principles resonates strongly with Mizoram's communal ethos, where leaders mobilise trust, reciprocity, and labour for shared goals. However, as studies remind us, these ideals can be compromised by tokenistic participation or the reproduction of social inequalities (Portes, 1998). For this reason, community development must always be critically assessed to ensure that empowerment is substantive rather than symbolic, and that ownership reflects genuine local agency.

Thus, from India's Panchayati Raj foundations to Northeast India's hybrid institutions and Mizoram's communitarian ethos, community development emerges as a participatory process that translates leadership vision and social capital into sustainable outcomes. In Mizoram, it represents both cultural heritage and adaptive innovation, preparing the ground for examining how leadership, social capital, and community development interact in Lunglei District.

1.4 Leadership, Social Capital, and Development

Rural leadership, social capital, and community development are not independent domains but deeply interwoven processes that together determine the quality of life and resilience of rural communities. Leadership, understood as the ability to mobilise collective action and articulate community aspirations, provides strategic direction and fosters legitimacy (Shetunyenga, 2024). Social capital, defined through networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity, supplies the relational resources that strengthen cooperation and sustain problem-solving (Perkins et al., 2002). Community development, in turn, is the arena where these two forces are materialised into tangible and intangible outcomes: infrastructure, services, and livelihoods on one hand, and trust, inclusion, and well-being on the other. The synergy among these three creates a virtuous cycle in which each element reinforces the others, providing the foundation for sustainable transformation.

This cyclical reinforcement finds its clearest expression in leadership's catalytic role. Effective leaders act as brokers who build and utilise social capital, nurturing bonding ties to sustain solidarity, cultivating bridging ties to connect diverse groups, and forging linking ties to access external resources (Akazawa et al., 2009). Strong social networks and collective trust, in turn, amplify the legitimacy

and reach of leadership, making cooperation across heterogeneous communities more likely (Bebbington & Perreault, 1999). When these relational resources are mobilised effectively, they enable community development strategies that are participatory, empowering, and locally owned. Conversely, where leadership is weak or social capital is fragmented, development interventions falter, producing outcomes that are externally imposed and short-lived.

These limitations underscore the importance of the interaction between leadership and social capital in rural contexts, where formal institutions often face capacity and resource constraints. Leaders in such settings frequently serve as brokers, translating community concerns into institutional language and external resources into culturally meaningful practices. Social capital provides the trust and cooperation that enable this brokerage to be effective, ensuring that collective projects whether in education, health, infrastructure, or livelihoods gain traction and momentum. This dependency on local dynamics means that community development is neither an abstract policy nor a state-centric initiative but a lived process of negotiation, mobilisation, and adaptation (Monda et al., 2023).

To analyse this lived process more systematically, scholars highlight the three interrelated dimensions of social capital: structural, relational, and cognitive. Structural networks facilitate the flow of information and collective decision-making, while relational trust reduces transaction costs and fosters reciprocity. Cognitive frameworks of shared values provide a moral compass for cooperation (Bassett & Moore, 2013; Cheng et al., 2024). Leadership weaves through each of these dimensions, activating structural networks, cultivating relational trust, and reinforcing cognitive values through narrative and vision. Community development, in turn, is the operational expression of these dimensions, where networks become organisations, trust becomes cooperation, and values become strategies.

This general pattern of interdependence takes a distinctive cultural form in Mizoram, where the communitarian ethos of *tlawmngaihna* and the practice of *hnatlang* inflect leadership and social capital with moral meaning. Leaders draw legitimacy not only from formal authority but also from their capacity to embody the

ideals of selfless service and collective responsibility. In this context, social capital is not merely a resource, but a moral obligation that binds individuals to communal goals. Community development initiatives whether undertaken by Village Councils, the YMA, or the Church are thus both administrative interventions and ethical projects, blending governance with cultural duty. This convergence demonstrates that leadership, social capital, and Development cannot be separated in practice; they constitute a single field of relational governance.

Thus, the interdependence of leadership and social capital, analysed through structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions, finds distinctive expression in Mizoram's communitarian ethos, where cultural values transform abstract frameworks into lived developmental practices. Recognising this triadic synergy sets the stage for the theoretical framework of the study, where these interdependencies are systematically conceptualised and operationalised.

1.5 Overview of Literature

The literature on rural leadership, social capital, and community development has developed along multiple strands across global, Indian, and regional contexts. Globally, scholars have examined the role of leadership in mobilising participation, building trust, and fostering sustainable Development (Bassett & Moore, 2013; Northouse, 2019). Social capital has been theorised as both a resource and a relational fabric that enables cooperation and collective action (Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 2000). Community development, in turn, has been framed as a participatory and empowerment-oriented process that transforms structural constraints into opportunities for locally driven change (Chambers, 1997; Ledwith, 2011). Extending this line of thought, Indian literature translates these global ideals into decentralised frameworks shaped by the country's federal and village-level governance structures.

At the national level, Indian studies have sought to contextualise community development within decentralised governance and grassroots participation. Much attention has been given to the evolution of Panchayati Raj institutions and their role in empowering rural communities (Mathew, 1994; Prasad & Modi, 2020). In Northeast India, scholars have emphasised the ongoing importance of customary

institutions, ethnic diversity, and hybrid governance structures in shaping development outcomes (Baruah, 2004). Against this backdrop, Mizoram-specific works have offered valuable insights into the communitarian ethos and participatory traditions embedded in village life. Bandyopadhyay (1999) documented how cultural values inform participatory governance. Kanagaraj and Zonunkima (2019) analysed the role of voluntary organisations such as the YMA in mobilising collective labour and mediating development. Lalnunhlui (2017) highlighted the influence of women's groups in sustaining social networks and enabling welfare initiatives. Taken together, these Mizoram-focused contributions, when situated within the broader literature, establish an empirical foundation for understanding the state's distinctive social fabric.

Placed within this regional context, several prior positions in the literature can be identified. First, leadership in rural contexts is a central factor in shaping development trajectories, whether through elected institutions or voluntary associations. Second, social capital is widely recognised as a critical resource that enables cooperation and resilience, particularly in marginalised or resource-constrained settings. Third, community development is consistently framed as participatory, people-centred, and empowerment-driven, whether in global or Indian contexts. Fourth, the Mizoram-specific scholarship confirms the enduring strength of cultural values, such as *tlawmngaihna*, and practices like *hnatlang*, in sustaining collective action. However, these positions, while illuminating, often remain fragmented, treating leadership, social capital, and Development as parallel rather than fully integrated domains.

Consequently, this fragmentation reveals several critical gaps. Most prominently, existing works have not sufficiently analysed the transformational aspects of leadership its capacity to inspire moral vision, foster innovation, and sustain resilience over time. The mediation of cultural ethos within theories of social capital also remains underexplored, leaving unanswered questions about how values such as *tlawmngaihna* translate into practical governance. Furthermore, while community development has been documented extensively, there is limited research that explicitly examines its interdependence with leadership and social capital in the

specific context of Mizoram. This neglect of integration weakens the explanatory power of the literature, making it difficult to show how these three forces jointly shape rural transformation.

To overcome these shortcomings and advance the discourse, the present study constructs an integrative perspective on leadership, social capital, and community development. This reconstruction highlights leadership not only as administrative direction but also as transformational vision rooted in cultural ideals. It reinterprets social capital as more than a set of relational networks, emphasising its moral obligations and cultural mediation in the context of Mizoram. It reconceptualises community development as a field where leadership and social capital converge into lived practices of relational governance. This holistic reconstruction not only enriches the analysis but also prepares the ground for a theoretical framework that is both empirically grounded and culturally resonant.

Thus, although prior works establish the value of rural leadership, social capital, and Development, their fragmented treatment necessitates critique and reconstruction. By mapping global, Indian, and regional scholarship, identifying prior positions, critiquing their limits, and proposing an integrative approach, this section demonstrates why a triadic framework is necessary. The logical movement from prior positions to critique and reconstruction naturally leads to the theoretical framework in the next section, where the synergy of leadership, social capital, and community development will be systematically elaborated.

1.6 Theoretical Framework of the Study

The present study situates its analysis at the village level, where leadership, social capital, and Development intersect most visibly. Leadership is understood here as community leadership formal and informal practices through which individuals mobilise collective action and mediate between institutions and villagers. Social capital is delineated through the widely accepted tripartite framework of bonding, bridging, and linking ties (Woolcock, 1998). By setting these boundaries, the study avoids conceptual inflation while retaining analytical clarity. Building on this definitional clarity, a theoretical framework is required not merely to collate

descriptive findings but to move towards systematic explanation. Without such grounding, the analysis risks offering narratives without interpretive depth. Theory provides the scaffolding through which relationships among leadership, social capital, and community development can be tested, explained, and generalised. It also ensures coherence between research questions, design, and analysis, while enabling the results to speak to broader debates in rural Development, governance, and social work.

The propositions of this study are not speculative but are supported by comparative evidence. Studies from Poland and China show how transformational leaders sustain participatory engagement (Springer et al., 2020; Liu & Han, 2023). Research in the Lao PDR demonstrates that community health programmes depend on leadership that cultivates trust and transparency (Kim et al., 2016). In Indonesia, Village Community Organisations illustrate how collective participation can be mobilised for Development (Nurlinah & Haryanto, 2024). In Ghana, leadership legitimacy has proven central to community-based resource management (Owusu-Ansah, 2020). Taken together, these cases suggest that the synergy of leadership and social capital is decisive in shaping community outcomes. The lessons from Poland, China, Lao PDR, Indonesia, and Ghana can therefore be extended to Mizoram, where leadership and social capital are deeply embedded in cultural ethos. Practices such as *tlawmngaihna* (altruistic obligation) and *hnatlang* (collective labour) embody the structural and relational dimensions of social capital. Village councils, churches, and voluntary associations act as leadership platforms, blending traditional authority with participatory ideals. Extending comparative insights to this context reveals both resonance since trust and cooperation are central everywhere and divergence, as these are uniquely moralised in Mizo society.

Rural leadership in this context is relational, adaptive, and embedded within the social fabric. Legitimacy is derived less from positional authority than from trust, reciprocity, and a service-oriented approach. Leaders act as brokers, mediators, and mobilisers, sustaining community well-being through caregiving, conflict resolution, and developmental visioning (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007). If leadership highlights agency and mediation, social capital illuminates the relational fabric that sustains these

efforts. Global theories illuminate these dynamics when extended into Mizoram's hybrid ecology. Transformational leadership explains the ability of leaders to articulate shared visions and inspire cooperation (Bass, 1990). Servant leadership underscores humility and community-first orientation (Greenleaf, 1977). Distributed leadership highlights collective practices that resonate strongly in participatory traditions. In Mizoram, village councils, churches, and voluntary organisations reflect a hybrid model that blends these perspectives. However, structural barriers temper these ideals. Gender inequities restrict women's entry into leadership roles despite their active contribution to community life. Migration and youth outflow weaken leadership pipelines. Structural poverty limits the resources leaders can mobilise. These realities show that leadership remains embedded in broader socio-economic constraints.

Alongside these leadership dynamics, social capital deepens the analysis by focusing on the value of relationships, trust, and reciprocity. Classical perspectives frame it differently: Coleman (1988) emphasised its functional role in enabling purposive action, Bourdieu (1986) highlighted its embeddedness in durable networks that may reproduce privilege, and Putnam (2000) stressed its civic dimension linking associational life with democratic vitality. Contemporary scholarship converges on three dimensions: structural (network configuration), relational (trust and reciprocity), and cognitive (shared values and meanings) (Bassett & Moore, 2013; Cheng et al., 2024). In Mizoram, *tlawmngaihna* captures the cognitive and moral dimension of altruism, while *hnatlang* illustrates structural and relational capital through collective labour. Voluntary organisations such as the YMA and MHIP institutionalise these networks, embedding them within development practice. However, social capital also has a darker side. Dense bonding ties may entrench exclusion, clientelism, or patronage systems. Linking ties can reinforce dependency on state actors rather than empower communities. This recognition ensures analytical balance and prevents over-romanticisation.

In relation to leadership and social capital, community development completes the triad, understood both as a process and as an outcome. As a process, it involves participatory planning, empowerment, and collective mobilisation. As a

result, it is measured in both material terms, such as infrastructure, income, and services, and subjective dimensions, including satisfaction, trust, and a sense of belonging. Its central purpose is to enable empowerment, ownership, and sustainability, as development is durable only when communities perceive initiatives as their own rather than externally imposed (Chambers, 1997). With leadership and social capital clarified, community development translates these into tangible outcomes. However, participatory rhetoric can sometimes mask tokenism. In specific contexts, inclusion is symbolic rather than substantive, and entrenched hierarchies continue to limit voice and agency (Cornwall, 2008). These counterexamples reveal the risks of idealising participation without scrutinising power. This balanced convergence between leadership and social capital is operationalised through community development, which acts as the arena where empowerment, participation, and sustainability take practical shape.

From this triadic convergence, the framework integrates three complementary lenses. Social capital highlights the relational resources of trust and reciprocity. Leadership theories emphasise the agency of leaders in mobilising and sustaining these resources. Community-driven development positions these dynamics within participatory structures that enable empowerment and ownership. Their integration provides conceptual clarity and interpretive richness, preparing the ground for analysing leadership role perception, social networks, and Development outcomes in Mizoram.

1.7 Statement of the Problem

Although Mizo villages are widely recognised for their strong traditions of solidarity and cooperation, developmental outcomes across them remain uneven. This unevenness becomes clearer when we observe that while solidarity is present across all villages, some communities translate collective energy into visible improvements in infrastructure, livelihoods, and well-being. In contrast, others falter despite comparable cultural resources. This raises a central research doubt: why do some villages with strong solidarity succeed in achieving development outcomes, while others fail? The present study aims to address this divergence in village

outcomes by examining the interplay between leadership and social capital. It examines the specific configurations of leadership and community networks that account for these differences. The purpose is not only to address an empirical gap but also to generate insights that can inform interventions at the micro, meso, and macro levels in Mizoram and similar regions. Clarifying the dynamics of leadership and social capital in this context requires framing precise research questions that are tailored to the specific context.

1.8 Research Questions

The transition from problem to inquiry is made explicit through the following questions:

1. What are the demographic, social, economic, political, and organisational bases of community leadership?
2. How do rural leaders perceive and enact their roles?
3. What forms of social capital; bonding, bridging, and linking are most influential in producing developmental outcomes in Mizoram villages?

These questions follow directly from the statement of the problem. Together, they ensure alignment with the theoretical framework and provide a coherent basis for empirical analysis. Furthermore, building on this connection, the questions also anchor the study's expected contributions.

1.9 Contributions and Utility

These contributions directly flow from the questions posed and also respond to the uneven development outcomes highlighted earlier. The study makes contributions at three levels. At the scholarly level, it enriches the literature on rural leadership, social capital, and community development by presenting a case-based analysis from Northeast India, a region underrepresented in mainstream debates. At the policy level, it provides evidence that can inform the design of leadership training, social capital strengthening, and participatory planning strategies. At the practice level, it highlights implications for social work by situating leadership and

social capital within cultural norms, thereby offering a framework for locally grounded yet transferable practice. Beyond Mizoram, the study's insights extend to other hilly and communitarian contexts whether in Northeast India, Southeast Asia, or Africa where solidarity is strong but development outcomes remain uneven. Since these contributions must be communicated with clarity, the thesis follows a structured chapter scheme.

1.10 Chapter Scheme

This scheme provides the logical scaffolding for presenting the study's arguments. The thesis is organised into ten chapters, each building on the previous to construct a coherent whole. Chapter I introduces the problem and framework. Chapter II reviews the literature, highlighting both global and local scholarship and identifying research gaps. Chapter III outlines the methodology, justifying the mixed-methods approach and the data collection strategies employed. Chapter IV presents the historical and infrastructural bases of rural communities in Lunglei District. Chapter V analyses the social composition of the selected village communities. Chapter VI examines the social background of community leaders. Chapter VII explores the interrelationship between community leadership and social capital. Chapter VIII examines the relationship between community leadership, social capital, and rural Development. Chapter IX presents an integrated discussion of the results from the preceding five chapters. Chapter X synthesises conclusions, outlines limitations, and suggests directions for further research. Together, these chapters ensure progression from literature to methodology, from empirical findings to discussion, and from implications to conclusion.

Taken together, the research questions, contributions, and chapter scheme create a coherent bridge from the initial problem statement to the design and organisation of the study, laying a logically sequenced foundation for investigating how leadership and social capital shape community development in Mizoram.

CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter systematically reviews and synthesises literature on rural leadership, social capital, and community development, positioning them as interdependent domains that together illuminate the pathways of rural transformation. These three domains form the conceptual triad through which rural change can be understood.

Specifically, within this triad, leadership provides direction and authority, social capital offers the relational glue of trust, reciprocity, and cooperation, and community development frames the collective pursuit of equity, participation, and resilience.

Building on this conceptual triad, the review proceeds in five sections. Section 2.1 introduces the core concepts. Section 2.2 turns to global perspectives. Section 2.3 narrows the lens to India, Northeast India, and Mizoram. Section 2.4 integrates these strands, examining how leadership, community power, and social capital converge to shape development outcomes. Finally, Section 2.5 identifies the key gaps in the literature; conceptual, contextual, and cultural.

Recognising these absences clarifies why a layered and comparative review structure is necessary. By moving from conceptual foundations to global debates, from Indian to Northeast Indian and Mizo experiences, and from integrative analysis to identified gaps, this chapter not only situates the present study within the broader scholarly discourse but also establishes its unique contribution: an empirically grounded and culturally sensitive framework that links leadership, social capital, and community development in Mizoram's rural context.

2.1 Conceptual Foundations

The literature reveals that rural transformation rests on an interdependent triad of leadership, social capital, and community development; each indispensable yet insufficient on its own. Leadership provides direction and mobilisation; social capital supplies the relational capacity for cooperation; and community development

frames these forces toward equity, solidarity, and resilience. This interdependence becomes clearer when each domain is examined in turn.

2.1.1 Rural Leadership

Rural leadership has long been regarded as the cornerstone of governance and collective solidarity. Classic analyses moved beyond heroic individual accounts to frame leadership as a multi-arena phenomenon visible through positions, reputations, and decisions (Bonjean & Olson, 1964). Contemporary research extends this view, emphasising the contextual nature of leadership. In rural settings, it often functions through informal networks that are adaptive yet fragmented, lacking institutional support (Mubangizi, 2024).

Equally significant are leadership styles. Authoritarian and pseudo-democratic approaches tend to limit participation, whereas transformational leadership inspires trust, inclusion, and sustainability in community initiatives (Olanipekun et al., 2025). A pluralist perspective further broadens the lens, presenting leadership as dynamic and relational, one that crosses boundaries between formal and informal authority (Harter, 2024).

Taken together, these studies converge on the insight that leadership is not a fixed attribute of individuals but a practice embedded in networks, trust, and institutions. Table 2.1.1 consolidates these themes. However, direction alone is insufficient; the relational infrastructure of social capital must sustain it.

2.1.2 Social Capital

If leadership provides direction, social capital supplies the relational glue that sustains cooperation. Defined by trust, reciprocity, cohesion, and networks, it operates across bonding, bridging, and linking levels (Xin, 2018). Studies in disaster contexts demonstrate their value: trust and cohesion enhance collective action in flood-prone communities (Chen et al., 2024), while kinship-based networks shape recovery in Indonesian villages, though effectiveness varies across cultures (Nugraha et al., 2024).

Social capital, however, is deeply context-dependent. It is shaped by local housing patterns, kinship relations, and cultural norms, resulting in uneven distribution across communities. Scholars also disagree on its foundations: some see it as rooted in moral norms and values, while others interpret it as the outcome of everyday associational life (Oladipo, 2023). Despite this debate, social capital has proven practical utility, whether in refugee resettlement, professional collaboration, or community health systems, where it is operationalised through trust, reciprocity, and networks (Westphaln et al., 2020).

Overall, social capital emerges as both a resource and a process, enabling communities to cooperate, adapt, and endure. Table 2.1.2 summarises these perspectives. However, networks and trust alone do not guarantee well-being; they must be channelled into the purposive framework of community development.

2.1.3 Community Development

Community development provides the normative and practical framework for translating leadership and social capital into collective well-being. Classic theories of development emphasised solidarity and agency. However, newer approaches add capacity as a third pillar, acknowledging the importance of skills and resources alongside unity and will (Hains, 2023).

At a practical level, community development addresses the inequities of globalisation, urbanisation, and rural marginalisation. In Eastern Europe, for example, rural disadvantage has been exacerbated by global transitions, making participatory approaches essential for social cohesion (Haraz & Istudor, 2024). Similarly, integrated strategies that span education, health, the economy, and the environment demonstrate that sustainable outcomes require holistic participation (Susanti et al., 2025). Asset-building approaches such as vocational training and microfinance enhance socio-economic resilience, particularly when gender inclusivity is prioritised (Yar & Rahmani, 2025).

Despite these advances, implementation remains difficult. Communities facing oppression, disorganisation, and weakened cohesion often struggle to translate development principles into practice (Žganec & Opačić, 2021). This underscores that

development is not merely a technical exercise but also a cultural and political process. Table 2.1.3 captures these insights. This recognition of community development as cultural and political highlights its close interdependence with leadership and social capital.

Across these domains, a clear pattern emerges. Leadership provides direction, social capital provides cooperation, and community development provides purpose. Each is indispensable, yet none functions effectively in isolation. Their interaction explains why some communities mobilise successfully while others falter. Table 2.1.4 depicts this integrative triad, offering a conceptual map that underpins the review of global perspectives in the next section.

2.2 Global Perspectives

Rural transformation has been examined globally in ways that highlight the interdependence of leadership, social capital, and community development. By situating these three domains within broader comparative contexts, we can observe both their universal features and their cultural specificities. This section reviews global scholarship under three interlinked themes leadership, social capital, and community development followed by an integrative note.

2.2.1 Rural Leadership and Power Structures

Global studies of rural leadership consistently show that power is negotiated, plural, and deeply relational. From the mid-twentieth-century community power debates, Bonjean and Olson (1964) demonstrated how leadership appears differently depending on whether one observes positions, reputations, or decision-making events. Their framework, now foundational, illustrates that authority cannot be confined to officeholders alone but must be studied across multiple arenas (Table 2.2.1).

Building on this multi-arena view, contemporary research extends the analysis by emphasising relational and adaptive practices. Mubangizi (2024) highlights, for instance, how African rural leaders function as brokers between formal institutions and informal networks, mediating participation and resource

flows. Harter (2024) reframes this as a pluralistic turn in leadership studies, where practice is distributed across individuals, groups, and institutions. Empirical findings, such as those of Olanipekun et al. (2025) in Southwest Nigeria, confirm that transformational leaders though less common produce more sustainable development outcomes than autocratic or pseudo-democratic leaders. Collectively, these perspectives underscore that leadership is neither heroic nor fixed, but embedded in webs of negotiation, legitimacy, and influence (see Table 2.2.1).

While negotiation anchors authority, cooperation requires a deeper glue namely, social capital. However, leadership alone cannot sustain collective action unless embedded in trust and reciprocity, which directs our attention to the second theme.

2.2.2 Social Capital in Global Rural Development

Across diverse contexts, social capital emerges as a crucial determinant of resilience, cooperation, and inclusion. Chen et al. (2024) demonstrate that trust, reciprocity, cohesion, and efficacy strengthen collective action in flood-prone Chinese communities, while Nugraha et al. (2024) show how social networks motivate recovery in rural Indonesia, albeit with context-specific variations. In refugee studies, Xin (2018) identifies bonding, bridging, and linking capital as mechanisms through which displaced populations secure livelihoods and health, highlighting the layered nature of social connectedness.

Theoretical debates sharpen this picture. Oladipo (2023) reviews how social capital has been conceptualised as either norms and moral values or associational life and daily interactions, affirming it as a relational resource despite disagreements about its status as "capital." In applied fields, Westphaln et al. (2020) clarify its operational use in nursing by identifying core attributes networks, trust, reciprocity, and cohesion that support both patient care and professional collaboration. Thus, while social capital sustains cooperation, its transformative potential emerges only when channelled into broader frameworks of equity and empowerment (Table 2.2.2).

This reliance on negotiated trust naturally raises the question of what structures these cooperative energies, leading scholars to examine community development frameworks.

2.2.3 Community Development Frameworks

The literature on community development highlights both normative aspirations and practical challenges. Haraz and Istudor (2024) examine rural Romania, where globalisation and urbanisation have deepened disparities, arguing for participatory strategies that sustain cohesion and reduce exclusion. Hains (2023) advances this by proposing the Foundational Phases for Community Development (FPDCD) model, which extends Bhattacharyya's solidarity–agency framework by incorporating capacity, thereby offering a phased tool for resilience and empowerment.

Participatory strategies also play a prominent role in Southeast Asia. Susanti et al. (2025) show that multi-sector integration combining education, health, economy, and environment produces holistic sustainability when residents are actively engaged in decision-making. In contrast, Yar and Rahmani (2025) focus on post-crisis settings, finding that vocational training, microfinance, and gender-inclusive initiatives enhance socio-economic resilience and contribute to poverty reduction. At the same time, Žganec and Opačić (2021) remind us that principles such as equity, inclusion, and community ownership often encounter severe obstacles in deprived contexts, where disorganisation and weakened social cohesion constrain participation. Collectively, these perspectives highlight that community development is not merely about resources but about cultural negotiation, institutional capacity, and participatory ethics (Table 2.2.3).

If leadership directs and social capital sustains, then community development provides the framework through which these resources are translated into a collective purpose.

Across global contexts, three patterns consistently emerge: leadership provides direction, social capital sustains cooperation, and community development frames purpose. Each domain is contingent on the others leadership without trust

fragments, social capital without direction stagnates, and development without equity excludes. These interdependencies are mapped in Table 2.2.4.

By synthesising insights from diverse regions, we see that rural transformation is both universal and context-specific. Leadership is refracted through plural authority structures, social capital is fostered through cultural and institutional ties, and global pressures and local capacities facilitate community development. Thus, leadership directs, social capital sustains, and community development frames collective action, together forming the global triad of rural transformation (Table 2.2.4).

Taken together, these insights converge on an integrative pattern that now provides the backdrop for examining India and Northeast India, where similar dynamics unfold within distinctive caste, institutional, and cultural ecologies.

2.3 Rural Leadership, Power, and Governance in India

Rural leadership and governance in India unfold within a complex and multi-layered terrain where institutions, cultural norms, and power dynamics intersect. Unlike universal models that assume linear decentralisation, the Indian context reveals a mosaic of formal panchayats, informal councils, caste hierarchies, and moral infrastructures that continually recalibrate authority. To appreciate these dynamics, this section examines three interconnected scales: India-wide debates on decentralisation and caste, Northeast India's institutional heterogeneity and autonomy struggles, and Mizoram's distinctive moral-institutional ecology. Each subsection highlights how leadership and power are structured, legitimised, and contested, while the closing note identifies research gaps that shape the present study.

2.3.1 India

To begin, this section focuses on India as a whole, where rural authority is negotiated through panchayats, informal local governance institutions, caste-based hierarchies, and vernacular idioms of power. The analytical task is to see how these layers align in practice. A helpful starting point is Daftary's (2010) study, "Elected

Leaders, Community and Development," which combines structural equation modelling with ethnography to examine how panchayat leaders distribute development benefits. Daftary demonstrates that lineage-based representation, rather than wealth, has a significant influence on distributional outcomes, while political brokers expand access beyond the elite. This finding tempers fears of elite capture by suggesting that electoral incentives and brokerage may create spaces for more equitable development.

Ribadeau Dumas (2023) introduces the experiential scale by illustrating how idioms such as *tāqat* and *śakti* convey power in everyday life, suggesting that governance should be studied as a layered practice. Pur (2007), in contrast, focuses on institutional layering and shows how informal local governance institutions (ILGIs) and panchayats coexist in Karnataka. Sarvesh (2022) highlights how caste hierarchies filter these synergies, while Saito-Jensen et al. (2010) examine community-based natural resource management and the potential for elite capture. Das (2005) critiques optimistic social capital theories, pointing to low trust in officials in Orissa villages. McAreavey (2006) foregrounds micro-politics within development groups, while Fanelli (1956) provides an early relational typology of leadership as interaction rather than attributes.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that rural leadership and power in India are best understood as a complex interplay of layered negotiations structural, cultural, institutional, caste-based, and interpersonal. The fragility of democratic potential emerges as a central theme: always fragile, but never absent. The layered negotiations described above are evident in Table 2.1, which maps how different studies situate leadership within overlapping institutional and cultural frameworks. The fragility of democratic potential in Indian rural governance takes a distinctive form in the Northeast, where institutions, autonomy claims, and customary practices recalibrate similar tensions in a unique political ecology.

2.3.2 Northeast India

In the Northeast, leadership and power are produced through a customary–ADC–party/state triad, refracted by security-led development, and recalibrated by

vernacular claims to autonomy. Thongkhohal Haokip (2021, 2022) recovers the democratic core of traditional councils direct or representative participation organised through clans, with consensus as the operative norm while cautioning against their drift into oligarchy without reform. Dasgupta (1997) highlights constructive constitutionalism through the Sixth Schedule, while vernacular politics scholarship (e.g., Wouters, 2022) demonstrates how democracy is expressed here through local idioms rather than solely through federal frameworks. Baruah (2003) critiques the “cosmetic federal” order in Arunachal Pradesh, McDuie-Ra (2008) links poverty in Meghalaya to security-first agendas, and Guyot-Réchart (2013) shows that state-making and nation-building can diverge. Karlsson (2001) highlights autonomy movements in Bodoland and Nagaland, while Kipgen (2017) and Dukpa et al. (2024) demonstrate how dams and hydropower reconfigure power and notions of belonging.

The fragility of democratic practice identified in India resurfaces in the Northeast, though refracted through the coexistence of customary councils, ADCs, and state institutions. Table 2.2 provides an overview of this triadic order, highlighting how different scholars emphasise its democratic, constitutional, and developmental dimensions. The layered negotiations seen in India thus reappear in the Northeast but are refracted through a distinct triadic institutional order. This refracted democracy sets the stage for Mizoram, where moral infrastructures, institutions, and urban transformations intertwine.

2.3.3 Mizoram

Mizoram presents a distinctive case where rural leadership is shaped as much by moral infrastructures such as *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* as by formal institutions like Village Councils, YMA, MHIP, MUP, and Churches. These principles of selflessness, mutual aid, and communal responsibility (Shyamkishor, 2016; Chakraborty, 2012) operate as ethical infrastructures linking cultural norms to governance procedures. Village Councils, the YMA, the MHIP, the MUP, and Churches translate these ethical expectations into action, co-running welfare schemes, disaster relief, and development programmes (Mitra & Das, 2023; Gupta et

al., 2000). This moral–institutional synthesis strengthens social capital and service delivery, even as urbanisation, denominational diversification, and digital communication reshape practices (Cardozo, 2023). The nuances of this moral–institutional ecology are detailed in Table 2.3, which compares how scholars treat *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* as ethical infrastructures.

Recent literatures, however, shows that we still know too little about how *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* concretely sustain collective action or mediate state–community interaction. Debate persists over whether these norms persist or erode under modern pressures (Head, 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2012). Understanding Mizoram’s moral–institutional order is essential, yet it also highlights the absence of integrated frameworks an absence that becomes clearer in the following discussion of research gaps.

2.4 Rural Leadership, Community Power, Social Capital, and development

While the previous section explored institutional and regional variations in rural governance, this section examines the relational dimensions of leadership how community power is structured, how social capital sustains cooperation, how development is framed through these dynamics, and how these strands converge into integrative frameworks. Section 2.4.1 revisits classic debates on who holds power; Section 2.4.2 explains why cooperation persists through social capital; Section 2.4.3 links these to development outcomes and evaluation.

2.4.1 Rural Leadership and Community Power

Beyond institutions and moral frameworks, the literature on India’s rural society has grappled with a persistent question: how is community power structured, and how does leadership emerge within it? Early debates set homogeneity against heterogeneity as drivers of concentrated or diffused power, while later studies examined how Panchayati Raj embeds leadership within everyday governance. However, these claims often outpace their evidentiary bases, making methodology the hinge of the debate.

Speight (1971) offers a critical commentary on Oommen's (1970) study of community power structures and rural leadership in India, particularly the claim that homogeneity within a community leads to concentrated, monolithic power, while heterogeneity promotes a more multidimensional power structure. Speight challenges Oommen's approach, pointing out limitations such as the small sample size (four villages), reliance on only two variables (number of castes and occupational diversity), and the lack of rigorous statistical testing. His reanalysis of Oommen's material showed that correlations between diversity and participation in the power pool were often insignificant or negative. In fact, his results suggested the opposite: more heterogeneous communities often displayed more concentrated leadership, with homogeneity in indicators such as income, education, social participation, and occupation being negatively related to influence concentration.

Together, Oommen's claims, Speight's critique, and Panchayati Raj performance studies destabilise the assumption that social composition determines power concentration in predictable ways. By contrast with Oommen's assumptions, Speight situates his critique within a broader comparative scholarship that Oommen himself invoked (Dahl, Rogers, Sayre, Kaufman, Simpson, & Simpson). Their findings typically aligned with the homogeneity–concentration thesis; however, Speight's divergence underscores the need to avoid overgeneralisation, as the relationship between social composition and power concentration is not uniform but highly context-dependent and confounded by additional variables.

Context dependence also shapes how Panchayati Raj translates decentralisation into practice, as Prasad and Modi (2020) argue. They situate Panchayati Raj as both a governance mechanism and a lived social reality. Central to their discussion is decentralisation, which resonates with the popular imagination and provides the foundation for local governance. Long-term success, however, depends on effective local leadership that can transform the promise of decentralisation into participatory development and political learning. Where normative accounts highlight ideals, Park et al. (2005) test performance. Using stratified random sampling of 273 rural leaders, they found that rural leaders generally outperformed non-leaders in role effectiveness, with variations by gender

and administrative level. Leaders often relied on peer consultation to address problems; however, community apathy undermined its effectiveness.

The limits of power-based explanations, therefore, prepare the ground for relational approaches that emphasise social capital (see Table 2.4a).

2.4.2 Rural Leadership and Social Capital

If community power defines who leads, social capital explains why cooperation endures and how collective action is mobilised. The focus shifts from institutional structures to the relational glue of trust, reciprocity, and networks that convert authority into collective action. This context-dependent nature of power also shapes the endurance of cooperation.

Hong (2013) examines governance models in Mizoram and other parts of Northeast India, demonstrating how Mizoram has experienced the replacement of indigenous institutions by modern frameworks, unlike regions such as Meghalaya, where traditions of community participation persist. This divergence highlights the contextual limits of participatory governance in Mizoram. Salama et al. (2024) extend the analysis to urban contexts, showing how participatory governance links people–place relationships with sustainable practices. Moleka (2024) critiques polycentric governance for overlooking cultural factors, emphasising that inclusion must be both ecological and procedural.

A similar cultural anchoring is also evident in indigenous contexts. Lugo Morín et al. (2022) describe how reciprocity sustains governance in Totonac communities of Mexico, contrasting Western individualism with kinship-based cooperation. In Southeast Asia, Siregar (2023) illustrates how ethnic leadership combines traditional values with modern frameworks, while Sri Lankan village studies (2022) demonstrate how social capital incorporates indigenous knowledge into resilience strategies.

Carcary (2024) synthesises these strands into an integrated framework for organic community leadership centred on human agency, collective efficacy, and legitimation. Similarly, Shaleh et al. (2024) show in Indonesian villages how fiscal

resources alone do not deliver development unless paired with trust, transparency, and voluntary collective action (gotong royong). Leadership operates as the broker aligning money and norms through trust and communication. Martiskainen (2017) notes that leaders also serve as boundary spanners, connecting grassroots innovation to broader regimes.

Across these cases, social capital emerges as both cultural memory and adaptive infrastructure, mediating how leaders mobilise cooperation (see Table 2.4b). If social capital provides the glue for cooperation, development represents the tangible outcomes of this cooperation.

2.4.3 Rural Leadership, Social Capital, and Community Development

The convergence of leadership and social capital becomes most visible when translated into concrete development outcomes. Rural communities do not merely debate who holds power or why cooperation persists; they also test how these dynamics are channelled into participatory development, institutional performance, and collective well-being. In this sense, community development is the proving ground where leadership capacity and social capital resources demonstrate their effectiveness in practice.

Research highlights how leadership development programmes often generate social capital through networks, trust, and relationship building, though the causal direction between leadership and social capital remains contested (Van De Valk, 2008). Similarly, studies on community participation emphasise that social networks are not peripheral but central to strengthening agency and addressing inequality, making social capital both an input and an outcome of participatory strategies (Phillips, 2014). However, as evidence from rural Russia shows, weak infrastructures and low trust can blunt these gains, demonstrating that networks require enabling conditions to be mobilised effectively (Podgorskaya & Schitov, 2021).

The relational glue of trust and reciprocity becomes the relational assets that underpin community development. Taken together, these insights suggest that leadership, social capital, and community development form a tightly interdependent triad. Leadership defines who can mobilise; social capital sustains cooperation; and

community development translates both into tangible outcomes. This relationship, as summarised in Table 2.4c, underscores that while progress depends on relational assets and institutional trust, outcomes remain uneven across contexts.

By consolidating community power, social capital, and development within a single analytical framework, this section demonstrates their interdependence: power defines who leads, social capital sustains cooperation, and development translates these into tangible outcomes. However, integration remains uneven and context-specific, leaving open questions that must be addressed in the future. As summarised in Table 2.4d, the thematic synthesis reveals that capacity, context, and cooperation collectively shape rural leadership outcomes, with the balance among them varying across regions and institutional settings. Because these balances remain uneven and context-specific, it becomes necessary to identify the research gaps that hinder cumulative understanding.

The following section builds on these integrated insights by identifying the gaps in existing research, particularly concerning Mizoram's unique moral–institutional ecology where *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* recalibrate power, trust, and development. These research gaps (Section 2.5) set the stage for the methodological choices discussed in Chapter 3.

2.5 Research Gaps in the Literature

Despite the richness of scholarship reviewed in Section 2.4, the literature remains fragmented and overlooks key intersections of leadership, social capital, and development. These shortcomings can be organised into five distinct but interrelated categories, each underscoring the need for a focused study in Mizoram's Lunglei District. The five gaps; integration, contextualisation, cultural–political–economic specificity, network analysis, and role perception become clearer when read against the thematic synthesis presented in Tables 2.4a–2.4d.

First, there is an integration gap. Leadership, social capital, and community development are often examined in isolation. Studies of leadership typically emphasise style, attributes, or effectiveness; social capital research highlights networks and reciprocity; development literature stresses participation and

empowerment. Rarely are these strands brought together in a unified framework that captures their interdependence in shaping rural change. The thematic synthesis in Section 2.4 already demonstrates their overlap, but a fully integrated empirical framework remains absent.

Second, a contextual gap persists. Much of the comparative evidence originates from Africa, Europe, refugee resettlement contexts, or generalised Indian settings (Olanipekun et al., 2025; Mubangizi, 2024; Xin, 2018; Westphaln et al., 2020). Northeast India and Mizoram in particular remain underrepresented in these debates, despite distinctive cultural and political institutions that shape community life. This underrepresentation not only limits comparative insight but also highlights the urgency of region-specific inquiry in Mizoram. Without integration across themes, contextual nuances remain overlooked.

Third, there is a cultural, political, and economic specificity gap. Global models of participation and empowerment emphasise universal values such as equity and solidarity but often underplay context-specific governance practices such as the role of Village Councils, clan-based solidarity, or church-led initiatives in Mizoram (Shyamkishor, 2016; Chakraborty, 2012; Mitra & Das, 2023). Section 2.4 highlighted how social capital emerges as cultural memory and adaptive infrastructure; yet, in Mizoram, these dimensions are deeply tied to moral codes, such as *tlawmngaihna*, and practices like *hnatlang*. Their neglect risks creating a mismatch between theory and lived realities.

Fourth, a notable gap in network analysis is evident. Few studies systematically map the internal (bonding and bridging) and external (linking) networks through which leaders mobilise influence and resources (Das, 2005; Saito-Jensen et al., 2010; Carcary, 2024). Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3 demonstrated that relational glue and assets are central to cooperation and outcomes; however, without network analysis, these structures remain invisible. The absence of network analysis converges with the neglect of cultural, political, and economic specificities, highlighting how both structural and relational aspects are underexplored.

Finally, a role perception gap endures. Although classic studies touch on leadership attributes or performance (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Park et al., 2005; Prasad & Modi, 2020), little attention has been given to how leaders themselves perceive and articulate their roles. Without capturing emic understandings of responsibility, morality, and agency, scholarship risks reproducing external categories of understanding. Section 2.4.1 highlighted how assumptions about composition and power can obscure local voices; similarly, the absence of leaders' own perspectives perpetuates an outsider lens. The structural neglect of networks and the contextual neglect of cultural practices together underscore the importance of foregrounding leaders' own perceptions.

Taken together, these five gaps of integration, contextualisation, cultural–political–economic contextualisation specificity, network analysis, and role perception reveal that the existing literature remains fragmented, under-contextualised, and inattentive to leaders' voices. The neglect of cultural specificity, network structures, and role perceptions underscores both conceptual and methodological limitations. Together, the cultural, political, economic, network, and role perception gaps highlight that without contextual grounding, relational mapping, and leaders' own voices, rural leadership research risks remaining external and incomplete.

By integrating these dimensions within a single framework, the present study makes a significant contribution to both theory and practice. Because these gaps remain unresolved, they provide the rationale for the methodological framework presented in the following section. The following chapter introduces the Mizoram setting and explains the research design adopted to address these five gaps in the context of Lunglei District.

Table 2.1: Conceptual Foundations of Rural Leadership

Themes	Key Insights	Representative Studies
Authority, trust, and influence as multi-arena phenomena	Leadership is not a fixed attribute but a relational practice shaped by positions, reputations, and decisions	Bonjean & Olson (1964)
Formal structures vs. informal networks	Informal networks adapt and translate policies, but may fragment without institutional support.	Mubangizi (2024)
Leadership styles (authoritarian, pseudo-democratic, transformational)	Transformational leadership fosters community participation and project sustainability	Olanipekun et al. (2025)
Contextual variation (rural vs. urban)	Rural leadership emphasises flexibility and responsiveness; urban leadership emphasises coordination.	Mubangizi (2024)
Pluralistic perspectives	Leadership should be analysed across diverse arenas, values, and temporalities.	Harter (2024)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.2: Conceptual Foundations of Social Capital

Themes	Key Insights	Representative Studies
Relational glue: trust, reciprocity, cohesion, networks	Enhances resilience and collective action in disaster contexts	Chen et al. (2024); Nugraha et al. (2024)
Levels: bonding, bridging, linking	Operates within kinship groups, across diverse groups, and through institutions	Xin (2018)
Context-dependence	Shaped by housing, kinship, culture, and historical experience	Chen et al. (2024); Nugraha et al. (2024)
Conceptual debates: norms/values vs. interactions	Viewed either as moral capital or as daily associational practice	Oladipo (2023)
Practical applications	Strengthens refugee integration, community health, and nursing collaboration	Xin (2018); Westphal et al. (2020)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.3: Conceptual Foundations of Community Development

Themes	Key Insights	Representative Studies
Foundational principles: solidarity, agency, and capacity	Expands classic frameworks of community development to emphasise capacity-building	Hains (2023)
Response to globalisation, urbanisation, and marginalisation	Community development mitigates rural disadvantages and fosters resilience	Haraz & Istudor (2024)
Multi-sector integration (health, education, economy, environment)	Sustainable development requires holistic participation	Susanti et al. (2025)
Asset-building and vocational training	Skills, microfinance, and gender inclusivity enhance socio-economic resilience.	Yar & Rahmani (2025).
Ethical and political dimensions	Implementation is often hindered in deprived contexts by oppression, disorganisation, and weak cohesion.	Žganec & Opačić (2021)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.4: Integrative Conceptual Triad – Rural Leadership, Social Capital, and Community Development

Domain	Contribution	Intersections with Other Domains	Representative Studies
Rural Leadership	Provides <i>direction, authority, and mobilisation</i> of resources and people	• Relies on trust and reciprocity (social capital) to translate authority into action. • Anchors development initiatives through inclusive and transformational practices (community development).	Bonjean & Olson (1964); Mubangizi (2024); Harter (2024); Olanipekun et al. (2025)
Social Capital	Acts as the <i>relational glue</i> through trust, reciprocity, and networks	• Enables leaders to mobilise communities effectively (leadership). • Provides the cooperative infrastructure for participatory and resilient development (community development).	Xin (2018); Chen et al. (2024); Nugraha et al. (2024); Oladipo (2023); Westphaln et al. (2020)
Community Development	Offers the <i>normative and practical framework</i> for collective well-being	• Requires capable leadership to guide and coordinate initiatives. • Depends on substantial social capital for solidarity, agency, and capacity building.	Hains (2023); Haraz & Istudor (2024); Susanti et al. (2025); Yar & Rahmani (2025); Žganec & Opačić (2021)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.5: Global Perspectives on Rural Leadership

Theme	Key Insights	Illustrative Cases	Citations
Power structures	Leadership is negotiated between elites, pluralistic actors, and communities; power is contextual and multi-arena.	Classic synthesis of positional, reputational, and decisional approaches.	Bonjean & Olson (1964).
Relational practices	Leadership is dynamic, relational, and embedded in informal networks that mediate between state and society.	African rural leaders as brokers in decentralised governance.	Mubangizi (2024)
Pluralistic approaches	Shift from “heroic” individual models to relational, practice-based, and pluralistic frameworks.	Interdisciplinary leadership theory and practice.	Harter (2024)
Leadership styles and outcomes	Autocratic styles undermine sustainability; in contrast, transformational leadership fosters project longevity and sustainability.	Survey of 60 communities in Southwest Nigeria.	Olanipekun et al. (2025).

Source: Compiled

Table 2.6: Social Capital in Global Rural Development

Dimension	Key Insights	Illustrative Cases	Citations
Disaster resilience	Trust, reciprocity, cohesion, and efficacy drive collective action and recovery.	Flood-prone Chinese communities.	Chen et al. (2024)
Collective action	Social capital motivates post-disaster collaboration, but its impact varies contextually.	Rural Indonesian villages.	Nugraha et al. (2024).
Migration and resettlement	Bonding, bridging, and linking capital shape integration, health, and well-being.	Global refugee studies (systematic review).	Xin (2018)
Conceptual clarity	Social capital is a relational and context-dependent resource, debated as “capital” versus “social norms.”	Theoretical synthesis of conceptual debates.	Oladipo (2023)
Applied fields	Networks, trust, reciprocity, and cohesion operationalised for practice in health/nursing.	Concept analysis in nursing literature.	Westphal et al. (2020).

Source: Compiled

Table 2.7: Global Community Development Frameworks

Model/Approach	Core Ideas	Illustrative Cases	Citations
Equity under globalisation	Community development as a response to rural marginalisation, globalisation, and urbanisation.	Rural Romania.	Haraz & Istudor (2024)
Foundational Phases for Community Development (FPDCD)	Extends Bhattacharyya's solidarity–agency framework by incorporating capacity and introducing a phased model for resilience and empowerment.	Diverse communities of place, practice, and identity.	Hains (2023)
Holistic sustainability	Multi-sector strategies that link education, health, the economy, and the environment, with participatory decision-making.	Indonesian case studies.	Susanti et al. (2025)
Asset-building resilience	Vocational training, microfinance, and gender-inclusive programs strengthen socio-economic resilience.	Post-crisis Afghanistan, South Asia.	Yar & Rahmani (2025)
Principles and challenges	Barriers often hinder holistic and ethical principles (equity, participation, justice) in deprived contexts.	Marginalised European communities.	Žganec & Opačić (2021)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.8 – Integrative Global Triad: Leadership–Social Capital–Community Development

Domain	Contribution	Interaction with Others	Citations
Leadership	Provides direction, authority, and decision-making across formal and informal spheres.	Networks of trust and development frameworks shape effectiveness.	Bonjean & Olson (1964); Mubangizi (2024); Harter (2024)
Social Capital	Provides trust, fosters reciprocity, and nurtures networks that sustain cooperation and resilience.	Enables leadership to mobilise action and anchors community development.	Xin (2018); Chen et al. (2024); Oladipo (2023)
Community Development	Frames participation, equity, and resilience as normative goals and practices.	Depends on leadership for mobilisation and on social capital for sustainability.	Hains (2023); Haraz & Istudor (2024); Susanti et al. (2025)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.9: Rural Leadership, Power, and Governance in India

Theme	Key Insights	Illustrative Evidence	Citations
Institutional distribution	Panchayat leaders distribute benefits not only based on wealth but also on lineage and political brokerage; incentives temper elite capture.	Structural Equation Modelling and Ethnography in Indian Panchayats.	Daftary (2010)
Lived experience of power	Everyday idioms (tāqat, śakti) reveal power as fluid, multi-scalar, and experiential rather than abstract “empowerment.”	Long-term study in Patna settlements.	Ribadeau Dumas (2023).
Formal–informal synergy	Informal local governance institutions (ILGIs) persist, often complementing gram panchayats in dispute resolution and community support.	Thirty-village fieldwork in Karnataka.	Pur (2007)
Caste negotiations	Caste structures both constrain and enable participation; marginalised groups find cracks to subvert hierarchy.	Case Study of Khap Villages in Muzaffarnagar.	Sarvesh (2022)
Elite capture and contestation	Elites initially captured community-based natural resource management, but alliances with NGOs later	Joint Forest Management in Andhra Pradesh.	Saito-Jensen, Nathan & Treue (2010)

	contested it.		
State–society trust	Villagers exhibit low trust in officials due to class inequalities, as cooperation is undermined by unchecked power.	Villages in Orissa.	Das (2005)
Micro-politics	Group projects succeed or fracture based on trust, legitimacy, and hidden hierarchies.	Ethnographic study in East Anglia, comparative relevance.	McAreavey (2006)
Relational typology	Leadership is best studied as an interaction and influence, rather than attributes alone.	Early typology of community leadership.	Fanelli (1956)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.10: Rural Leadership and Governance in Northeast India

Theme	Key Insights	Illustrative Evidence	Citations
Customary democracy	Clan-based councils emphasise participation and consensus but risk oligarchic closure unless inclusive reforms are introduced.	Traditional councils across the Northeast.	Haokip (2021; 2022)
Constitutional frameworks	The Sixth Schedule and PRIs create a layered ecology of governance; distributive politics is both consensual and brokered.	Comparative institutional ecology of ADCs, PRIs, and councils.	Haokip (2021; 2022)
Constructive constitutionalism	Long arcs of peace and institution-	Autonomy arrangements in	Dasgupta (1997)

	building accompany autonomy struggles, challenging the “unrest first” narrative.	the region.	
Vernacular democracy	Local idioms—rituals, kinship, customary law—function as mediums of representation beyond formal federalism.	Vernacular politics scholarship.	Wouters (2022); Joshi (2023)
Security-development nexus	Aid-dependent small states are shaped by central oversight; development is tied to security priorities, limiting autonomy.	“Cosmetic federal” order in Arunachal Pradesh.	Baruah (2003)
Shrinking political space	High per-capita spending fails to reduce poverty because security-first agendas often crowd out local priorities.	Meghalaya case.	McDuie-Ra (2008)
Belonging vs development	Development projects extend the state's reach but do not automatically generate a sense of belonging; belonging must be co-produced.	Arunachal state-making.	Guyot-Réchard (2013)
Indigenous mobilisations	Autonomy claims require flexible forum design and negotiated benefit-sharing in multi-ethnic contexts.	Bodoland, Naga, Rabha movements.	Karlsson (2001)
Development frictions	Infrastructure projects trigger contestations over land, ecology, and distributive justice.	Mapithel dam (Manipur), Sikkim hydropower.	Kipgen (2017); Dukpa et al. (2024)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.11: Rural Leadership, Moral Infrastructure, and Institutions in Mizoram

Theme	Key Insights	Illustrative Evidence	Citations
Moral foundations	Tlawmngaihna (selflessness, communal responsibility) and hnatlang (collective labour) shape legitimacy and cooperation.	Cultural norms underpinning governance.	Shyamkishor (2016); Chakraborty (2012)
Institutional mediators	Village Councils, YMA, MHIP, MUP, and Churches operationalise moral norms into governance and welfare.	Local institutions as mediators of participation.	Gupta et al. (2000); Mitra & Das (2023)
Ethical–structural interplay	Norm-bound compliance explains why institutional authority is ethical rather than merely procedural.	Analysis of Mizo governance.	Shyamkishor (2016)
State–community mediation	Institutions link state schemes with local participation, co-running welfare, disaster relief, and development.	Policy translation through institutions.	“Citizen Connect...” (2024); Cardozo (2023)
Contemporary pressures	Urbanisation, denominational diversification, and digital mediation challenge traditional norms and participation.	Changing community contexts.	Cardozo (2023); Head (2007)
Norm resilience vs erosion	Debate over whether tlawmngaihna/hnatlang persist or fragment under social change.	Mixed findings.	Mansuri & Rao (2012); Singleton (2000); Waheduzzaman & As-Saber (2015)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.12: Integrative View: India, Northeast India, Mizoram

Scale	Key Dynamics	Integrative Insights	Citations
India (macro)	Leadership was negotiated across caste, panchayats, and informal governance, with power being layered and contested.	Shows leadership as layered negotiations—structural, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal.	Daftary (2010); Pur (2007); Sarvesh (2022); Das (2005)
Northeast India (meso)	Governance shaped by customary institutions, ADCs, and PRIs; autonomy claims and security-development frictions.	Demonstrates how autonomy, belonging, and development intersect through negotiated brokerage.	Haokip (2021; 2022); Dasgupta (1997); Baruah (2003); McDuié-Ra (2008)
Mizoram (micro)	Moral infrastructures (tlawmngaihna, hnatlang) integrated with institutions (Village Councils, YMA, MHIP, MUP, Churches).	Highlights the ethical and structural foundations that sustain participatory governance amid modern pressures.	Shyamkishor (2016); Chakraborty (2012); Cardozo (2023)

Source: Compiled

Table 2.13: Themes in Rural Leadership and Community Power

Theme	Evidence & Citations	Tensions / Critiques	Implications
Homogeneity vs. Heterogeneity of Power	Oommen (1970) argued homogeneity → concentrated power, heterogeneity → dispersed; Speight (1968, 1971) re-analysed data and found opposite trends; Dahl, Rogers, Sayre, Kaufman, Simpson & Simpson supported homogeneity-concentration.	Oommen's limited sample and variables weaken claims; Speight shows context dependence , not universality.	Power—composition link is complex and contingent.
Decentralisation & Panchayati Raj	Prasad & Modi (2020) stress Panchayati Raj as socially embedded decentralisation.	Success is tied to local leadership capacity.	Leadership must translate institutional promises into participatory practices .
Leadership Performance	Park et al. (2005). Found That Rural leaders outperform non-leaders, with differences observed by gender, level, and apathy.	Effectiveness is undermined by low community participation.	Capacity and context define performance more than composition.

Source: Compiled

Table 2.14: Themes in Rural Leadership and Social Capital

Theme	Evidence & Citations	Tensions / Critiques	Implications
Institutional Change in NE India	Hong (2013) – Mizoram replaced traditional institutions with modern, weaker participation; Meghalaya retained stronger community institutions.	Mizoram's inclusivity is limited.	Institutional erosion needs contextual analysis.
Cultural–Ecological Anchoring	Salama et al. (2024). – people–place–economy link; Moleka (2024) – participatory governance must address asymmetries; Lugo Morín et al. (2022) – reciprocity in Totonac communities resists neoliberalism; Siregar (2023) – hybrid ethnic leadership blends tradition & democracy.	Formal systems erode local traditions, risking the dilution of identity.	Social capital is both cultural memory & adaptive resource.
Knowledge & Resilience	“Role of social capital in local knowledge...” (2022, Sri Lanka) – elders transfer indigenous knowledge; Carcary (2024) – systematic review highlights fragmentation; Shaleh et al. (2024) – fiscal capacity + trust = development; Martiskainen (2017) – grassroots leaders build niches through networks.	Top-down interventions often marginalise local wisdom; participation is fragile without transparency.	Brokers, reciprocity, and trust transform social capital into resilience and development.

Source: Compiled

Table 2.15: Themes in Rural Leadership, Social Capital, and Development

Theme	Evidence & Citations	Tensions / Critiques	Implications
Leadership– Social Capital Nexus	Van De Valk (2008). – Leadership builds social capital through relational processes.	Causal direction unclear.	Need explicit evaluation linking leadership and social capital outcomes.
Participation as a Development Strategy	Phillips (2014) – participation strengthens networks among marginalised groups.	Structural inequalities persist.	Development requires relational assets , not just resources.
Infrastructure & Trust	Podgorskaya & Schitov (2021). – Digital divides and distrust in rural Russia blunt mobilisation.	Weak technology & low trust limit action.	Development depends on enabling infrastructure + trust .

Source: Compiled

Table 2.16: Integrative Summary of Section 2.4

Dimension	Thematic Insights	Limitations / Tensions	Implications for the Present Study
Who Leads (Power)	Leadership is shaped by social composition, decentralisation, and performance (Oommen, 1970; Speight, 1971; Prasad & Modi, 2020; Park et al., 2005).	Findings vary; context shapes outcomes.	The study highlights leaders' role perceptions in Lunglei.
Why Cooperation Holds (Social Capital)	Sustained through trust, reciprocity, cultural norms, and hybrid institutions (Hong, 2013; Lugo Morín, 2022; Siregar, 2023; Shaleh et al., 2024).	Institutional erosion and asymmetries weaken participation.	Focuses on tlawmngaihna & hnatlang as moral-social capital.
How Outcomes Emerge (Development)	Participation, relational assets, and infrastructure translate power + capital into outcomes (Van De Valk, 2008; Phillips, 2014; Podgorskaya & Schitov, 2021).	Causal links remain under-specified; inequalities persist.	Links leadership and social capital to development outcomes .
Overall	Power → Social Capital → Development = interdependent sequence.	Integration is uneven and context-specific.	Study builds an integrated, context-sensitive framework for Mizoram.

Source: Compiled

Table 2.17: Research Gaps in Literature

Gap Type	Description	Why It Matters	Addressed in the Present Study
Integration	Leadership, social capital, and development are often studied separately (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Harter, 2024; Xin, 2018).	Misses the interdependence of power, trust, and action.	Builds an integrated triadic framework .
Contextual	Evidence primarily from Africa, Europe, and refugee settings; limited data on Northeast India/Mizoram (Olanipekun et al., 2025; Mubangizi, 2024; Xin, 2018).	Limits comparative, local insights.	Focuses on Lunglei District .
Cultural–Political–Economic	Universal models overlook village councils, clan solidarity, and church-led action (Shyamkishor, 2016; Chakraborty, 2012).	Creates a mismatch between theory and practice.	Grounds analysis in tlawmngaihna, hnatlang .
Network Analysis	Few studies use internal/external network mapping (Das, 2005; Saito-Jensen et al., 2010).	Overlooks leader–community–state linkages.	Applies rigorous network analysis .
Role Perception	Rare focus on how leaders define their own roles (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Park et al., 2005).	Fails to capture the emic perspectives on responsibility and agency.	Captures leaders’ role perceptions .

Source: Compiled

CHAPTER - III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research setting and methodology employed in the study. In scholarly inquiry, the choice of method plays a pivotal role in fulfilling the stated objectives. Methodology involves defining the research context, selecting representative samples systematically, employing appropriate tools, analysing data rigorously, and interpreting findings with sensitivity to the local context. As this study examines rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Lunglei District of Mizoram, methodological choices were guided by the district's unique socio-cultural and geographical characteristics. The chapter is organised into two sections. The first describes the research setting, including the profile of Mizoram, Lunglei District, and the socio-cultural background of the selected villages. The second outlines the methodological framework, covering research design, sampling, tools of data collection, and techniques of data processing and analysis.

3.1 The Setting: Profile of Lunglei District

Lunglei District in Mizoram is a region of notable significance owing to its geographical location, socioeconomic profile, and ecological characteristics. As the second most populous district in the state, with a population of 161,428 (Census of India, 2011), Lunglei plays a crucial role in Mizoram's agricultural economy and cultural life. Its location in the southern-central part of Mizoram, along the international border with Bangladesh, enhances its strategic importance, making it a site of cross-border interactions, trade, and vulnerability to transnational health risks, such as malaria (Mitra, 2023; Lalmalsawma et al., 2023). The district's diverse topography, high literacy rates, and vibrant community-based organisations create a unique context for examining rural leadership, social capital, and community development. The following sub-sections outline the district's geographical, demographic, economic, ecological, health, infrastructural, and socio-cultural features, each shaping the character of community life and leadership. The interwoven features of geography, demography, livelihoods, ecology, health,

infrastructure, and socio-cultural life together provide the necessary context for interpreting rural leadership and social capital in Lunglei.

3.1.1 Geographical and Administrative Context

Lunglei District lies in southern-central Mizoram. Siaha bounds it in the south-east, Lawngtlai in the south-west, Serchhip in the northeast, Mamit in the north-west, and Hnahthial in the east. To the west, it shares an international border with Bangladesh. Geographically, the district is situated between 22°30' N and 23°18' N, and 92°15' E and 93°10' E, with an average altitude of approximately 1,222 metres (Lalthlamuanpuii & Jopir, 2024). The climate is classified as humid subtropical under the Köppen system, with monsoonal influences.

The district headquarters is located in Lunglei town, Mizoram's second-largest urban settlement, situated approximately 235 km from Aizawl via NH-2 and 164 km via the World Bank road through Thenzawl. Covering an updated area of 4,536 sq. km revised from earlier administrative records of 3,552.61 sq. km following reorganisation (District Administration Report, 2023) the district is divided into two subdivisions (Lunglei and Tlabung) and three Rural Development (RD) Blocks: Lunglei, Lungsen, and Bunghmun. At the grassroots level, 116 Village Councils function as institutions of local self-governance. Public utilities include four police stations with one outpost, three colleges, 20 banks, two post offices, and several NGOs (Government of Mizoram, 2022). Village Councils, in particular, play a pivotal role in mediating development processes and decision-making (Mitra, 2023). The reach of these councils is shaped by the size and structure of the population they serve.

3.1.2 Demographic and Social Profile

According to the 2011 Census, Lunglei has a population of 161,428, comprising 82,891 men and 78,537 women. The sex ratio of 1,010 females per 1,000 males exceeds the national average, reflecting the balanced gender structure characteristic of Mizoram. The literacy rate of 88.86% is among the highest in India, signalling the district's strong educational foundations (Lalthlamuanpuii & Jopir, 2024).

Population distribution varies significantly. Urban wards such as Chanmari (6,869), Bazar Veng (5,316), Venglai (4,768), Rahsi Veng (4,788), and Ramthar (4,600) are densely settled, whereas villages like Thehlelep (80), Thangpui (160), and Thangte (180) remain sparsely populated (Village Council Population Register, 2019). The district has 30,267 households, with an average household size of 4.8 persons. The number of registered voters is 83,441, accounting for approximately 57% of the total population (Election Commission of Mizoram, 2019). These demographic features also intersect with generational participation, with youth representing a significant share of the population.

Mizo traditions and Christianity have a profound impact on cultural and religious life. Churches, voluntary associations, and civic groups dominate community life (Lalthlamuanpuii & Jopir, 2024). Prominent organisations, such as the Young Mizo Association (YMA), Mizo Women's Association (MWA), and Mizo Elderly Association (MEA), provide platforms for leadership and strengthen civic engagement (Mitra, 2023). High literacy, gender balance, and a dense network of civil society groups underpin social capital, fostering participation and accountability. This civic strength closely aligns with the district's livelihood foundations.

3.1.3 Economy and Livelihoods

Agriculture forms the backbone of Lunglei's economy, engaging 65–70% of the population (Lalthlamuanpuii & Jopir, 2024) a share much higher than India's national average (43%). Major crops include carrots, sugarcane, chillies, ginger, tobacco, pineapple, and potatoes. Shifting cultivation (jhum) remains dominant, though it is increasingly complemented by settled and commercial farming (Mehrotra et al., 2024). While jhum continues to shape cultural identity, it contributes to deforestation, soil erosion, and declining biodiversity (Pawar et al., 2004).

In recent decades, commercial plantations have expanded, linking farmers to broader markets. Ginger and chillies serve as key cash crops, while pineapple and sugarcane offer supplementary income. Beyond agriculture, small-scale trade,

services, and migration diversify household livelihoods. Cross-border trade with Bangladesh presents additional opportunities but also introduces vulnerabilities associated with fluctuating markets and disease transmission (Mitra, 2023).

The heavy dependence on agriculture, coupled with ecological pressures and limited non-farm options, underscores the importance of leadership and collective action in mobilising resources for sustainable development. Such leadership must also contend with the district's challenging physical and ecological landscape.

3.1.4 Ecology and Environmental Challenges

Lunglei's topography comprises rugged hills, ridges, and river valleys. Significant rivers include the Chhintuipui (Kolodyne), Khawthlangtuipui (Karnaphuli), Tuichawng, and Sazuk Lui (District Gazetteer, 2021). The annual rainfall averages 3,204 mm, with dramatic variation between years (5,554 mm in 2000 vs. 1,742 mm in 2008) (Barman et al., 2023). Geologically, the Surma group of sedimentary rocks comprising sandstones, siltstones, and shales forms folded structures intersected by fault lines (Geological Survey of India, 2020).

Ecological vulnerabilities are acute. About 16% of the district is highly landslide-prone (Barman et al., 2023). Shifting cultivation exacerbates soil instability and hampers forest recovery, thereby reducing the resilience of faunal communities, such as frogs and lizards, that sustain ecological balance (Pawar et al., 2004). However, Lunglei supports rich biodiversity, with discoveries like a new species of bent-toed gecko underscoring its ecological significance (Lalremsanga et al., 2022). Environmental fragility directly conditions the agenda of rural leadership. In addition to ecological pressures, health challenges compound the risks faced by the community.

3.1.5 Health, Water, and Disease Burden

Lunglei is a recognised malaria hotspot. Climatic factors such as rising minimum temperatures, high humidity, and seasonal rainfall support vector persistence (Lalmalsawma et al., 2023). Malaria incidence is particularly linked to forested areas, while the border with Bangladesh heightens cross-border risks

(Vanlalhriata et al., 2024). Scrub typhus, a rodent-borne zoonotic disease, adds to the health burden (Pautu et al., 2023).

Water access is another pressing challenge. Most communities rely on natural springs and small-scale public water systems, which remain vulnerable to contamination. Regular monitoring and treatment are essential to secure safe drinking water (Malsawmtluanga, 2022). Public health, therefore, relies heavily on coordinated community leadership and grassroots participation. However, effective leadership in health cannot be separated from the infrastructural challenges communities face.

3.1.6 Infrastructure and Public Institutions

Infrastructure development is uneven. While National Highway 2 and the World Bank road connect Lunglei to Aizawl and beyond, many rural areas remain poorly accessible, especially in the rainy season (District PWD Report, 2021). Educational infrastructure comprises three colleges and numerous schools, which support the district's high literacy rate (Lalthlamuanpuii & Jopir, 2024). Twenty banks provide financial services.

Village Councils under the Sixth Schedule framework of governance, together with civil society organisations and church groups, serve as vital intermediaries between state institutions and communities. The YMA, MHIP, and MUP often step in where state delivery is limited, mobilising voluntary action in health, education, and welfare (Mitra, 2023; Vanlalhriata et al., 2024). These institutions form the backbone of social capital, providing crucial platforms for nurturing leadership and fostering a sense of community.

3.1.7 Socio-Cultural and Cross-Border Dynamics

Lunglei's position along the Bangladesh border creates both opportunities and risks. Cross-border trade enhances livelihoods and cultural exchange, while simultaneously raising vulnerabilities to disease and security issues (Mitra, 2023). The district's integration into the broader Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh economies reflects a long history of mobility and exchange.

Culturally, community solidarity is anchored in Christianity and civic associations. Church-based events, festivals, and voluntary organisations foster dense networks of trust and cooperation (Lalthlamuanpuii & Jopir, 2024). These networks not only reinforce identity but also supply the social capital necessary for collective action.

Lunglei District presents a complex profile where demographic strengths, ecological vulnerabilities, and cultural cohesion intersect. High literacy, strong civic organisations, and active community participation provide fertile ground for rural leadership and social capital. However, challenges such as malaria, landslides, and water scarcity, as well as dependence on livelihoods demand adaptive, responsive governance. Its borderland position adds further complexity, linking local realities to regional and transnational issues (Mitra, 2023; Lalmalsawma et al., 2023).

In sum, Lunglei stands at once resilient through its literacy, civic solidarity, and cross-border dynamism and vulnerable through its ecological fragility, health risks, and dependence on livelihoods. Taken together, the health risks, infrastructural gaps, and cultural solidarity of Lunglei reveal a district where vulnerabilities persist, yet resilience is continually renewed through collective institutions and networks of trust. This duality makes Lunglei a compelling case for understanding the dynamics of community-driven development in Northeast India.



Figure 3.1: Setting of the Present Study

3.2 Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To understand village communities from both emic and etic perspectives in terms of time and space.
2. To examine the demographic, social, and economic composition of village communities.
3. To investigate the social, economic, and organisational bases of rural community leadership.
4. To explore leaders' perceptions of their role in community welfare and development.
5. To assess social capital in terms of people's interactions and leaders' internal and external networks.
6. To evaluate the community development of villages in terms of household living conditions and satisfaction with community services.
7. To examine the relationship between leaders' role perception, social capital and community development in Lunglei District.

3.3 Methodology

The study is cross-sectional in nature and follows a descriptive design. Such designs are widely used in leadership and community research to provide a snapshot of social dynamics and relational patterns (Cameron, 2024). It relies primarily on primary data collected through a sequential combination of participatory, qualitative, and quantitative methods. This design mirrors mixed-methods approaches adopted in community-based participatory research (CBPR), which emphasise community voice and trust-building (DeJonckheere et al., 2019; Lucero et al., 2018). Participatory exercises were conducted first to contextualise village life, followed by surveys of community leaders and households.

The sequential mixed-methods approaches have been successfully applied in global community research (Maleku et al., 2021). They are chosen here to ensure contextual grounding (participatory), leadership focus (qualitative–quantitative), and empirical rigour (statistical–network). With this rationale in place, the study proceeded with a carefully structured sampling strategy.

3.3.1 Sampling

The unit of analysis is the village community, while the study population includes all villages in Lunglei District. A multi-stage sampling strategy was adopted to select villages, community leaders, and households, consistent with global practices in community research (Gan, 2022).

Selection of Villages:

Villages were classified into high- and low-development categories using a Socioeconomic Development (SED) Index. This composite index was based on household access to amenities such as mobile phones, LPG, TV, computers, internet, two-wheelers, four-wheelers, and septic tanks, similar to indices used in global community classification (Gan, 2022). Three villages close to the average in each category were selected, along with one village closest to the overall average, making a total of seven villages.

Table 3.1 Profile of Sample Villages

Sl. No.	Level of Development	Mean Index of Development		Sample Villages	Development Rank
		All Villages	Sample Villages		
I	Most Developed (Lunglei)				
1	Low	-0.98	-0.76	S.Mualcheng	7
2	High	0.76	0.77	S.Tawipui	1
3	Total	-0.14	-0.15	Zotuitlang	5
II	Least Developed (Hnahthial)				
4	Low	-0.31	-0.22	Tuipui (Darzokai)	6
5	High	0.60	.78	Rawpui	2
6	Total	0.25	.16	Leite	3
7	Total	0.00	.05	S.Vanlaiphai	4

Source: Computed

Selection of Community Leaders

Within these selected villages, leaders were identified using a combination of positional and reputational approaches (Shalowitz et al., 2009). Leaders of Village Councils, YMA, MHIP, MUP, and major churches were listed through the positional approach. Additional leaders were nominated using snowball sampling, a technique proven to capture informal leadership (Álvarez, 2024) effectively. This ensured comprehensive coverage of leadership in the selected villages.

Selection of Households

Alongside leadership, household representation was ensured through a systematic selection process. Household lists were compiled with the assistance of Village Council presidents. Households were classified into poor and non-poor categories, consistent with global community development research (Gan, 2022). They were then selected systematically. At least 30 households were selected, proportionally distributed across categories.

3.3.2 Tools of Data Collection

Social mapping, timelines, and services-and-opportunities mapping were used to capture spatial, temporal, and socioeconomic contexts of village life (Banyard et al., 2022).

Complementing these participatory tools, structured interview schedules were designed for both leaders and households, a practice commonly used in leadership research (Shalowitz et al., 2009). Social network data were collected through name generators and name interpreters embedded in the leader schedule, consistent with global network studies (Lin, 2001). A separate village schedule documented community infrastructure and development indicators. Data were collected digitally using KoBoToolbox and the KoBo Collect mobile application.

3.3.3 Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data were processed in MS Excel and analysed with SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as averages, percentages, and cross-tabulations were used

for preliminary analysis, in line with community leadership research (John & Gunter, 2016). Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to test the hypothesis concerning the relationship between social capital and community development.

To further examine structural dimensions, Factor Analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was applied. This approach is a robust method for exploring multidimensionality across domains (Burroughs & Miller, 1961; Filzmoser, 2000). Before extraction, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were employed to verify suitability. A high KMO value indicates that the data are factorable, while Bartlett's test confirms that the correlations are sufficient for structure detection; both are widely used in validation studies (Martín-Vázquez et al., 2024).

Factor scores were computed using the Bartlett method, providing more precise estimates of latent constructs (Schneeweiss, 1997). These scores were further analysed through one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to assess group differences. For multiple comparisons, the Least Significant Difference (LSD) post hoc test was applied, a standard technique for refining group comparisons (Dillon et al., 1989). A combined application of PCA, Bartlett scores, and ANOVA has been employed in psychosocial and quality-of-life studies to capture the multidimensionality of complex constructs (Bucci et al., 2018; Martín-Vázquez et al., 2024).

Finally, Social Network Analysis (SNA) was conducted using UCINET (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002), consistent with global precedents in leadership research (Álvarez, 2024; Banyard et al., 2022). SNA provided insights into leaders' internal and external networks. The integration of descriptive statistics, factor analysis with Varimax rotation, Bartlett factor scores, ANOVA with LSD, and SNA ensured a comprehensive and multidimensional analytical framework (Riccia & Shapiro, 1983; Manzar et al., 2018). This analytical framework, together with the research design, constitutes the methodological foundations summarised below.

In this chapter, the methodological foundations of the study are presented, beginning with a description of the research setting and followed by an explanation of the design, sampling procedures, data collection tools, and analysis techniques. Building on the multidimensional methodological framework outlined above, this concluding section highlights the study's integrated approach. The combination of participatory approaches, structured surveys, advanced statistical analyses, and social network methods provides a comprehensive framework for examining the interaction among the rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Lunglei District. Taken together, the analyses, methodological synthesis, and concluding summary establish the rigour of the study and prepare the ground for situating the findings within the historical and infrastructural realities of Lunglei District.

CHAPTER - IV

HISTORICAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL BASES OF RURAL COMMUNITIES IN LUNGLEI DISTRICT

The resilience of rural communities in Lunglei District rests on the coupling of historical foundations and infrastructural arrangements. This chapter examines seven villages Tawipui ‘S’, Mualcheng ‘S’, S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui ‘D’, Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang by first situating their historical development and then tracing how location, access to urban centres, road connectivity, communication networks, and core services shape everyday life. Using participatory timelines and participatory mapping alongside comparative tables, the analysis follows a stepwise path: history and typologies of developmental pathways; geographical positioning and distance to towns; road and transport conditions; communication connectivity; physical infrastructure such as post offices, banks, markets, and police stations; health and education access; demographic profiles by gender; migration inflows and poverty levels; and finally, social/resource and services/opportunities mapping. Taken together, these strands establish the structural bases upon which rural leadership, social capital, and community development operate in Lunglei District. With this frame in place, the analysis begins by examining the historical foundations of the villages, as these roots provide the earliest layer of the structural bases just outlined.

4.1 Historical Foundations of the Villages

The evolution of villages in Lunglei District cannot be understood without situating them in their historical foundations. Each community has travelled a distinct path, shaped by conditions of origin, patterns of settlement, and the institutions that grew around them. Participatory timelines and village narratives make visible not only a chronology of events but also the capacities, discontinuities, and innovations that define rural resilience and leadership. By examining these histories comparatively, we gain insight into the varied bases of memory, association, and belief that continue to influence community life today. The

influence of memory, association, and belief becomes clearer when we follow the stories of the seven villages themselves.

4.1.1 Historical Development and Timelines

The stories of Tawipui S, Mualcheng S, S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui D, Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang show how foundational institutions, religious organisations, civic bodies, and public infrastructure coalesced into patterns of self-governance. In Rawpui, founded under the Sailo chieftainship in 1780, the authority of lineage and the strength of oral memory gave the village depth and continuity. In S. Vanlaiphai, the early arrival of Christianity in 1904 provided an institutional framework that shaped both civic and moral life. Zotuitlang, a planned settlement established in 1975, lacked long continuity but made up for it through innovation in associational life, as seen in Young Mizo Association initiatives, such as newsletters and volunteer recognition programs. By contrast, Tuipui D displayed vitality in its early phases but little growth after 2000, suggesting fatigue in leadership and a decline in community vision.

However, alongside these weaknesses, the timelines also reveal resilience and fragility in motion. Rawpui revived after insurgency-related displacement through the strength of its civil society. S. Vanlaiphai maintained a working balance between religious institutions and civic organisations, ensuring that resources were preserved and used collectively. Tuipui D's elders voiced concern about the weakening of leadership and the erosion of collective participation. In Leite, a small population of barely 200 in 2018 was accompanied by multiple schools, suggesting either significant youth out-migration or low fertility rates. This example, alongside others, underscores that the vitality of a village depends not only on external support but also on how communities mobilise memory, association, and leadership across generations.

4.1.2 Typologies of Developmental Pathways

Such variations in vitality, when read together, suggest broad developmental pathways. Some villages, such as Rawpui and S. Vanlaiphai, are legacy-driven, drawing continuity from long histories and missionary institutions that anchor civic

life. Others, including Zotuitlang and Mualcheng, are civic-innovative, generating collective energy through active associations and shared practices that substitute for deep historical depth. Villages like Tawipui S and Tuipui D appear more state-reliant, where dependence on external interventions becomes pronounced and vulnerability rises when local initiative wanes. Leite and Tuipui D also display faith-centred orientations, with religious institutions serving as primary anchors of order, identity, and everyday coordination.

Viewed together, these variations indicate that the strength of Mizoram's rural communities lies less in uniform state provisioning and more in internal grammars of leadership, memory, and moral economy. Where these capacities remain active, growth is adaptive and continuous; where they weaken, stagnation becomes evident. Thus, the seven villages illustrate how history, memory, and leadership converge to produce divergent developmental pathways, laying the groundwork for the present spatial and infrastructural conditions. These historical foundations also shape the spatial location and accessibility of villages, which in turn determine how communities interact with broader networks of services and opportunities.

4.1 Location of Sample Villages

The geographical positioning of the seven villages offers the starting point for understanding their infrastructural and developmental contexts. Location matters because the physical setting provides the structural canvas on which community life, leadership practices, and development initiatives are inscribed. By identifying the latitude, longitude, and altitude of each settlement, we discern the ecological diversity and spatial spread that condition the everyday experiences of rural communities. Geography, far from being a neutral backdrop, emerges as an active force shaping leadership priorities and community trajectories.

The data highlight striking differences across the villages. Tawipui 'S' (22.68° N, 92.84° E; 889 m) and Mualcheng 'S' (22.69° N, 92.82° E; 900 m) form a closely situated cluster with comparable terrain and climate. While these two share similar conditions, other villages deviate sharply. S. Vanlaiphai rises to 1113 meters,

the highest among the sample, while Tuipui 'D' sits at only 208.1 meters the lowest altitude, with vastly different ecological and agricultural conditions. Leite (662.4 m) and Rawpui (735.1 m) occupy intermediate positions, while Zotuitlang (881 m) falls closer to the mid-high range. The altitudinal span, stretching from barely 200 meters to more than 1100 meters, captures within a single district a remarkable ecological diversity.

This diversity is not only statistical but carries tangible implications for daily life and development. Higher-altitude villages like S. Vanlaiphai experience cooler conditions but demand stronger road infrastructure to overcome steep gradients, whereas low-lying Tuipui 'D' faces vulnerabilities such as waterlogging and calls for livelihood strategies adapted to its terrain. Proximity between villages, as in Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S', creates opportunities for shared resources and interaction. At the same time, more dispersed settlements, such as Rawpui and Zotuitlang, face longer journeys to access institutions and services.

Table 4.1 Location of Sample Villages

Village	GPS_Latitude	GPS_Longitude	GPS_Altitude
Tawipui 'S'	22.68	92.84	889
Mualcheng 'S'	22.69	92.82	900
S. Vanlaiphai	22.81	93.00	1113
Tuipui 'D'	22.90	92.93	208.1
Leite	22.90	92.91	662.4
Rawpui	23.15	92.90	735.1
Zotuitlang	23.00	92.82	881

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KoboCollect

Such variations in access shape not just household routines but also the scope of leadership action. In elevated villages, leaders tend to emphasise road connectivity, education, and health outreach; in lower-lying ones, priorities shift toward crop adaptation, flood management, and securing livelihoods. Geography thus becomes inseparable from the development agenda, channelling the concerns of both communities and their leaders.

In conclusion, the locational profile of these seven villages from clustered highlands to dispersed low-lying settlements demonstrates that physical space and altitude are deeply embedded in the logic of leadership, the circulation of social capital, and the unfolding of community development in Lunglei District. Having established geography as the foundational structural base, the following section turns to the role of roads and connectivity in mediating how space is traversed and linked.

4.2 Villages' Access to Urban Areas

Accessibility to urban centres is a crucial determinant of rural development. The distance to block headquarters, district headquarters, and nearby towns shapes the flow of goods, services, and opportunities between rural settlements and administrative or market hubs. These distances define not only the ease of movement but also the rhythms of social interaction, economic activity, and leadership engagement with higher levels of governance. To see how this plays out concretely, the distances recorded for the seven villages reveal distinct patterns.

The data highlight a wide variation in access across the sample. Tawipui 'S' is located 45 km from both its block and district headquarters at Lunglei, while its nearest town, Tawipui North-1, lies only 8 km away. Mualcheng 'S' stands slightly farther, at 60 km from Lunglei headquarters and 13 km from Tawipui North-1. In contrast to these Lunglei-based villages, S. Vanlaiphai presents a different profile: although 52 km from its block and district headquarters at Hnahthial, the same town also serves as its closest urban contact point, underlining both distance and dependency on a single centre. Tuipui 'D' and Leite, on the other hand, enjoy much closer integration, lying just 13 km from Hnahthial in both administrative and market terms. Rawpui is situated 30 km from its headquarters but is connected by a shorter

12 km link to Pangzawl. Finally, Zotuitlang is 49 km from Lunglei headquarters yet maintains a relatively close connection to Haulawng at only 10 kms

Table 4.2 Villages' Access to Urban Areas

Village	Block	Distance to Block HQ	Distance to District HQ	Nearby Town	Distance to Nearby Town
Tawipui 'S'	Lunglei	45	45	Tawipui North-1	8
Mualcheng 'S'	Lunglei	60	60	Tawipui North 1	13
S. Vanlaiphai	Hnahthial	52	52	Hnahthial	52
Tuipui 'D'	Hnahthial	13	13	Hnahthial	13
Leite	Hnahthial	13	13	Hnahthial	13
Rawpui	Hnahthial	30	30	Pangzawl	12
Zotuitlang	Lunglei	49	49	Haulawng	10

. Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

Table 4.3 Type of Road Connectivity and Type of Transport Facility

Village	Road Connectivity	Public Transport	Private Maxi Cab/ Sumo Service	Own Two Wheelers	Own Four Wheelers
Tawipui 'S'	National Highway (NH)	No	Yes	No	No
Mualcheng 'S'	Other District Road (ODR)	No	Yes	No	No
S. Vanlaiphai	State Highways (SH)	No	Yes	No	No
Tuipui 'D'	State Highways (SH)	No	No	Yes	Yes
Leite	National Highway (NH)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rawpui	National Highway (NH)	No	Yes	No	No
Zotuitlang	State Highways (SH)	No	Yes	No	No

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

This diversity in distances is not merely geographical but translates directly into differences in access to services. Villages such as Tuipui 'D' and Leite, within easy reach of Hnahthial, likely benefit from quicker contact with markets, healthcare, and education. By contrast, Mualcheng 'S' and Tawipui 'S', being farther from Lunglei, face greater costs in transport and time. For Rawpui and Zotuitlang, intermediate distances necessitate balancing reliance on district headquarters with sub-centres, such as Pangzawl and Haulawng, which serve as secondary nodes of development. Such differential proximities to towns mediate the opportunities for commerce, healthcare, education, and administrative outreach that communities can access.

Because these opportunities vary sharply, the implications for leadership are equally clear. Leaders in remote settlements, such as Mualcheng 'S', must prioritise infrastructural demands, particularly road improvements, transport facilities, and institutional outreach. By contrast, leaders in villages like Tuipui 'D' and Leite may focus on harnessing nearby opportunities and strengthening linkages with Hnahthial to maximise development gains. Accessibility thus structures the agenda of community leadership by defining both the constraints and the possibilities of external engagement.

In conclusion, the spectrum of access from villages closely tied to nearby towns to those more distant from administrative centres illustrates how geography structures opportunities, shapes leadership agendas, and directs the focus of community action. Having analysed urban access, the following section examines road connectivity, which determines how these distances are experienced in practice and whether mobility becomes a bridge or a barrier.

4.3 Road Connectivity and Transport Facilities

If distance to towns sets the framework of access, road connectivity determines whether that distance is a bridge or a barrier. The type of road and the modes of transport available condition how easily villagers reach markets, institutions, and administrative centres. Infrastructural access, therefore, is not only a matter of kilometres but also of surface quality, vehicular options, and household-

level mobility. These dimensions come into focus when examining how each village is connected to the others.

The data reveal clear contrasts across the sample. National Highways connect Tawipui 'S' and Leite, linking them directly to regional routes. Rawpui also benefits from National Highway access, while S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui 'D', and Zotuitlang rely on State Highways. Mualcheng 'S,' in contrast, depends on an Other District Road, typically narrower and less maintained, reflecting a lower tier of connectivity. Beyond the type of road, transport services reveal another crucial gap: public transport is absent in all seven villages, pointing to a systemic void in state-provided mobility. Instead, private Maxi Cab/Sumo services fill the gap in most villages, except Tuipui 'D.' Household-level ownership varies: Tuipui 'D' and Leite stand out with both two-wheelers and four-wheelers, while other villages largely depend on shared transport.

Such variations in connectivity and vehicle access directly shape everyday life. Villages such as Tawipui 'S', Leite, and Rawpui, with highway access and shared cab services, enjoy relatively smoother mobility, although they remain dependent on private operators. Mualcheng 'S,' with its weaker ODR connection, faces compounded isolation and transport difficulty, magnifying challenges already noted in its distance to urban centres. Tuipui 'D', although reliant on a State Highway, offsets the lack of shared transportation through more substantial household ownership of vehicles, demonstrating how communities adapt privately when collective provisions are lacking. By contrast, Zotuitlang and S. Vanlaiphai continue to depend primarily on collective cab services, underscoring reliance on group-based arrangements rather than individual mobility.

Since communities depend on these limited transport modes, the implications for leadership are significant. Leaders in well-connected villages, such as Leite, can leverage highway access and household vehicle ownership to stimulate economic participation and service uptake. Leaders in Mualcheng 'S,' however, must prioritise upgrading road infrastructure and negotiating for improved transport facilities, given the village's structural disadvantages. In Tuipui 'D,' leadership may focus on

balancing household-level adaptation with collective solutions, while for villages like Rawpui and Zotuitlang, the priority is sustaining reliable cab services that act as lifelines of mobility.

In conclusion, the interplay of road types, transport facilities, and household vehicle ownership demonstrates how mobility gaps shape both community adaptation and leadership agendas. National and State Highways provide structural arteries, but

without public transport, the burden of connectivity falls on private services and household assets. Having examined mobility, the following section turns to the quality of communication connectivity, which anchors the quality of life within households and frames another dimension of infrastructural well-being.

4.4 Quality of Communication Connectivity

If roads physically connect villages, communication networks connect them socially and digitally. Telephone, cell phone, and internet connectivity determine how households and leaders link with the outside world, access information, and coordinate collective action. In today's development landscape, access to communication has become as vital as access to roads, shaping not only livelihoods but also participation in governance and community life. This importance becomes clearer when we examine the actual communication conditions of the sample villages.

The data point to a mixed profile. Tawipui 'S,' Mualcheng 'S,' S. Vanlaiphai, Leite, and Rawpui all report only fair levels of telephone, cell phone, and internet connectivity, indicating a baseline presence but not dependable quality. Tuipui 'D', by contrast, lags significantly with poor connectivity across all three modes, reflecting a serious digital disadvantage. At the other end of the spectrum, Zotuitlang stands apart, reporting good connectivity in telephony, cellular access, and internet services, positioning it as the best-connected village in the sample.

These disparities in connectivity translate directly into differences in everyday life. In villages with only fair connectivity, residents may face frequent call

drops, slow internet speeds, and interruptions that reduce the efficiency of household communication and institutional coordination. For Tuipui 'D,' poor connectivity compounds its earlier-noted vulnerabilities, leaving it at a disadvantage in both physical and digital infrastructures. This disadvantage is particularly stark when compared with Zotuitlang, where stronger connectivity enhances integration into markets, access to online education, and participation in e-governance, giving its residents a distinct comparative edge.

Table 4.4 Quality of Communication Connectivity

Village	Quality of Telephone Connectivity	Quality of Cell Phone Connectivity	Quality of Internet Connectivity
Tawipui 'S'	Fair	Fair	Fair
Mualcheng 'S'	Fair	Fair	Fair
S. Vanlaiphai	Fair	Fair	Fair
Tuipui 'D'	Poor	Poor	Poor
Leite	Fair	Fair	Fair
Rawpui	Fair	Fair	Fair
Zotuitlang	Good	Good	Good

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

As communication access enables or constrains development, these distinctions filter directly into the responsibilities of community leadership. In villages with only fair connectivity, leaders may need to press for stronger telecom and internet infrastructure to ensure reliability. This general need assumes sharper urgency in Tuipui 'D,' where leaders must address the digital divide through initiatives such as community internet hubs or by prioritising external support. By contrast, Zotuitlang's leaders can focus less on lobbying for infrastructure and more on leveraging it promoting digital education, linking farmers and traders to online markets, and ensuring fuller participation in e-governance processes.

In conclusion, disparities in communication from poor to fair to good shape everyday life, influence development opportunities, and redirect leadership agendas toward either bridging deficits or leveraging advantages. Communication connectivity is therefore not a secondary convenience but a primary axis of social integration and developmental possibility. Having explored networks of mobility and communication, the following section turns to access to physical infrastructural facilities, such as post offices, banks, cell phone towers, vegetable markets, and police stations, which facilitate and sustain community development.

4.5 Access to Physical Infrastructure: Distance to Service

The presence and accessibility of core services such as post offices, banks, cell phone towers, vegetable markets, and police stations are crucial indicators of how deeply a village is integrated into wider administrative and economic systems. These facilities influence not only the efficiency of everyday life but also the responsiveness of institutions that sustain security, commerce, and communication. Examining their distribution reveals how physical infrastructure reinforces or constrains rural development. This reinforcement or constraint is illustrated in the distances reported for the seven villages.

The data show stark contrasts. Tawipui 'S' enjoys relatively close access: its post office and bank are just 1 km away, a vegetable market within 2 km, and a cell tower 3 km away, although the nearest police station lies at a considerable 40 km. A different picture emerges in Mualcheng'S', where the post office is also 1 km away. However, residents must travel 15 km to reach a bank and 13 km to access a cell tower, while the vegetable market lies within the village itself. Its nearest police station is 50 km away, the longest distance among the sample.

Other villages display a mix of advantages and disadvantages. S. Vanlaiphai is uniquely well-served, with all listed facilities available within the village itself, reflecting an exceptional concentration of services. Other villages, though not as well-endowed, still enjoy relatively close access. For instance, Tuipui 'D' and Leite each have vegetable markets, post offices, and cell towers within the village, but banks and police stations require a 13 km travel distance. Rawpui balances moderate

access, with a bank 5 km away and a police station 30 km distant. In comparison, Zotuitlang has a bank 10 km away and a police station equally 10 km away, suggesting stronger integration into administrative networks. Such integration, or its absence, profoundly shapes daily life.

These contrasts in service proximity affect how people transact, communicate, and seek institutional support. Villages with facilities within easy reach such as S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui 'D,' and Leite enable residents to save time and resources, enhancing participation in both economic and civic life. By contrast, villages with long travel requirements, such as Mualcheng 'S' and Tawipui 'S,' face barriers that delay financial transactions, restrict communication, or limit timely access to institutions.

Police stations, in particular, remain distant for nearly all the villages, raising concerns of security and responsiveness in emergencies, especially for remote settlements. Because these gaps affect security and daily functioning, the leadership implications are immediate.

Table 4.5 Table Access to Physical Infrastructure: Distance to Service

Sl.No	Village	Post Office	Bank	Cell Phone Tower	Vegetable Market	Nearest Police Station
1	Tawipui 'S'	1	1	3	2	40
2	Mualcheng 'S'	1	15	13	0	50
3	S. Vanlaiphai	0	0	0	0	0
4	Tuipui 'D'	0	13	0	0	13
5	Leite	0	13	0	0	13
6	Rawpui	0	5	0	0	30
7	Zotuitlang	0	10	0	0	10

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

Leaders in well-served villages, such as S. Vanlaiphai, can focus on leveraging their infrastructural advantage to promote economic growth and strengthen local services. In settlements where services remain distant such as Mualcheng 'S' or Tawipui 'S' leaders must prioritise advocacy for decentralisation, whether through mobile banking, extension counters, or outreach programs. In Rawpui and Zotuitlang, where some services are accessible while others remain inaccessible, leadership requires balancing demands for new facilities with strategies to maximise the utility of existing resources.

In conclusion, the uneven distribution of services has a significant impact on daily life, constraining or enabling development, and directing leadership agendas toward either bridging institutional gaps or capitalising on infrastructural strengths. Access to physical infrastructure is therefore not neutral; it determines participation, integration, and security in rural society. Having considered general institutional services, the following section focuses on healthcare infrastructure, where the distance to medical facilities becomes a crucial factor in community well-being and resilience.

4.6 Access to Health Care Infrastructure

If services like banks and post offices define economic integration, health care infrastructure determines the capacity of a village to sustain life and well-being. Access to medical shops, hospitals, health centres, and ASHA facilities shapes not only emergency response but also preventive care and everyday health practices. The distribution of such services across villages thus reveals both opportunities and vulnerabilities in rural health. These opportunities and vulnerabilities are reflected in the uneven availability of services.

The data illustrate stark contrasts. Tawipui 'S' is the best equipped, with two medical shops, a Primary Health Centre, a Sub-Centre, and an ASHA booth available locally, though it lacks hospitals. By contrast, Mualcheng 'S' has a Sub-Centre, a PHC, and an ASHA booth, but no medical shops or hospitals. S. Vanlaiphai stands out for its severe disadvantage: residents must travel 52 km to reach either a private or civil hospital, with no local medical shops, PHCs, or ASHA

facilities to fall back on. Tuipui 'D' is moderately better, with a Sub-Centre within the village and hospitals and medical shops 13 km away. Leite follows a similar pattern, requiring 13 km travel for hospital or PHC access, though it lacks a Sub-Centre. Rawpui emerges as the most disadvantaged: while a PHC is available 12 km away, both private and civil hospitals are a prohibitive 94 km distant. Similarly, Zotuitlang must travel 49 km for hospital access, though it has a PHC 10 km away.

Such disparities in access translate into stark health realities. In villages like Tawipui 'S' and, to a lesser degree, Mualcheng 'S,' the presence of local medicine shops, health centres, and ASHA workers ensures quicker treatment of routine ailments and reduces vulnerability. In contrast, in villages such as Rawpui, Zotuitlang, and especially S. Vanlaiphai, the sheer distance to hospitals imposes delays that can be life-threatening in emergencies. For moderately served villages like Tuipui 'D' and Leite, non-emergency visits remain manageable, but urgent cases still face severe constraints. Even in these contexts, the absence of local hospitals forces dependence on distant centres, raising both economic and logistical burdens for households. Because these burdens weigh heavily on families, the implications for leadership are immediate and pressing.

Table 4.6 Access to Health Care Infrastructure: Distance to Service

Village	Medical Shops	Private Hospital	Civil Hospital	Primary Health/Sub Centres	Primary Health Centres	ASHA Booth
Tawipui 'S'	2	0	0	1	1	1
Mualcheng 'S'	0	0	0	1	1	1
S. Vanlaiphai	0	52	52	0	0	0
Tuipui 'D'	0	13	13	13	0	0
Leite	0	13	13	0	13	0
Rawpui	0	94	94	0	12	0
Zotuitlang	0	49	49	0	10	0

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

Since health access is uneven and delays can determine survival, village leaders must tailor their priorities accordingly. In well-served villages like Tawipui 'S', leadership can emphasise preventive health campaigns, awareness drives, and coordination with government schemes. In Mualcheng 'S,' leaders face the challenge of supplementing limited services through mobile medical units or improving drug supply chains. In severely disadvantaged villages such as Rawpui and S. Vanlaiphai, advocacy for additional PHCs, Sub-Centres, or reliable ambulance services becomes urgent. For moderately served villages like Tuipui 'D' and Leite, leaders can focus on strengthening the staffing and resources of existing Sub-Centres to maximise their utility.

Thus, unequal health care access produces everyday constraints, burdens households, and forces leaders to respond with a mix of advocacy, improvisation, and local adaptation. Health infrastructure, therefore, is not merely a technical provision but a determinant of survival and equity in rural life. Having examined health facilities, the following section turns to educational infrastructure, where distance to schools and colleges similarly shapes opportunity, mobility, and leadership priorities.

4.7 Access to Educational Infrastructure

If health infrastructure sustains life, educational infrastructure shapes the horizons of future opportunity. The presence or absence of Anganwadi Centres, schools, and colleges determines how far children and youth must travel for learning, and how strongly a village is positioned for long-term social mobility. This section examines the accessibility of educational infrastructure in the seven villages, illustrating how proximity to schools and colleges influences opportunities, mobility, and leadership priorities. These inequalities are reflected in the distinct patterns of access revealed by the data.

The data illustrate a wide range of conditions. Tawipui 'S' is relatively well served, with five Anganwadi Centres, three primary schools, and one each of middle, high, and higher secondary schools, although it lacks a college. By contrast, Mualcheng 'S' has four Anganwadis and one school each at the primary, middle, and

high levels, but no higher secondary school or college. Other villages show sharper disadvantages. S. Vanlaiphai has no educational facilities at all, requiring students to travel 52 km to reach a college the longest distance in the sample. Tuipui 'D' and Leite mirror this absence, lacking all local institutions and requiring 13 km travel to reach higher secondary schools and colleges. Rawpui shows slightly better conditions, with a higher secondary school 5 km away and a college 30 km away. Zotuitlang follows a similar pattern, but with longer distances: 10 km to a higher secondary school and 49 km to a college.

Such constraints in access translate directly into uneven educational opportunities. Children in Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' benefit from smoother progression, since multiple layers of schooling exist within their own village. In contrast, the complete absence of local facilities in S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui 'D,' and Leite forces students to rely on long commutes, which can discourage continued education and limit access to higher studies. This pattern continues in Rawpui and Zotuitlang: while higher secondary schools are somewhat closer, the long journeys to colleges (30 km and 49 km respectively) constrain participation in tertiary education and reduce opportunities for youth. Since participation is constrained, these educational gaps present a significant challenge for community leadership.

Table 4.7 Access to Educational Infrastructure: Distance to Service

Village	Anganwad i Centre	Primary School	Middle School	High School	Higher Secondar y School	Colleg e
Tawipui 'S'	5	3	1	1	1	0
Mualcheng 'S'	4	1	1	1	0	0
S. Vanlaiphai	0	0	0	0	0	52
Tuipui 'D'	0	0	0	0	13	13
Leite	0	0	0	0	13	13
Rawpui	0	0	0	0	5	30
Zotuitlang	0	0	0	0	10	49

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

Because educational opportunities are unevenly distributed, community leadership must respond in varied ways. In relatively well-served villages such as Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S,' leaders can focus on improving the quality of schooling, teacher capacity, and infrastructure. In disadvantaged villages like S. Vanlaiphai, the priority is to secure even the most basic institutions, such as Anganwadis or primary schools, to reduce dependence on distant facilities. For Tuipui 'D' and Leite, where higher education requires long-distance travel, leaders may advocate for transportation schemes, hostels, or scholarships to support students. In Rawpui and Zotuitlang, strengthening higher secondary schools and negotiating for closer college facilities becomes vital to reduce dropout risks and ensure smoother educational progression.

Thus, unequal educational access shapes life chances, burdens students with travel, and directs leadership toward bridging institutional gaps or supporting mobility solutions. Educational infrastructure is therefore both a determinant of opportunity and a reflection of structural inequality. Having explored education, the following section turns to the demographic profile of the villages, beginning with the distribution of population by gender, which offers another lens into social structure and community development.

4.8 Population of Villages by Gender

Demographic structure provides the baseline for understanding community composition and the dynamics of participation in social and economic life. The balance of males and females within a population is not merely a statistical fact but a marker of household labour, reproductive roles, and the inclusivity of development outcomes. This section examines the gender composition of the sample villages, illustrating how the proportions of males and females create patterns of balance and imbalance that influence development outcomes and leadership agendas. These demographic conditions are reflected in the data, which reveal both symmetry and variation.

The data illustrate a diverse set of patterns. Tawipui 'S' shows a clear female majority, with 1,195 females (57%) compared to 905 males (43%) in a total

population of 2,100. While Tawipui 'S' leans female, a contrasting pattern emerges in Mualcheng 'S,' where males constitute 56% (530 persons) and females 44% (420 persons) of a total 950. S. Vanlaiphai presents near balance, with 1,285 males (49%) and 1,350 females (51%), producing a total of 2,635 the largest population among the sample. Tuipui 'D' is male-heavy, with 640 males (55%) compared to 525 females (45%), totalling 1,165. In contrast to Tuipui 'D,' Leite displays balance tilted slightly in favour of females, with 432 males (49%) and 448 females (51%) in a total of 880. Rawpui has almost equal representation, with 504 males (51%) and 483 females (49%) in a total of 987. Zotuitlang, however, has a male tilt, with 351 males (54%) and 300 females (46%), totalling 651.

Table 4.8 Population of Villages by Gender

Village	Male		Female		Total Population	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Tawipui 'S'	905	43	1195	57	2100	100
Mualcheng 'S'	530	56	420	44	950	100
S. Vanlaiphai	1285	49	1350	51	2635	100
Tuipui 'D'	640	55	525	45	1165	100
Leite	432	49	448	51	880	100
Rawpui	504	51	483	49	987	100
Zotuitlang	351	54	300	46	651	100

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

These gender balances and imbalances have direct implications for community life. Villages with higher female proportions, such as Tawipui 'S,' Leite, and S. Vanlaiphai, reflect demographic conditions favourable to women's inclusion in social, cultural, and economic activities. Where males are predominant, such as in Mualcheng 'S,' Tuipui 'D,' and Zotuitlang, gender imbalance may shape labour patterns, influence leadership representation, and contribute to migration pressures. Balanced populations, as seen in Rawpui, provide opportunities for more equal participation, but sustaining this equilibrium requires gender-sensitive leadership policies. Because sustaining balance requires leadership attention, the demographic picture signals distinct priorities for leadership.

For leadership, these demographic patterns imply different directions of action. In female-majority villages, leaders may focus on strengthening women's groups, expanding maternal and child health services, and supporting income-generating opportunities tailored to women. In male-dominant villages, leadership may need to address issues such as youth employment, migration, and the underrepresentation of women in community decision-making. In balanced villages like Rawpui, leaders can build participatory structures that involve both men and women equally in community development.

Thus, the gender composition whether balanced, male-dominant, or female-majority shapes everyday participation, frames leadership responsibilities, and determines the inclusivity of community development. Having examined demographic composition by gender, the following section turns to migration inflows and poverty, where household mobility and economic stratification intersect with these demographic bases to shape the lived realities of rural communities.

4.9 Migration Inflow and Poverty

Migration and poverty together provide a vital lens for understanding the resilience and vulnerabilities of rural households. Migration inflows affect demographic composition, labour availability, and social integration, while poverty distribution signals the extent of economic inequality. This section examines migration inflow and poverty levels across the seven villages, showing how mobility patterns and household stratification shape both economic resilience and leadership priorities. These intersecting conditions are evident in the data, which present sharp contrasts across the seven villages.

The data reveal distinct variations. In Tawipui 'S,' 30 households (7%) have migrated in during the last decade, while 14% of households are classified as very poor (AAY), 16% as poor (BPL), and 70% as non-poor (APL), out of a total of 435 households. In contrast, Mualcheng 'S' exhibits a lower migration inflow (5 households, 3%), but a similar poverty profile: 13% are abysmally poor, 13% are poor, and 74% are non-poor. S. Vanlaiphai, however, presents a different picture: 30 migrant households (7%), but a disproportionately high 57% of households classified

as poor (BPL) and only 25% non-poor. Similarly vulnerable, Tuipui 'D' reports 10 migrant households (4%), with 8% classified as very poor, 61% as poor, and 31% as non-poor, indicating a significant concentration of deprivation. Leite mirrors this pattern: 6 migrant households (3%), with 14% experiencing abysmal conditions, 68% living in poverty, and 18% not living in poverty. Rawpui records just four migrant households (2%), but 68% of households fall into the poor category, with only 23% classified as non-poor. Similarly, Zotuitlang, with five migrant households (4%), stands out for its high proportion of impoverished households (28%) and poor households (60%), leaving only 18% as non-poor.

Table 4.9 Migration Inflow and Poverty

Village	Households Migrated in the Last 10 Years	No. of Very Poor (AAY) Households	No. of Poor (BPL) Households	No. of Non-Poor (APL) Households	Total number of Households
Tawipui 'S'	30 (7)	60 (14)	70 (16)	305 (70)	435 (100)
Mualcheng 'S'	5 (3)	25 (13)	25 (13)	142 (74)	192 (100)
S. Vanlaiphai	30 (7)	89 (20)	259 (57)	112 (25)	453 (100)
Tuipui 'D'	10 (4)	18 (8)	136 (61)	70 (31)	223 (100)
Leite	6 (3)	26 (14)	131 (68)	83 (43)	192 (100)
Rawpui	4 (2)	19 (9)	140 (68)	47 (23)	206 (100)
Zotuitlang	5 (4)	38 (28)	81 (60)	24 (18)	136 (100)

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

These migration and poverty patterns reveal striking socio-economic divides. Villages such as Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' display relatively higher proportions of non-poor households (70–74%), suggesting stronger resource bases and better livelihood opportunities. In contrast, Tuipui 'D,' Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang reveal entrenched poverty, with more than 60% of households in the poor category. S. Vanlaiphai shows a mixed profile: while hosting the largest population among the sample, it also has a high concentration of BPL households (57%), reflecting

widespread economic vulnerability. Migration inflows appear modest across all villages, ranging between 2% and 7%. However, their impact is uneven—villages with higher poverty levels may face greater difficulty in absorbing new households, straining already limited resources. Because resource pressures directly impact governance concerns, these dynamics present distinct sets of challenges for leadership.

For leadership, the implications diverge. In relatively better-off villages such as Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S,' leaders can focus on sustaining livelihoods, expanding opportunities, and preventing inequality from widening. In poverty-heavy villages such as Rawpui and Zotuitlang, leadership must address the structural roots of deprivation through welfare mobilisation, poverty alleviation schemes, and income diversification. In S. Vanlaiphai, where poverty is widespread despite population size, leaders may need to balance resource distribution with advocacy for more targeted government interventions. In Tuipui 'D' and Leite, the dominance of poor households places leadership in the position of securing subsidies, employment programs, and improved access to welfare schemes. Migration, even if small in scale, requires leaders to ensure social inclusion and reduce tensions over resource competition.

Thus, migration inflow and poverty distribution together expose uneven resilience, deepen vulnerability in poorer villages, and compel leaders to choose between consolidating prosperity or alleviating deprivation. Household-level mobility and economic stratification, therefore, emerge as key determinants of community well-being. Having explored migration and poverty, the following section examines household size and structure, which further influence the social and economic capacity of these villages.

4.10 Social and Resource Mapping of Villages

Participatory Social and Resource Mapping exercises extend the understanding of rural infrastructure beyond statistical inventories, revealing how communities themselves perceive, locate, and value their resources. These maps capture not only the presence of institutions but also the lived geographies of access,

convenience, and belonging. This section presents the findings of participatory Social and Resource Mapping, showing how villagers perceive, locate, and value their resources, and how these perceptions complement statistical inventories to shape leadership and development priorities. These trajectories are mirrored in the comparative data, which highlight unevenness in the distribution of facilities.

The institutional profiles reveal varied patterns. Tawipui 'S' emerges as resource-rich, hosting a bank, post office, police outpost, higher secondary school, market, and recreational spaces. In contrast, Mualcheng 'S' features a modest profile, comprising only a community hall, playground, and school. S. Vanlaiphai, despite being the largest settlement, possesses selective facilities like a PHC, high school, BRTF office, and tourist lodge, but lacks several community-level nodes such as markets or YMA houses. Tuipui 'D' balances institutional gaps with natural resource advantages, possessing a sub-centre, schools, and service points like a mining check gate. Leite and Rawpui reflect moderate endowments, with Leite including an MNREGS House and solar water pumps, and Rawpui combining a health and wellness centre with RD Rest House and YMA facilities. Similarly, Zotuitlang, although smaller, features distinctive community spaces, including a YMA Park and a waiting shed, although its overall institutional presence is thin. These institutional inventories gain more profound meaning when placed alongside community reflections gathered during the mapping exercises.

Beyond the inventory of facilities, villagers emphasised how the spatial organisation of resources influences community life. In Tawipui 'S', participants emphasised the centrality of the bazaar, which allows easy access from all directions, while YMA leaders valued the mapping for clarifying their knowledge of local resources. In Mualcheng 'S', villagers appreciated that key facilities like the playground, community hall, and primary school were centrally located, ensuring accessibility. At the same time, they recognised gaps and expressed aspirations for new governmental offices, such as agriculture and horticulture departments, to support their agrarian livelihoods. While Mualcheng stressed these gaps, S. Vanlaiphai's community displayed pride in their stewardship of resources. Although facilities were scattered, participants felt that this ensured equitable access across the

village. YMA leaders noted with satisfaction the involvement of students, which revived intergenerational knowledge about the village.

Other villages highlighted distinctive features through their mapping reflections. In Tuipui 'D', villagers emphasised their dependence on surrounding rivers for seafood, sand, and other natural resources that contribute directly to household and community income. Mapping also helped them delineate boundaries and locate important resources, reinforcing their sense of belonging. In Leite, YMA leaders, though pressed for time, actively assisted and discovered offices and resources they had overlooked, remarking with pride that their community was richer than they had assumed. Rawpui leaders, already deeply familiar with the local geography, drew their map quickly and precisely; however, the process triggered a recognition of the need for structured town planning to prevent future issues with internal roads. Similarly, in Zotuitlang, the mapping exercise became an act of collective learning: YMA leaders and villagers realised the importance of visually locating resources, which gave them a clearer picture of their community's actual endowments.

These endowments, viewed through the eyes of participants, reveal that participatory mapping is not merely a technical tool but also a catalyst for awareness and leadership development. In resource-rich villages, mapping consolidated existing knowledge; in resource-scarce ones, it generated aspirations and advocacy demands; and in others, it triggered the recognition of planning needs. Across all sites, YMA leaders played a pivotal role, bridging facilitation with ownership, and the mapping itself strengthened the community's capacity to imagine future possibilities.

Thus, resource inventories, community reflections, and leadership engagement together reveal that social mapping is both a descriptive and empowering process that strengthens awareness, advocacy, and planning. Taken together, these experiences confirm that resources are unevenly distributed but also unevenly perceived sometimes underestimated, sometimes newly appreciated. Having examined the endowment of resources, the following section turns to Services and Opportunities Mapping, which explores how villagers view their access

to education, health, markets, and welfare institutions, and how these perceptions translate into opportunities for development.

4.11 Services and Opportunities Mapping of Villages

Participatory Services and Opportunities Mapping shifts attention from physical resources to the everyday accessibility of essential services, including education, health, markets, banking, and welfare. Unlike the resource inventory that shows what exists in a village, this exercise foregrounds the distance and effort required to reach opportunities. This section examines the spatial distribution of services and opportunities across seven villages, illustrating how distance affects villagers' access to health, education, and livelihood, and how such disparities shape distinct priorities for leadership. These leadership concerns become clear in the comparative findings, which demonstrate significant disparities.

The comparative analysis reveals distinct variations. Tawipui 'S' enjoys proximity to many facilities: schools at all levels, Anganwadi Centre, post office, and community spaces are within the village itself, though higher education and major health institutions require travel of 30 km. By contrast, Mualcheng 'S' faces greater limitations, with banking, mobile towers, and hospitals located 15–50 km away, and higher education requiring up to 47 km of travel. S. Vanlaiphai, despite its size, depends on services at considerable distances 72 km for a college and 54 km for a civil hospital though it sustains schools locally. Tuipui 'D' requires only 12 km to access a college, higher secondary school, and hospital, but lacks several basic amenities within the village, such as a bank or post office. Leite shows a similar profile, with a 13 km distance to college, bank, police, and health facilities, marking it as moderately disadvantaged. Rawpui has better access to schooling within the village, with a higher secondary school located within 5 km, but faces long journeys of 30 km to hospitals, the post office, and banking facilities. Similarly, Zotuitlang reflects a mixed condition: while schools, post offices, and playgrounds are present locally, higher education and hospital services are located 50 km away, and banking requires a 10 km travel distance. These distance-based service profiles translate directly into opportunities and constraints.

The implications of these profiles are far-reaching. Villages like Tawipui ‘S’ and Rawpui, with schools and community institutions located internally, allow smoother educational progression and a vibrant local social life. However, their distance from colleges and hospitals limits higher aspirations. In Mualcheng ‘S’ and S. Vanlaiphai, extended travel to essential services generates dependency on external centres and increases vulnerability. In Tuipui ‘D’ and Leite, moderate accessibility offers partial opportunities but also imposes recurring travel burdens on students and patients. Zotuitlang’s situation illustrates how partial provision local schools but distant advanced services generates both inclusion and exclusion simultaneously. Because such simultaneous inclusion and exclusion reshape village life, these disparities pose distinct agendas for leadership.

For leadership, the consequences are differentiated. In service-rich villages, leaders may focus on upgrading quality, expanding welfare linkages, and lobbying for nearby colleges or hospitals. In service-poor contexts such as Mualcheng ‘S’ and S. Vanlaiphai, leadership must advocate for the establishment of critical institutions or secure transport subsidies to offset disadvantage. In intermediate villages such as Tuipui ‘D, Leite, and Zotuitlang, leaders face the dual challenge of maximising local services while pressing for better access to higher-level institutions. Across all contexts, leaders recognised through the mapping process that spatial distribution is as important as institutional presence, since distance itself acts as a barrier to equity.

Taken together, these disparities confirm that opportunities are unevenly spread across the seven villages. Some are better served at the basic level but constrained in advanced facilities, while others face chronic deficits across multiple sectors. More importantly, the participatory process highlighted how villagers themselves view accessibility not as a neutral distance, but as a lived challenge that shapes education, health, and livelihoods. Thus, distance-based disparities in access to services not only create uneven opportunities but also compel leaders to balance the strengths of local facilities with advocacy for higher-level institutions. Having examined services and opportunities, the following section turns to household-level socio-economic

composition, beginning with household size and structure, which further conditions the ability of families to utilise available opportunities.

Read together, the seven villages show how history imprints location, location orders access, access depends on road and communication connectivity, and connectivity shapes the reach of services from banking and policing to health and education. These structural differences are then filtered through demographic balance and strained by poverty and migration, before being reinterpreted in participatory mapping exercises that reveal how villagers themselves perceive and prioritise resources. The pattern is clear: where historical continuity, strong mobility networks, and proximate services converge, communities sustain smoother daily rhythms and broader options; where these links are weak remoteness, fragile roads, unreliable digital lines, or distant institutions time, cost, and risk accumulate, constraining both households and leadership agendas.

Taken together, these accumulated constraints and advantages confirm that the historical and infrastructural bases of rural Lunglei form a causal spine that explains today's variation in opportunity, burden, and leadership priorities. This causal spine not only accounts for uneven growth but also frames the terms on which leadership and community resilience are exercised.

Thus, history, infrastructure, and lived constraints converge into a causal spine, providing both an explanation of present inequalities and an orientation for subsequent analysis. Guided by this orientation, the next chapter on the Demographic and Social Composition of Villages builds directly on these structural bases by showing how population structures, household characteristics, and social organisation further condition how historical legacies and infrastructural opportunities are lived, distributed, and transformed within communities.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL COMPOSITION OF VILLAGE COMMUNITIES

Introduction

Villages in Mizoram are not only places of residence but living systems of identity, economy, and governance. Their social composition shapes cultural norms, economic participation, and political authority, influencing how communities interact, distribute resources, and maintain cohesion. Understanding this composition is essential because it reveals both enduring traditions and emerging transitions as rural Mizoram moves from shifting cultivation to more settled forms of livelihood and organisation. Such a transformation cannot be understood in isolation but requires a structured examination of village composition.

To capture these dynamics of continuity and change, the analysis in this chapter is organised across five interconnected domains. First, the demographic profile outlines basic characteristics gender, age, marital status, and education that determine both vulnerabilities and capacities at the individual and household level. Second, the family profile examines type, form, size, and headship, offering insight into kinship patterns, intergenerational co-residence, and gendered responsibility. Third, the social profile examines subtribal affiliations, clan categories, denominational affiliations, socio-economic stratification, and political orientation, illustrating how cultural identity and institutional membership influence participation and access. Fourth, the agrarian structure of land ownership highlights tenure forms, acreage distribution, and landholding sizes, situating Mizoram's villages within the ongoing transition from shifting cultivation to permanent settlement. Finally, the living conditions of households are assessed through income and expenditure patterns, revealing livelihood dependence, inequality, and emerging aspirations.

Taken together, the demographic, family, social, agrarian, and economic domains provide a comprehensive picture of how social composition both sustains and challenges rural life. The transition from shifting to settled cultivation, viewed through these domains, confirms that social structure is inextricably linked to patterns of livelihood. This integrated understanding also prepares the ground for

analysing leadership perceptions and community participation in subsequent chapters, since authority and decision-making are inseparable from demographic, kinship, cultural, agrarian, and economic foundations.

5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, and education form the foundation for understanding social structure in rural villages. They highlight both individual vulnerabilities and collective strengths, guiding the development of community-level interventions that address these needs. This section analyses the demographic composition of respondents across seven rural villages in Mizoram: Tawipui ‘S’, Mualcheng ‘S’, S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui ‘D’, Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang. Each subsection follows a logical chain of reasoning: claim, evidence, illustration, inference, and conclusion, with categories systematically enumerated to reflect the diversity of rural realities.

5.1.1 Gender Distribution

Gender structure is a fundamental demographic marker that shapes household roles, labour participation, and social expectations. Among the seven villages, two categories are distinguished: male and female. Rawpui is female-dominated, with 69% of respondents women. This imbalance likely reflects male outmigration or higher female life expectancy. In contrast, Tuipui ‘D’ (96% male) and S. Vanlaiphai (93% male) are overwhelmingly male, which may be attributed to male-centred sampling, greater male visibility in community activities, or socio-cultural biases. Tawipui ‘S’ and Leite show moderate imbalance, with female shares of 14% and 23% respectively. Zotuitlang, with 39% female respondents, is the most balanced of all. These examples illustrate how demographic trends, social norms, and sampling dynamics shape gender profiles. The inference is that gender imbalance can distort participation and policy planning. In conclusion, gender distribution reveals uneven representation across villages, ranging from balanced to extremely skewed.

5.1.2 Age Group Distribution

Age composition reflects both the workforce's potential and care needs, revealing both generational balance and imbalance. Respondents are classified into three categories: youth (13–34 years old), middle-aged (35–55 years old), and elderly (56 years old and above). Tawipui ‘S’ and Zotuitlang record higher youth representation (31 and 28 respondents, respectively), showing potential for an active labour force. Rawpui (32 youth) demonstrates intergenerational balance, as youth, middle-aged, and elderly groups are evenly represented. Middle-aged groups dominate in Leite (37), Mualcheng ‘S’ (32), and Tuipui ‘D’ (35), pointing to stable working-age populations managing households and livelihoods. Elderly populations are highest in S. Vanlaiphai (65) and Mualcheng ‘S’ (55), with significant shares in Leite (53) and Tuipui ‘D’ (52). These cases suggest ageing communities, low youth retention, or longevity trends. The inference is that demographic ageing poses challenges for care, labour, and intergenerational support. In conclusion, youth-rich villages like Tawipui ‘S’ contrast with elderly-heavy ones like S. Vanlaiphai, confirming that development strategies must address distinct demographic structures. While gender and age highlight structural balance, marital status shapes social responsibilities and household dynamics.

Table 5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents: Gender and Age Group

Sl. No.	Village	N	Gender		Age Group		
			Male	Female	13 - 34	35 - 55	56+
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	14	86	31	38	31
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	23	77	14	32	55
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	7	93	12	23	65
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	4	96	13	35	52
5	Leite	26	23	77	10	37	53
6	Rawpui	22	69	31	32	32	36
7	Zotuitlang	15	61	39	28	22	50
	Total:	214	32	68	23	31	46

Source: Computed

5.2 Marital Status

Marital status indicates social roles and vulnerabilities, influencing economic dependency and psychosocial well-being. Four categories are considered: unmarried, married, divorced/separated, and widowed. The vast majority of respondents are married, ranging from 82% in Mualcheng 'S' to 96% in Tuipui 'D'. Villages such as S. Vanlaiphai, Leite, and Zotuitlang also have a high percentage of married respondents, underscoring the cultural centrality of marriage. Tawipui 'S' (15% unmarried) and Rawpui (45% unmarried) show higher shares of single respondents, possibly reflecting youth presence, late marriages, or changing attitudes. Only Tawipui 'S' reports divorced/separated individuals (5%), highlighting that marital breakdown, while rare, is becoming visible. Widowhood is highest in Mualcheng 'S' (18%) and S. Vanlaiphai (7%), with notable cases in Leite (7%) and Zotuitlang (6%). These patterns may be linked to older populations, male migration, or mortality. The inference is that widowhood introduces vulnerabilities, such as female-headed households and increased demands for elder care. In conclusion, marriage remains the dominant norm, but unmarried, widowed, and divorced individuals represent emerging needs for tailored social support. Beyond marital status, educational attainment provides insight into the human capital that underpins these social dynamics.

Table 5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents: Marital Status

Sl. No.	Village	N	Unmarried	Married	Divorced/Separated	Widowed
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	9	83	3	5
2	Mualcheng 'S'	21	0	82	0	18
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	0	93	0	7
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	0	96	0	4
5	Leite	26	0	93	0	7
6	Rawpui	22	10	88	0	2
7	Zotuitlang	15	0	94	0	6
	Total:	214	19	629	3	49

Source: Computed

5.3 Education Status

Education is both a present resource and a future capability indicator. Respondents are classified into five categories: primary (classes 1–5), middle (classes 6–8), secondary (classes 9–10), higher secondary (classes 11–12), and higher education. S. Vanlaiphai (40%) and Mualcheng ‘S’ (41%) report the highest concentration with only primary education, reflecting early dropout or lack of access to middle schools. Leite (33%), Tuipui ‘D’ (35%), and Zotuitlang (33%) also show strong clustering at this basic level. Middle school emerges as the terminal stage in Rawpui (51%) and Tuipui ‘D’ (48%), with similar trends in Mualcheng ‘S’ (45%) and Zotuitlang (44%). Secondary attainment peaks in Tuipui ‘D’ and Leite (17% each), with Rawpui (22%) also notable, while Tawipui ‘S’ and S. Vanlaiphai trail at 14%. Higher secondary achievement is most substantial in Leite (17%) and Tawipui ‘S’ (16%), followed by Zotuitlang (14%). Rawpui and S. Vanlaiphai, at 5% each, show critical drop-offs. Higher education attainment is minimal: S. Vanlaiphai (7%) and Tawipui ‘S’ (6%) show some presence, while Leite (3%) has few, and other villages report none. These patterns illustrate severe bottlenecks beyond secondary schooling, likely due to affordability, accessibility, or socio-economic pressures. The inference is that educational mobility is sharply constrained. In conclusion, while a few villages exhibit upward trends, the majority remain educationally impoverished, necessitating the provision of scholarships, improved rural schools, and increased community awareness.

The demographic profile reveals stark variations across villages some balanced, others skewed by gender, age, marital status, or education. Rawpui and Zotuitlang exhibit a greater balance, whereas S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui ‘D’ are heavily male-dominated and aged. Mualcheng ‘S’ and Leite concentrate in middle-aged and elderly groups signals a demographic transition. Educational attainment is the most constrained indicator, with most respondents clustered at primary or middle levels and very few advancing to higher education. The systematic categories presented above, supported by computed data, demonstrate through direct observation, inference, and textual authority where available, that village-level variation is both structural and cultural. The overall conclusion is clear: a one-size-

fits-all development strategy will not work across these villages. Tailored social work interventions must respond to the specific demographic realities of each community, balancing the potential of youth, elderly care, marital dynamics, and educational uplift.

Table 5.3 Demographic Profile of Respondents: Education Status

Sl. No.	Village	N	Primary (1-5)	Middle (6 -8)	Secondary (9 - 10)	Higher Secondary (11 -12)	Higher Education
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	23	41	14	16	6
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	41	45	9	5	0
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	40	35	14	5	7
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	35	48	17	0	0
5	Leite	26	33	30	17	17	3
6	Rawpui	22	22	51	22	5	0
7	Zotuitlang	15	33	44	8	14	0
	Total:	214	227	294	101	62	16

Source: Computed

5.4 Family Profile of Respondents: Type, Form and Size

The family remains the foundational social unit in rural Mizoram, shaping caregiving, resource distribution, gender roles, and socialisation. Analysing type, form, size, and household headship provides a systematic understanding of kinship dynamics, dependency patterns, and resilience. This section presents findings from seven villages Tawipui ‘S’, Mualcheng ‘S’, S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui ‘D’, Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang.

5.4.1 Type of Family

Two types of families are identified: joint and nuclear. The majority are joint families, especially in Rawpui (73%), S. Vanlaiphai (68%), Zotuitlang (67%), and Leite (62%). Even in Tawipui ‘S’, where nuclear families dominate (56%), joint families remain significant (44%). Tuipui 'D' is evenly balanced at 50% each, reflecting a transitional structure. These cases show that extended family norms remain strong, but nuclearisation is emerging in villages like Tawipui ‘S’ and

Mualcheng 'S'. In conclusion, family type across villages reflects continuity of joint living with early signs of structural change.

5.4.2 Form of Family

Two forms are distinguished: stable (intact) and reconstituted. Nearly all households are stable (98%). Tawipui 'S' alone reports reconstituted families (12%), likely from remarriage, divorce, or widowhood. The absence elsewhere may imply either marital stability or reluctance to report due to stigma. In conclusion, family form remains overwhelmingly stable; however, Tawipui S signals that reconstitution, although rare, is a visible social process.

5.4.3 Size of Family

Three categories are identified: small (with ≤ 3 members), medium (with 4–5 members), and large (with ≥ 6 members). Large families dominate: Rawpui (77%), Leite (73%), Zotuitlang (67%), and S. Vanlaiphai (64%). Medium households are highest in Tuipui 'D' (38%) and Tawipui 'S' (31%). Small households occur mainly in Zotuitlang (20%) and S. Vanlaiphai (19%) but are rare in Rawpui and Mualcheng'S' (5%). These figures illustrate intergenerational co-residence as the prevailing norm, which ensures social cohesion but stretches limited resources. In conclusion, family size patterns confirm the persistence of large, multi-generational households, with smaller units emerging selectively.

5.4.4 Gender of Household Head

Two categories are considered: male-headed and female-headed households. Male-headed households dominate overall, with the highest proportions in Tuipui 'D' (96%), S. Vanlaiphai (93%), and Tawipui 'S' (86%). In contrast, Rawpui (69%) and Zotuitlang (61%) report a higher proportion of female-headed households. Leite and Mualcheng 'S' also register 23% female heads each. These patterns likely result from widowhood, male outmigration, or single parenting. In conclusion, while male headship dominates, the high proportion of female-headed households in Rawpui and Zotuitlang highlights gendered vulnerabilities that require targeted interventions.

The family profile across Mizoram's rural villages is predominantly joint, stable, large, and male-headed consistent with traditional norms. However, variations signal transition: nuclearisation in Tawipui 'S', reconstituted households in Tawipui 'S', and high female headship in Rawpui and Zotuitlang. The findings reveal that rural families embody both resilience and strain. In conclusion, social work interventions must therefore address both the that while most households identify with commoner status, ruling clans remain significant in certain villages, linking them to traditional authority.

Table 5.4 Family Profile of Respondents: Type, Form and Size

Sl. No.	Village	N	Type of Family		Form of Family		Size of Family			Gender of Head	
			Joint	Nuclear	Reconstituted	Stable	Small (≤ 3)	Medium (4 - 5)	Large (6 +)	Female	Male
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	44	56	7	93	39	31	31	14	86
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	62	38	0	100	5	29	67	23	77
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	68	32	0	100	19	17	64	7	93
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	50	50	0	100	8	38	54	4	96
5	Leite	26	62	38	0	100	8	19	73	23	77
6	Rawpui	22	73	27	0	100	5	18	77	69	31
7	Zotuitlang	15	67	33	0	100	20	13	67	61	39
	Total:										

Source: Computed

5.5 Social Profile of Respondents

In Mizoram's multi-ethnic tribal context, social identity is shaped by subtribal affiliations, clan membership, denominational belonging, socio-economic classification, and political orientation. Analysing these dimensions across villages highlights both shared patterns and striking inter-village contrasts that influence leadership, participation, and access to institutions.

5.5.1 Subtribe

Five subtribes are identified among respondents: Lusei, Lai, Hmar, Ralte, and Paite. Lusei is dominant overall (69.6%), but distribution varies: highest in Leite (92.3%), Mualcheng 'S' (76.2%), and Rawpui (77.3%), lower in Tawipui 'S' (59.3%) and Zotuitlang (60%). Lai presence is significant in Tawipui 'S' (28.8%), S. Vanlaiphai (34%), Tuipui 'D' (29.2%), and Zotuitlang (26.7%), but absent in Leite, Mualcheng 'S', and Rawpui. Hmar appears only in Tawipui 'S' (6.8%) and Zotuitlang (13.3%). Ralte is visible in Rawpui (4.5%) and Tawipui 'S' (3.4%). Paite occurs marginally in Tawipui 'S' (1.7%). These differences reveal Lusei dominance overall but highlight pluralism in Tawipui 'S' and Zotuitlang.

5.5.2 Type of Clan

Two clan categories are recognised: commoner and ruling. Commoner clans form the majority (75.2%). Ruling clans are most visible in S. Vanlaiphai (36.2%), Zotuitlang (33.3%), and Mualcheng 'S' (33.3%). Their presence is moderate in Tuipui 'D' (29.2%) and lower in Tawipui 'S' (13.6%), Leite (19.2%), and Rawpui (18.2%). This distribution shows that while most households identify with commoner status, ruling clans remain significant in certain villages, linking them to traditional authority.

Table 5.5(a) Social Profile of Respondents: Subtribe and Type of Clan

Sl. No.	Village	N	Subtribe					Type of Clan	
			Lusei	Lai	Hmar	Ralte	Paite	Commoner	Ruling
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	59.3	28.8	6.8	3.4	1.7	86.4	13.6
2	Mualcheng 'S'	21	76.2	23.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	66.0	34.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	63.8	36.2
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	70.8	29.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	70.8	29.2
5	Leite	26	92.3	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	80.8	19.2
6	Rawpui	22	77.3	18.2	0.0	4.5	0.0	81.8	18.2
7	Zotuitlang	15	60.0	26.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	66.7	33.3
	Total:	214	501.9	168.4	20.1	7.9	1.7	517	183

Source: Computed

5.5.3 Denomination

Four denominations are reported: the Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM), the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI), the United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram (UPC-M), and the United Pentecostal Church of Northeast India (UPC-NEI). BCM dominates overall (79.4%). It is universal in Tuipui 'D' (100%) and very high in Leite (92.3%), Mualcheng 'S' (90.5%), Rawpui (86.4%), and Zotuitlang (86.7%). Tawipui 'S' stands apart with only 52.5% BCM members, and sizable PCI (16.9%) and Pentecostal adherents (30.5%). This contrast shows that while BCM is hegemonic in most villages, Tawipui 'S' is notably plural in its religious composition.

5.5.4 Socio-Economic Category

Three categories structure economic status: very poor (AAY), poor (BPL), and non-poor (APL). AAY households are most concentrated in Zotuitlang (26.7%), S. Vanlaiphai (23.4%), and Tawipui 'S' (22.0%), but remain minimal in Rawpui (9.1%), Leite (11.5%), and Tuipui 'D' (12.5%). BPL shares are highest in Tuipui 'D' (58.3%), Leite (53.8%), Zotuitlang (53.3%), and S. Vanlaiphai (53.2%), but low in Mualcheng 'S' (9.5%). APL dominance occurs in Mualcheng 'S' (71.4%) and

Tawipui ‘S’ (50.8%), but is weakest in Zotuitlang (20%), Rawpui (22.7%), and S. Vanlaiphai (23.4%). These differences identify Mualcheng ‘S’ as relatively affluent, Zotuitlang and S. Vanlaiphai as disadvantaged, and Tawipui ‘S’ as internally unequal.

Table 5.5(b) Social Profile of Respondents: Denomination and Socio-Economic Category

Sl. No.	Village	N	Denomination				Socio - Economic Category		
			Baptist Church of Mizoram	Presbyterian Church of India	United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram	United Pentecostal Church of NEI	Very-Poor (AAY)	Poor (BPL)	Non-Poor (APL)
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	52.5	16.9	13.6	16.9	22.0	27.1	50.8
2	Mualcheng 'S'	21	90.5	0.0	4.8	4.8	19.0	9.5	71.4
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	85.1	6.4	0.0	8.5	23.4	53.2	23.4
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	100	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	58.3	29.2
5	Leite	26	92.3	0.0	0.0	7.7	11.5	53.8	34.6
6	Rawpui	22	86.4	9.1	0.0	4.5	9.1	68.2	22.7
7	Zotuitlang	15	86.7	0.0	0.0	13.3	26.7	53.3	20.0
	Total	214	79.4	7.0	4.2	9.3	18.7	43.9	37.4

Source: Computed

5.6 Political Affiliation

Four levels of political affiliation are observed: none, sympathiser, member, and office bearer. Disengagement is highest in Tawipui ‘S’ (44.1%) and Rawpui (40.9%), but lowest in Mualcheng ‘S’ (9.5%) and Tuipui ‘D’ (12.5%). Sympathisers dominate in Tuipui ‘D’ (83.3%), Zotuitlang (66.7%), and Leite (65.4%). Party membership is notable in Tawipui ‘S’ (33.9%) and Mualcheng ‘S’ (28.6%), but absent in Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang. Office bearers are rare, limited to Tawipui ‘S’ (3.4%). Party preferences also vary: ZPM leads in Mualcheng ‘S’ (76.2%) and S. Vanlaiphai (63.8%), MNF is strong in Tuipui ‘D’ (41.7%) and Rawpui (27.3%), while INC presence is minimal, scattered only in Rawpui (18.2%), Leite (3.8%), and S. Vanlaiphai (2.1%). These contrasts show lively political mobilisation in some villages alongside disengagement in others.

The social profile reveals strong patterns of dominance tempered by village-specific diversity. Lusei commoner families under BCM affiliation dominate the overall picture, yet Tawipui 'S' and Zotuitlang stand out for ethnic and religious plurality. Economically, Mualcheng 'S' is relatively affluent, while Zotuitlang and S. Vanlaiphai remain highly vulnerable. Politically, Mualcheng 'S' and Tuipui 'D' exhibit high mobilisation, while Tawipui 'S' and Rawpui lean toward disengagement. These findings confirm that rural Mizoram villages, although structurally similar, differ significantly in terms of social composition, economic capacity, and political engagement. Development interventions must therefore be tailored to these inter-village variations.

Table 5.7 Social Profile of Respondents: Political Affiliation

Sl · No	Village	N	Political Affiliation				Political Party Affiliation			
			None	Sym pathi zer	Membe r	Offi ce Bea rer	None	ZP M	MN F	INC
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	44.1	18.6	33.9	3.4	44.1	32.2	20.3	3.4
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	9.5	61.9	28.6	0.0	9.5	76.2	14.3	0.0
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	29.8	57.4	12.8	0.0	29.8	63.8	4.3	2.1
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	12.5	83.3	4.2	0.0	12.5	45.8	41.7	0.0
5	Leite	26	34.6	65.4	0.0	0.0	34.6	34.6	26.9	3.8
6	Rawpui	22	40.9	54.5	4.5	0.0	40.9	13.6	27.3	18.2
7	Zotuitlang	15	33.3	66.7	0.0	0.0	33.3	33.3	33.3	0.0
	Total	214	31.8	51.4	15.9	0.9	31.8	43.5	21.0	3.7

Source: Computed

5.7 Agrarian Structure of Land Ownership

Land ownership is a defining feature of agrarian livelihoods in Mizoram. Patterns of tenure, distribution of acreage, and landholding size reveal the extent of livelihood security, inequality, and the scope for policy interventions. These structures must also be understood in the context of Mizoram's ongoing transition from shifting (jhum) cultivation to settled agriculture. Temporary landholding through Village Council Passes (VC Passes) continues to reflect the legacy of shifting cultivation, while Land Settlement Certificates (LSCs) signal a movement toward permanent, settled farming systems.

5.7.1 Households by Form of Land

Two forms of tenure exist: temporary rights under VC Pass and permanent rights through LSC. Overall, temporary tenure dominates with 63% of households, while only 37% possess permanent titles. The reliance on VC Passes indicates that many households remain tied to transitional land arrangements shaped by the legacy of shifting cultivation. Such temporary tenure restricts investment and limits access to credit and subsidies.

Inter-village contrasts are significant. Tuipui 'D' records the highest LSC share (67%), reflecting the strongest land security and most advanced transition to settled cultivation. In contrast, Zotuitlang (100% VC Pass, 0% LSC) and Mualcheng 'S' (95% VC Pass, 5% LSC) are the most insecure, showing continued dependence on temporary rights. Tawipui 'S' (56% VC Pass, 44% LSC) and S. Vanlaiphai (55% VC Pass, 45% LSC) show transitional profiles, while Rawpui (73% VC Pass, 27% LSC) and Leite (65% VC Pass, 35% LSC) indicate partial progress. These distributions highlight uneven movement away from shifting cultivation toward settled farming across villages.

Table 5.7.1 Agrarian Structure of Land Ownership: Households by Form of Land

Sl. No	Village	N	Temporary VC Pass		Land Settlement Certificate		Total	
			Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	33	56	26	44	59	100
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	20	95	1	5	21	100
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	26	55	21	45	47	100
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	8	33	16	67	24	100
5	Leite	26	17	65	9	35	26	100
6	Rawpui	22	16	73	6	27	22	100
7	Zotuitlang	15	15	100	0	0	15	100
	Total	214	135	63	79	37	214	100

Source: Computed

5.7.2 Distribution of Acres of Land Possessed

Average household landholding across all villages is 5.3 acres (SD 1.5). However, tenure legality remains uneven. VC Pass reliance is universal in Zotuitlang (100%) and near-total in Mualcheng 'S' (92.9%) and Rawpui (73.9%), all reflecting persistence of temporary, jhum-like arrangements. Tuipui 'D' contrasts sharply with 65.7% of households under LSC, marking it as a village that has shifted mainly toward settled agriculture villages such as Leite, S. Vanlaiphai, and Rawpui exhibit mixed profiles, reflecting a gradual transition.

Table 5.7.2 Agrarian Structure: Distribution of Acres of Land Possessed

Sl.No	Village	N	VC Pass		Land Settlement Certificate		Land Owned in Acres	
			Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	2.2 (51.8)	2.2	2.0 (48.2)	2.4	4.2 (100)	1.2
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	4.4 (92.9)	2.1	0.3 (7.1)	1.5	4.7 (100)	1.9
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	2.8	2.7	2.6	3.0	5.3	1.3
			(51.8)		(48.2)		(100)	
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	2.0	3.0	3.8	3.0	5.8	1.4
			(34.3)		(65.7)		(100)	
5	Leite	26	4.3	3.3	2.3	3.3	6.7	0.7
			(64.9)		(35.1)		(100)	
6	Rawpui	22	4.6	3.0	1.6	2.8	6.3	1.0
			(73.9)		(26.1)		(100)	
7	Zotuitlang	15	6.2	1.3	0.0	0.0	6.2	1.3
			(100.0)		(0.0)		(100)	
	Total	214	3.3	2.9	2.0	2.8	5.3	1.5
			(61.8)		(38.2)		(100)	

Source: Computed

Figures in Parentheses are Percentages

In acreage, Leite (6.7 acres) and Zotuitlang (6.2 acres) report the highest averages, though Zotuitlang's insecurity undermines its advantage. Tuipui 'D' holds an average of 5.8 acres, combining size with secure tenure, making it a model case for settled agriculture. Tawipui 'S' (4.2 acres) and Maulcheng 'S' (4.7 acres) report smaller holdings with insecurity attached. The pattern illustrates the paradox of being land-rich but legally insecure in several villages, a common feature of regions still emerging from shifting cultivation practices.

5.7.3 Households by Size of Land

Landholding size is grouped into small (≤ 3.80 acres), medium (3.81–5.35 acres), and large (≥ 6.90 acres). A majority of households (78%) fall into the medium and large categories, reflecting a significant overall agrarian capacity.

Table 5.7.3 Agrarian Structure of Land Ownership: Households by Size of Land

Sl. No	Village	N	Size of Land Owned in Acres						Total	
			<= 3.80		3.81 - 5.35		6.90+			
			Freq uenc y	Perce nt	Fr eq ue nc y	Perc ent	Freq uenc y	Per cen t	Fre que ncy	Perc ent
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	26	44%	30	51%	3	5%	59	100%
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	11	52%	2	10%	8	38%	21	100%
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	7	15%	25	53%	15	32%	47	100%
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	3	13%	8	33%	13	54%	24	100%
5	Leite	26	0	0%	4	15%	22	85%	26	100%
6	Rawpui	22	0	0%	8	36%	14	64%	22	100%
7	Zotuitlang	15	1	7%	4	27%	10	67%	15	100%
	Total	214	48	22%	81	38%	85	40%	214	100%

Source: Computed

Village contrasts remain pronounced. Tawipui 'S' shows balance (44% small, 51% medium, 5% significant), while Mualcheng 'S' is polarised (52% small, 38% large), reflecting inequality. S. Vanlaiphai (53% medium, 32% large) reflects strong

productive potential. Tuipui 'D' (54% large) emerges as land-rich with surplus capacity, aligned with its higher LSC coverage. Leite (85% significant, 0% small) and Rawpui (64% significant, 0% small) display concentrated ownership, indicating homogeneity among land-rich households. Zotuitlang (67% significant, 7% small) also leans towards land-rich areas but combines this with insecure tenure rooted in temporary arrangements. The agrarian structure demonstrates three distinct patterns. First, temporary tenure remains dominant, showing that the transition from shifting to settled cultivation is incomplete, particularly in Zotuitlang and Mualcheng 'S'. Second, even where landholdings are large, insecurity reduces their economic value, as in Zotuitlang. Third, the distribution of land size varies sharply: Tawipui 'S' is balanced, Mualcheng 'S' is polarised, while Leite and Rawpui are highly concentrated. Tuipui 'D' combines secure tenure with significant holdings, representing a model of agrarian stability and settled farming. These findings underscore the importance of land titling, tenure reform, and support for permanent cultivation in consolidating Mizoram's agrarian transition.

5.8. Living Conditions of Household

The living conditions of households in rural Mizoram can be most clearly revealed through two interlinked indicators: income and expenditure. Income indicates the sources, stability, and diversity of livelihoods, while expenditure shows how those earnings are allocated to meet needs, manage risks, and pursue aspirations. Together, they provide a comprehensive picture of dependence, inequality, and resilience across the seven study villages.

5.8.1 Annual Household Income

Annual household income refers to the total earnings of a household from all sources within a year. It captures the economic base on which rural life rests and the degree of diversification within it. Seven primary income sources are considered: agriculture, livestock rearing, skilled labour, petty trade or business, government service and pension, agricultural wage labour, and other non-conventional sources.

5.8.1.1 Pattern of Annual Household Income: Sources

Agriculture is the foremost source, contributing 59.4% of overall household income across the villages. This dominance is most pronounced in S. Vanlaiphai (69.7%), Rawpui (62.3%), and Mualcheng 'S' (61.9%). The finding demonstrates that land and cultivation continue to be the backbone of livelihoods. Livestock accounts for 21.8% of income, and its significance is striking in Mualcheng 'S' (36.9%), Zotuitlang (35.4%), and Leite (32.6%). The evidence suggests that households diversify within agrarian systems by combining crops with animal rearing as a buffer against agricultural uncertainty.

Skilled labour contributes 10.3% on average, with sharp differences across villages. Tuipui 'D' (19.8%) and Tawipui 'S' (13.9%) show the most substantial reliance, while Rawpui records none. This reveals how access to vocational skills and market opportunities can substantially improve household earnings, but this remains uneven. Petty trade or business accounts for 5.1%, concentrated in Tawipui 'S' (15.2%), with a smaller presence in Leite (4.6%) and Tuipui 'D' (2.7%). This indicates the limited penetration of small-scale commerce in rural areas, shaped by market access and entrepreneurial support.

Government service and pensions add 2.5% overall, with only Rawpui (7.3%) and Tawipui 'S' (6.5%) registering meaningful shares. This scarcity of formal employment opportunities reinforces the dominance of informal and agrarian livelihoods. Agricultural wage labour is negligible at 0.1%, showing that households rarely survive by working in others' fields. Other sources, such as remittances or unconventional earnings, account for only 0.7% overall, underscoring unrealised potential for diversification.

Taken together, the income structure demonstrates continuity in agriculture, growing importance of livestock as a complement, uneven opportunities in skilled work and trade, and near-absence of formal or wage employment. This composition underscores both resilience and fragility: while households demonstrate the capacity to diversify within agrarian systems, they remain vulnerable to shocks due to limited non-farm opportunities.

Table 5.8.1 Pattern of Annual Household Income: Sources

Sl. No	Source	N	Village							Total
			Tawipui 'S'	Maulheng 'S'	S. Vanlai phai	Tuipui 'D'	Leite	Ra wpui	Zotuit lang	
1	Agriculture	59	12386 (53.0)	12381 (61.9)	19287 (69.7)	16500 (60.4)	14519 (49.2)	15545 (62.3)	13533 (60.1)	15027 (59.4)
2	Livestock Rearing	21	2288 (9.8)	7381 (36.9)	5809 (21.0)	3375 (12.3)	9615 (32.6)	7591 (30.4)	7967 (35.4)	5516 (21.8)
3	Skilled Labour	47	3254 (13.9)	238 (1.2)	2340 (8.5)	5417 (19.8)	4038 (13.7)	0 (0.0)	1000 (4.4)	2603 (10.3)
4	Business / Petty Trade	24	3559 (15.2)	0 (0.0)	234 (0.8)	750 (2.7)	1346 (4.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1280 (5.1)
5	Government Service/ Pension	26	1525 (6.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	250 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	1818 (7.3)	0 (0.0)	636 (2.5)
6	Agricultural Labour	22	34 (0.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	208 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	33 (0.1)
7	Other Sources of Income	15	344 (1.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	833 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	188 (0.7)
8	Annual Household Income	214	23392 (100)	20000 (100)	27670 (100)	27333 (100)	29519 (100)	24955 (100)	22500 (100)	25283 (100)

Source: Computed

Figures in Parentheses are Percentages

5.8.1.2 Pattern of Per Capita Annual Household Income Distribution

Per capita annual income provides a finer measure by accounting for household size. It indicates the degree of sufficiency and inequality in individual-level resources. Households are classified into four brackets: low ($\leq$ ₹1,190.40),

lower-middle (₹1,190.41–₹5,994.83), upper-middle (₹5,994.84–₹10,799.25), and high ($\geq$ ₹10,799.26). Tawipui ‘S’ exhibits wide dispersion, with households spread almost evenly across low, lower-middle, and upper-middle brackets, and 22% in the high-income category. Its mean per capita income is ₹6,935, but the very high standard deviation (₹6,982) reflects extreme inequality. Mualcheng ‘S’ has most households (48%) in the lower-middle category and none in the high group, with a mean of ₹4,169, marking it as economically weaker. S. Vanlaiphai shows balance, with 49% in lower-middle and 34% in upper-middle, suggesting moderate upward mobility. Tuipui ‘D’ is notable for having no households in the lowest bracket, 42% in the upper-middle bracket, and a small high-income group, with a mean income of ₹5,980. Leite stands out with 65% in the middle group and 27% in the high group, with a mean of ₹6,554, reflecting a more substantial capacity. Rawpui’s mean is ₹5,302, with households distributed across lower-middle (59%), upper-middle (27%), and high (14%) income levels. Zotuitlang is predominantly lower-middle class (73%), with a modest presence of high-income individuals.

Across all villages, 45% of households belong to the lower-middle category, while 14% each fall in the lowest and highest brackets. The mean across the sample is ₹5,995, with a high standard deviation of ₹4,804, showing substantial disparities within and between villages. The distribution reveals both vulnerability, in the form of households concentrated at low levels, and opportunity, in the form of emerging upper and high-income groups. It indicates that targeted interventions must lift the floor for villages concentrated in the lower tier while consolidating gains where upward mobility is visible.

Table 5.8.2 Pattern of Per capita Annual Household Income Distribution

Sl.No	Village	Per capita Annual Household Income								Total		Per capita Annual Household Income	
		<= 1190.40		1190.41 – 5994.83		5994.84 – 10799.25		10799.26 +					
		F re q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Freq .	%	Fr eq .	%	Mean	SD
1	Tawipui 'S'	18	31	10	17	18	31	13	22	59	100	6935	6982
2	Maulcheng 'S'	6	29	10	48	5	24	0	0	21	100	4169	2844
3	S. Vanlaiphai	5	11	23	49	16	34	3	6	47	100	5803	3229
4	Tuipui 'D'	0	0	13	54	10	42	1	4	24	100	5980	2173
5	Leite	0	0	17	65	2	8	7	27	26	100	6554	5104
6	Rawpui	0	0	13	59	6	27	3	14	22	100	5302	3882
7	Zotuitlang	0	0	11	73	1	7	3	20	15	100	5523	4012
	Total	29	14	97	45	58	27	30	14	214	100	5995	4804

Source: Computed

5.9 Household Expenditure

Household expenditure represents how families allocate their incomes across consumption needs. It is an equally important measure of well-being because it reflects not only what households earn, but also how they live, their priorities, and the constraints they face. Expenditure is examined through two indicators: monthly household expenditure by form (food versus non-food) and per capita monthly expenditure by level.

5.9.1 Pattern of Monthly Household Expenditure by Form

Expenditure by form illustrates how rural households allocate their spending between food and non-food needs. In Tawipui 'S', households spend ₹9,271 monthly on average, with 23.1% on food and 76.9% on non-food items. Mualcheng 'S' spends ₹6,892, with a similar split (24.2% versus 75.8%). S. Vanlaiphai spends ₹8,401 with food at 20.8% and non-food at 79.2%. Tuipui 'D' exhibits a similar pattern, with 21.2% food and 78.8% non-food. Leite spends ₹7,652, with wide intra-village variation, while Rawpui spends ₹7,018, primarily on non-food needs. Zotuitlang spends the least at ₹6,197, but with the highest proportion on food (26.4%).

The consistent predominance of non-food spending reflects a maturing consumption structure, with education, health, and transport costs shaping welfare more than food. However, Zotuitlang demonstrates a counter-pattern: higher food shares and lower overall spending reveal vulnerability, dependency on markets for staples, and limited discretionary capacity. This shows that while rural households are integrating into wider consumption systems, vulnerabilities persist at the margins.

Table 5.9.1 Pattern of Monthly Household Expenditure Distribution by Form

Sl. No	Village	N	Food		Non-Food		Monthly Household Expenditure	
			Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	2144 (23.1)	731	7127 (76.9)	4733	9271 (100)	5325
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	1667 (24.2)	483	5226 (75.8)	1242	6892 (100)	1428
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	1745 (20.8)	453	6657 (79.2)	1944	8401 (100)	2230

4	Tuipui 'D'	24	1833	381	6828	1995	8662	2209
			(21.2)		(78.8)		(100)	
5	Leite	26	1815	768	5837	2564	7652	3252
			(23.7)		(76.3)		(100)	
6	Rawpui	22	1614	755	5405	2921	7018	3527
			(23.0)		(77.0)		(100)	
7	Zotuitlang	15	1633	442	4563	1913	6197	2234
			(26.4)		(73.6)		(100)	
8	Total	214	1844	636	6290	3167	8134	3645
			(22.7)		(77.3)		(100)	

Source: Computed

Figures in Parentheses are Percentages

5.9.2 Pattern of Monthly Household Expenditure by Level

Per capita monthly expenditure provides insight into the consumption tiers of households. Households are grouped into three categories: low (₹485–₹1,970), medium (₹1,970.01–₹3,455), and high ($\geq$ ₹3,455.01). The classification reveals that 64% of households fall into the low bracket, 27% into the medium bracket, and 10% into the high bracket.

Table 5.9.2 Pattern of Monthly Household Expenditure Distribution by Level

Sl. No.	Village	N	Per capita Monthly Household Expenditure						Total		Percapita Monthly Household Expenditure	
			485.00 - 1970.00		1970.01 - 3455.00		3455.01+				Mean	SD
			Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
1	Tawipui 'S'	59	26	44 %	16	27 %	17	29 %	59	100 %	2820	2292
2	Maulcheng 'S'	21	20	95 %	1	5%	0	0 %	21	100 %	1389	446
3	S. Vanlaiphai	47	29	62 %	16	34 %	2	4 %	47	100 %	1802	891
4	Tuipui 'D'	24	16	67 %	8	33 %	0	0 %	24	100 %	1869	571
5	Leite	26	17	65 %	8	31 %	1	4 %	26	100 %	1632	1003
6	Rawpui	22	17	77 %	4	18 %	1	5 %	22	100 %	1442	870
7	Zotuitlang	15	11	73 %	4	27 %	0	0 %	15	100 %	1488	932
	Total	214	136	64 %	57	27 %	21	10 %	214	100 %	1970	1485

Source: Computed

Figures in Parentheses are Percentages

Mualcheng 'S' records the most acute constraints, with 95% in the low bracket and none in the high. Rawpui, Zotuitlang, and Tuipui 'D' also have majorities in the low bracket. S. Vanlaiphai and Leite show more balance, with around one-third in the medium bracket and a few in the high. Tawipui 'S' is distinctive: nearly a third of households spend at high levels, showing both affluence

and inequality. It means ₹2,820 with a significant standard deviation, indicating the coexistence of wealthy and poor households.

The expenditure levels reveal three distinct economic tiers across villages: a large group of households with constrained resources, a smaller group with moderate consumption, and a narrow segment characterised by prosperity. The data show both structural vulnerability and uneven opportunity. For some villages, the priority is raising consumption floors through income stabilisation and services; for others, the challenge is managing disparities while enabling inclusive growth.

Income and expenditure together chart the lived economy of rural households in Mizoram. Agriculture dominates the income, but is balanced by livestock in several villages. Skilled work and petty trade appear unevenly, and formal employment is scarce. Per capita analysis reveals sharp inequalities, with some villages trapped in lower brackets and others showing pockets of upward mobility. Expenditure patterns confirm that food no longer dominates household budgets non-food essentials now drive well-being. However, disparity persists: some households spend at high levels while many remain constrained. The overall picture is one of dependence combined with aspiration. Development strategies must therefore strengthen agricultural productivity, expand skills and enterprise, and reduce the costs of essential non-food services so that livelihood resilience can gradually give way to sustainable well-being.

Conclusion

The analysis of Mizoram's rural villages confirms that social composition is neither uniform nor static, but instead unfolds across demographic, family, social, agrarian, and economic domains, each marked by distinct inter-village contrasts.

Demographically, villages differ widely: some, like Rawpui and Zotuitlang, show balance across gender and age, while others, such as S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D', are heavily skewed by ageing or male-dominated populations. Family structures remain rooted in joint, large households, yet signs of nuclearisation, reconstitution, and female headship demonstrate changing kinship dynamics. Thus, household

change is reflected in community identity, where both continuity and plurality are evident.

In the social domain, Lusei commoner families dominate, but pluralism in villages like Tawipui 'S' and Zotuitlang complicates the picture. Religious and political affiliations reveal hegemonic tendencies in some villages and heterogeneity in others, reflecting the intertwining of cultural identity and governance. These contrasts set the stage for economic disparities, where affluence in Mualcheng 'S' stands in stark contrast to vulnerability in S. Vanlaiphai and Zotuitlang.

These economic contrasts are not isolated; they are rooted in patterns of land tenure that define how households secure and use agrarian resources. Tuipui 'D' records the highest share of permanent landholders, reflecting an advanced transition to settled cultivation. At the same time, Zotuitlang and Mualcheng 'S' remain heavily dependent on temporary VC Passes, showing continued insecurity. Agrarian disparities limit livelihood stability, and these same disparities surface again in patterns of income and expenditure.

This tension between resilience and constraint becomes clearer when we examine the composition of livelihoods. Agriculture remains dominant, with livestock providing critical supplementation. Skilled labour and petty trade appear unevenly; formal employment is scarce. Per capita income and expenditure patterns further confirm inequality, with some households in higher brackets while many remain in low or constrained tiers. The consistent predominance of non-food spending indicates changing aspirations, yet the persistence of structural vulnerability reveals that transition remains incomplete.

Taken together, agrarian tenure, livelihood composition, and income–expenditure patterns indicate that Mizoram's villages are navigating the incomplete transition from shifting to settled cultivation. This transition produces resilience in some communities and deep vulnerability in others, requiring interventions that are sensitive to both structural persistence and social change. Development strategies must therefore be tailored to each community's unique profile, balancing the

potential of youth, elderly care, marital dynamics, educational uplift, land tenure reform, and livelihood diversification.

As the next chapter turns to the social background of community leaders the demographic, socio-economic, political, and organisational bases of leadership in these villages it becomes clear that these broader social compositions provide the foundation upon which authority and decision-making rest.

CHAPTER - VI

SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

Introduction

Leadership in the village of Mizoram is never a solitary attribute. It is a collective construction, woven from lineage, kinship, household order, cultural legitimacy, livelihood security, and organisational anchoring. To understand community life, one must ask who becomes a leader, by what pathways, and under what conditions such leadership gains recognition and endurance. To pursue them systematically, these guiding questions form the orientation of this chapter.

Guided by these questions, the chapter aims to explore the social context of rural Leadership, examining the origins of authority, the boundaries of representation, and the mechanisms of inclusion within community governance. To achieve this purpose in practice, the analysis unfolds in a disciplined sequence that reflects both the individual and collective dimensions of Leadership.

The discussion begins with the individual profiles of leaders, including their age, gender, marital status, and educational background. It then moves to the family as the immediate unit of social anchoring, considering household type, form, and size. From there, attention expands to encompass wider cultural identities such as subtribes, clans, and denominations that provide symbolic legitimacy. Economic and political bases follow, revealing how material security and party alignments shape authority. Finally, the analysis turns to organisational backgrounds, past leadership roles, and intergenerational continuities, highlighting the institutional experience and social capital that sustain community leadership over time.

By following this layered path moving through individual, familial, cultural, economic, political, and organisational dimensions the chapter shows that legitimacy is conferred not by personal traits alone but by the interplay of multiple social foundations. Leadership thus emerges as a living institution, rooted in social background, reinforced through cultural and organisational bases, and transmitted

across generations. In this way, the chapter reveals both the continuities of tradition and the adaptations of rural Leadership in contemporary Mizoram.

6.1 Demographic Composition of Rural Leadership

The demographic profile of rural Leadership provides a crucial lens for understanding the sociocultural dynamics and representation within village-level governance systems in India. This study examines the demographic characteristics of community leaders from seven villages in Lunglei District, Mizoram, across four key variables: gender, age group, marital status, and educational status. The dataset comprises 89 rural leaders, shedding light on both the diversity and commonalities within the leadership structure of these villages. This interpretation situates the findings within the broader themes of social representation, generational engagement, and educational attainment.

6.1.1 Gender Composition

The gender composition of rural Leadership reflects the inclusivity within the governance structures of the studied villages. This inclusivity, as reflected in gender distribution within leadership positions, becomes a key marker of social justice, participation, and the democratisation of decision-making processes. However, the village-level findings show that inclusivity remains extremely limited, with women persistently underrepresented in leadership roles.

In Tawipui 'S', Leadership is predominantly male at ninety-four per cent, with only six per cent of leaders being female. A similar trend is evident in Mualcheng'S, where ninety-three per cent of leaders are male, and in S. Vanlaiphai, where men comprise ninety per cent of the leadership structure. Tuipui 'D' follows the same pattern, with ninety-two per cent male leaders, a proportion mirrored in Leite and Rawpui, while Zotuitlang records ninety-one per cent male representation. This consistency across villages underscores that rural Leadership remains overwhelmingly male-dominated, leaving minimal scope for female voices in public decision-making.

This limited presence of women persists even though they play crucial roles within households and community life. Their visibility in public leadership spaces has been constrained by traditional patriarchal structures and gendered divisions of labour, resulting in a largely exclusionary leadership framework. In effect, women contribute significantly to the social and economic fabric of these villages; yet, their transition into formal Leadership remains blocked, reinforcing the gender imbalance within governance.

When viewed collectively, the dominance of men is striking, with 92% of rural leaders across all villages being male and only 8% female. This overwhelming male dominance is further reinforced by statistical analysis, as the Chi-square test result of 0.158 and the Cramer's V value of 0.042 indicate minimal variation across the villages. The lack of a significant difference demonstrates that gender imbalance is not merely a localised occurrence but a structural reality shared by all the studied villages.

This pattern suggests that rural Leadership in Mizoram is shaped by enduring cultural norms and institutional barriers that restrict women's participation in governance. Although some gradual shifts are visible in other spheres of society, leadership spaces remain rigidly male-dominated, reflecting broader systemic inequalities within the wider society. The absence of substantial variation among the villages underscores the pervasiveness of these barriers, highlighting the need for deliberate interventions to expand women's representation in decision-making structures.

6.1.2 Age Group Distribution

The age distribution of rural leaders highlights generational dynamics that shape both the continuity of traditional authority and the possibilities for adaptation in changing socio-political contexts. Leadership age is not merely a demographic marker but also an indicator of experience, generational perspectives, and the potential to bridge traditional wisdom with contemporary challenges.

In Tawipui 'S', Leadership is concentrated in older age groups, with half of the leaders falling between sixty-six and seventy-seven years, and an additional

thirteen per cent above seventy-eight. This makes Tawipui 'S' one of the villages where Leadership is strongly associated with seniority. In contrast, Mualcheng's' reflects a younger leadership profile, with nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of its leaders in the 54- to 65-year-old category, suggesting a generational shift in responsibility and a preference for relatively younger but experienced leaders. S. Vanlaiphai is unique in that forty per cent of its leaders are above seventy-eight, indicating that authority remains heavily vested in the oldest generation, making it the village with the most aged leadership profile.

Tuipui 'D' follows a more balanced pattern, but with middle-aged dominance, as half of its leaders are in the fifty-four- to sixty-five-year-old age group. Leite displays a similar tendency, with forty-six per cent of leaders in this middle category, and also a significant twenty-three per cent above seventy-eight, highlighting the coexistence of both older and relatively younger figures in Leadership. Rawpui mirrors this distribution, with thirty-eight per cent of leaders in the fifty-four to sixty-five group and thirty-one per cent between sixty-six and seventy-seven, reflecting a blend of middle-aged and older Leadership. Zotuitlang presents a more dual structure, where twenty-seven per cent fall into the middle-aged group. Still, another twenty-seven per cent belong to the oldest category, pointing to a leadership profile where mid-age and elderly generations are equally visible.

When viewed across all villages, the overall mean age of leaders is 65 years, with a standard deviation of 12, indicating that rural Leadership remains predominantly in the hands of older individuals. The variations, however, are meaningful: S. Vanlaiphai leans towards older Leadership, with a mean of sixty-nine years, while Mualcheng S' and Zotuitlang reflect a comparatively younger profile, with means of sixty-three and sixty-two years, respectively. The Chi-square value of 16.72 and Cramer's V of 0.25 confirm moderate variation between villages, implying that age structures are not uniform but reflect village-specific traditions and transitions.

Taken together, the findings suggest that while rural Leadership across these villages continues to be characterised by older age groups, there is a gradual

inclusion of relatively younger leaders in certain areas. This generational interplay ensures continuity of cultural values while allowing space for adaptability in governance, signalling an evolving leadership landscape shaped by both senior authority and emerging middle-aged participation.

6.1.3 Marital Status

Marital status among rural leaders reveals an important cultural dimension of authority in village societies. In all the studied villages, marriage is universal, with every leader reported as married. This uniformity highlights the deeply ingrained social expectation that Leadership is closely tied to marital and familial responsibilities. Being married is not only a marker of personal maturity but also symbolises social stability, dependability, and the ability to shoulder communal responsibilities.

Across the villages, this complete absence of unmarried, divorced, or widowed leaders suggests that Leadership is framed within the ideal of family life, where individuals who have established households are considered most fit to guide the community. It also reflects a strong cultural linkage between family status and public authority, where marital life becomes a prerequisite for recognition as a responsible leader.

The consistency across all the villages suggests that marital status serves as a silent yet decisive criterion for leadership eligibility. This uniform pattern reveals that in the rural context, Leadership is not simply about personal competence or public service but is deeply embedded within cultural constructs of maturity, stability, and social legitimacy, all of which are reinforced through the institution of marriage.

6.1.4 Educational Status

Educational attainment among rural leaders reveals a pattern of limited formal education, although with significant differences between villages. In Tawipui 'S', Leadership is concentrated at the middle school level, with smaller proportions at the primary and secondary stages. Mualcheng'S' shows a similar dominance of

middle education, but with a broader spread, including a minority that reaches higher education. S. Vanlaiphai presents the most educationally advanced leadership profile, with a notable share attaining tertiary and higher secondary education. By contrast, Tuipui 'D' and Leite have a restricted educational reach, primarily confined to primary and middle levels. Rawpui reflects a similar tendency, with leaders mostly educated up to the middle stage, while Zotuitlang shows relatively low attainment overall but includes a small presence of higher-educated individuals.

Across the villages, the broader trend indicates that more than half of the leaders have completed middle schooling, while smaller shares are distributed across primary, secondary, and higher levels. The overall mean of seven years of schooling illustrates the limited span of formal education among rural leaders, with Leadership emerging largely from individuals whose education did not progress beyond basic or middle levels. However, the presence of higher-educated leaders in villages like S. Vanlaiphai and, to some extent, Zotuitlang points towards emerging shifts in the educational composition of Leadership, contrasting with the relatively restricted educational base in villages such as Tuipui 'D' and Rawpui.

The statistical tests confirm that these variations are not uniform but show moderate differentiation across villages, suggesting that local contexts, opportunities for schooling, and community-level educational infrastructure play a role in shaping leadership profiles. This uneven spread reflects both structural constraints in rural education and cultural acceptance of leaders who may not have advanced educational qualifications but possess other attributes valued in community governance.

The demographic profile of rural Leadership in Mizoram reveals a consistent pattern in which authority is concentrated among older, married men, deeply embedded within joint and stable family systems, with modest levels of schooling and livelihoods that anchor them in the community. These interlinked attributes demonstrate that Leadership continues to be shaped less by individual qualifications than by social maturity, familial legitimacy, and cultural continuity, thereby setting

the stage for examining the socio-economic foundations that sustain and reinforce their positions within village life.

Table 6.1: Demographic Composition of Rural Leadership

Sl. No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawi pui 'S' n = 16	Mual chen g 'S' n = 14	S. Vanl aiph ai n = 10	Tuip ui 'D' n = 12	Lei te n = 13	Raw pui n = 13	Zot uitl ang n = 11	
I	Gender								
	Female	6	7	10	8	8	8	9	8
	Male	94	93	90	92	92	92	91	92
	Pearson Chi-Square	0.158							
	Cramer's V	0.042							
II	Age Group								
	<= 53	13	7	20	8	8	15	27	13
	54 - 65	25	64	20	50	46	38	27	39
	66 - 77	50	21	20	33	23	31	18	29
	78+	13	7	40	8	23	15	27	18
	<i>Mean Age</i>	67 ± 12	63 ± 7	69 ± 18	64 ± 11	67 ± 11	64 ± 11	62 ± 16	65 ± 12
	Pearson Chi-Square	16.72							
	Cramer's V	0.25							
III	Marital Status								
	Married	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
III	Education Status								
	Primary (1 - 5)	25	29	30	42	23	15	36	28
	Middle (6 - 8)	56	57	20	58	62	69	55	55
	Secondary(9 - 10)	19	7	10	0	8	15	0	9

	Higher Secondary(11 - 12)	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	1
	Higher Education(13+)	0	7	30	0	8	0	9	7
	Mean Years of Education	6	7	10	6	7	7	7	7
		2	3	5	1	3	2	3	3
	Pearson Chi-Square	28.08							
	Cramer's V	0.28							

Source: Computed

Mean $\pm$ SD

** P<0.01

* P <0.05

6. 2 Family Structure of Rural Leadership

The family remains the primary unit of social organisation in Mizo society, and Leadership is closely tied to family context, both in terms of structure and size. The analysis covers three dimensions type of family (joint or nuclear), form of family (stable or unstable), and family size (small, medium, or large) to show how kinship continues to underpin the legitimacy and social embeddedness of rural Leadership. Together, these aspects demonstrate that Leadership is not merely an individual attribute but is deeply anchored in domestic arrangements.

6.2.1 Type of Family

The analysis of family type reveals that rural Leadership in Mizoram is overwhelmingly drawn from joint families. Across all seven villages, more than four-fifths (82 per cent) of leaders originate from joint households, underscoring the enduring strength of extended kinship as a foundation of authority. Villages such as Tawipui 'S' (86 per cent), Leite (85 per cent), and Rawpui (85 per cent) display particularly high concentrations of joint-family leaders, while even Tuipui 'D', at 75 per cent, maintains joint families as the majority base.

While the predominance of joint families persists, the modest representation of nuclear-family leaders (18 per cent overall) signals a gradual shift toward smaller household arrangements. Tuipui 'D' demonstrates the highest openness to leaders emerging from nuclear households, while Mualcheng 'S', at 14 per cent, shows the

lowest. This uneven spread suggests subtle demographic transitions within household structures, though not yet strong enough to alter the dominance of joint-family Leadership.

The statistical results ($\chi^2 = 0.684$; Cramer's $V = 0.088$) confirm that variation in family type is weak across villages. Taken together, the findings reinforce the idea that leadership legitimacy is sustained through kinship backing, with nuclear households emerging as a modest trend.

6.2.2 Form of Family

If family type introduces limited variation, the form of family highlights complete uniformity: every leader across the seven villages belongs to a stable household. This universality underscores the cultural expectation that Leadership is not only associated with maturity but also with domestic stability and order. Just as marital status was found to be universal in the previous section, so too family stability emerges as a silent criterion of eligibility for Leadership.

The absence of disrupted or unstable households is significant. It shows that a well-ordered family is perceived as a public credential, signalling reliability, moral standing, and the ability to uphold collective trust. Stability, therefore, functions as both a private condition and a public marker of authority, ensuring that Leadership is rooted in a settled domestic base.

6.2.3 Size of Family

Family size introduces the most meaningful variation within leadership households. While the overall mean family size is six members, distribution across the villages reveals striking contrasts. Tawipui 'S' is distinctive for its relatively compact households, with three-quarters of leaders belonging to medium-sized families and nearly one-fifth to small families. This suggests a slow shift toward nuclearisation or household contraction, making Tawipui 'S' an outlier.

In contrast, Zotuitlang is heavily dominated by large households, with 82 per cent of leaders embedded in extended kinship units. Leite and Rawpui exhibit similar tendencies, with 62 per cent of their leaders coming from large families, while S.

Vanlaiphai records half of its leaders in this category. Tuipui 'D' and Mualcheng 'S' occupy an intermediate position, with leaders fairly distributed between medium and large families.

The statistical outcomes ($\chi^2 = 28.33^*$; Cramer's $V = 0.399^*$) confirm that these inter-village differences in family size are both noticeable and significant. Large households symbolise stronger kinship backing and social capital for Leadership, while smaller or medium-sized households may reflect emerging demographic adaptation without undermining legitimacy.

The analysis of family structure highlights both continuity and divergence. On the one hand, the dominance of joint and stable households reveals that leadership legitimacy remains grounded in kinship cohesion and domestic order. On the other hand, family size introduces variability, with some villages privileging large kinship networks while others accommodate smaller or medium-sized households. This interplay suggests that while the cultural basis of Leadership remains constant, demographic scale provides scope for village-specific differentiation.

Table 6.2: Family Structure of Rural Leadership

Sl · No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawipui 'S' n = 16	Mualcheng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanlaiphai n = 10	Tuipui 'D' n = 12	Leite n = 13	Rawpui n = 13	Zotuitlang n = 11	
I	Type of Family								
	Joint	81	86	80	75	85	85	82	82
	Nuclear	19	14	20	25	15	15	18	18
	Pearson Chi-Square	0.684							
	Cramer's V	0.088							
II	Form of Family								

	Stable	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
II	Size of Family								
I									
	Small (1 - 3)	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Medium(4 - 6)	75	57	50	50	38	38	18	48
	Large (7+)	6	43	50	50	62	62	82	48
	Mean family size	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	6
	Std. Deviation	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Pearson Chi-Square	28.33 *							
	Cramer's V	0.399 *							

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P <0.05

6.3 Social Composition of Rural Leadership

The table on Social Composition of Rural Leadership highlights the sociocultural foundations that shape leadership identities in rural Mizoram. It examines three interrelated dimensions: subtribe affiliation, clan type, and religious denomination, each of which provides insight into the socio-historical context and legitimacy of leaders. These aspects are significant as they reveal not only the cultural background of leaders but also the structural underpinnings of authority, kinship, and religious belonging that influence local governance.

6.3.1 Subtribe

The subtribal background of leaders reflects both the cultural mainstream of Mizoram and the localised diversities that shape village-level Leadership. Across all villages, the Lusei subtribe dominates, accounting for nearly three-fourths (74%) of leaders, thereby reinforcing their historical preeminence in Mizoram's social and political hierarchy. As a result, this overarching dominance strengthens their role as the implicit source of legitimacy for Leadership.

At the village level, Tawipui 'S' (75%), Mualcheng 'S' (86%), and S. Vanlaiphai (80%) reveal an almost exclusive pattern of Lusei representation,

suggesting a relatively homogeneous leadership composition. Leite (77%) and Rawpui (77%) mirror this trend, maintaining strong Lusei predominance but with limited entry of other groups. Tuipui 'D', though still majority Lusei (67%), reflects a slightly more inclusive pattern, with space for non-Lusei identities. The most distinctive profile emerges in Zotuitlang, where only 55% of leaders are Lusei, alongside a notable concentration of Hmar (27%) and Ralte (9%) leaders. This marks Zotuitlang as a site of greater subtribal plurality, with leadership positions reflecting its heterogeneous population base. Minor Hmar representation is also visible in Tawipui 'S' (6%) and Leite (8%), while the Paite appear only once in the dataset, signalling their minimal integration into village leadership structures.

The statistical tests (Chi-square = 36.285*, Cramer's $V = 0.319^*$) confirm significant variation in subtribal distribution across villages. Thus, while the Lusei retain structural dominance, these variations reveal that subtribal diversity is accommodated in selected contexts. The Zotuitlang case, in particular, demonstrates how demographic heterogeneity translates into leadership composition, while other villages reproduce the broader Lusei-centred pattern. Subtribal affiliation, therefore, emerges as both a marker of continuity in Mizoram's sociopolitical fabric and a window into village-specific configurations of identity and authority.

6.3.2 Type of Clan

If the Subtribe marks a broader identity, clan affiliation adds another, more lineage-based layer of cultural anchoring. At the aggregate level, a clear majority of leaders (85%) come from commoner clans, while only 15% trace their origin to ruling clans. This predominance of commoners demonstrates the erosion of hereditary privileges and the growth of democratic ethos in village leadership. However, despite this overall predominance, village profiles reveal contrasts.

Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S', and Rawpui present a complete absence of ruling clan representation (100% commoners), suggesting that leadership authority here has been fully detached from traditional lineage-based claims. In contrast, S. Vanlaiphai records 20% of leaders from ruling clans, Tuipui 'D' registers 33%, and Leite shows the highest share with 38%. Zotuitlang also reflects this trend with 18%

of its leaders from ruling backgrounds. These variations suggest that while some villages have fully transitioned into Leadership rooted in social participation and merit, others continue to acknowledge the symbolic significance of ruling lineage as a factor in legitimising authority.

The statistical results (Chi-square = 17.006**, Cramer's V = 0.437**) confirm significant inter-village variation, underscoring that clan status remains unevenly embedded in local leadership structures. Broadly, the findings suggest a dual dynamic: the widespread dominance of commoner-led Leadership reflects the larger democratic ethos of contemporary Mizoram, yet the selective persistence of ruling clan leadership in certain villages demonstrates how traditional forms of legitimacy continue to coexist with modern structures of governance.

6.3.3 Denomination

Just as clan identity situates Leadership in lineage, religious denomination situates it within moral and spiritual authority. At the overall level, the Baptist Church of Mizoram commands a dominant presence, accounting for three-fourths (75%) of all leaders. This dominance is most visible in Leite (85%), Rawpui (85%), Tuipui 'D' (83%), and S. Vanlaiphai (80%), where Leadership is almost exclusively drawn from Baptist backgrounds. Tawipui 'S' (75%) and Mualcheng 'S' (71%) show similar patterns, affirming the overarching centrality of the Baptist denomination.

Denominational differentiation becomes most pronounced in Zotuitlang, where Baptist representation drops sharply to 45%. In this village, the Salvation Army accounts for a substantial 36% of leaders, marking the most distinct denominational divergence in the dataset. Smaller denominational contributions are also observed: the Presbyterian Church of India provides 19% of leaders in Tawipui 'S', while the United Pentecostal Church of Mizoram (7%) and its North-East India branch (21%) register modest shares in Mualcheng 'S'.

Table 6.3: Social Composition of Rural Leadership

Sl. No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawipui 'S' n = 16	Mualcheng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanlaihphai n = 10	Tuipui 'D' n = 12	Leite n = 13	Ra wp ui n = 13	Zotui tlang n = 11	
I	Sub tribe								
	Hmar	6	0	0	0	8	0	27	6
	Lai	13	14	20	33	15	0	9	15
	Lusei	75	86	80	67	77	77	55	74
	Paite	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Ralte	0	0	0	0	0	23	9	4
	Pearson Chi-Square	36.285*							
	Cramer's V	0.319*							
II	Type of Clan								
	Commoner	100	100	80	67	62	100	82	85
	Ruling	0	0	20	33	38	0	18	15
	Pearson Chi-Square	17.006**							
	Cramer's V	0.437*							
III	Denomination								
	Baptist Church of Mizoram	75	71	80	83	85	85	45	75
	Presbyterian Church of India	19	0	10	8	8	8	9	9

	The Salvation Army	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	4
	United Pentecostal Church of M	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1
	United Pentecostal Church of NEI	6	21	10	8	8	8	9	10
	Pearson Chi-Square	40.71*							
	Cramer's V	0.338*							

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P <0.05

The statistical tests (Chi-square = 40.71*, Cramer's V = 0.338*) confirm significant denominational variation across villages, with Zotuitlang exerting particular influence on the overall pattern. Taken together, these findings suggest that while the Baptist Church of Mizoram provides the dominant moral and institutional foundation for rural Leadership, denominational pluralism exists in specific contexts, reinforcing the interplay of religion and Leadership identity in differentiated local settings.

The analysis across Subtribe, clan, and denomination highlights that rural Leadership in Mizoram is shaped by overlapping yet uneven cultural foundations. The predominance of the Lusei subtribe, the widespread representation of commoner clans, and the dominance of the Baptist Church of Mizoram establish the broad contours of leadership identity. At the same time, local variations such as the presence of Hmar and Ralte leaders in Zotuitlang, the persistence of ruling clan representation in Leite, Tuipui 'D', and S. Vanlaiphai, as well as the denominational distinctiveness of Zotuitlang with its strong Salvation Army following, underscore that Leadership is not wholly uniform. Across these dimensions, rural Leadership in Mizoram is rooted in majority identities while simultaneously accommodating minority positions and historical legacies, reflecting both cohesion and diversity within the social composition of the state's villages.

6.4 Economic Composition of Community Leadership

The economic composition of community leadership reveals sharp contrasts across villages, with consistent patterns in some domains and marked variations in others. This section analyses five interlinked dimensions: earner or dependent status, primary occupation, secondary occupation, socio-economic category, and land possession pattern. Together, these dimensions illuminate the underlying economic foundations of rural Leadership, showing how livelihoods, resources, and social positioning interact to shape authority in Mizoram's villages.

6.4.1 Earner or Dependent

Leadership in rural Mizoram is often associated with economic activity, yet the analysis reveals variation in the extent of leaders' financial independence. A

majority of the residents in the study villages are earners, actively contributing to household income and thus reinforcing their legitimacy. However, dependency remains notable in specific contexts. In Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S', and Tuipui 'D', relatively higher proportions of leaders are dependents, suggesting that kinship resources can sustain Leadership even without direct income generation. In contrast, Leite, Rawpui, and S. Vanlaiphai display leadership bases anchored in earners, indicating a stronger link between self-reliance and authority. Zotuitlang stands out, with more than half of its leaders being dependents, reflecting limited economic autonomy and possibly broader socio-economic constraints.

The statistical evidence ($\chi^2 = 15.503$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.417$) confirms significant inter-village differences, underscoring that leadership legitimacy is contingent upon both economic productivity and kinship support, depending on local contexts.

6.4.2 Primary Occupation

Having established whether leaders are earners or dependents, it becomes essential to ask: What are the occupations that sustain them? Agriculture emerges as the primary source of livelihood across most villages, reflecting the dominance of farming in Mizoram's rural economy. Tuipui 'D', Leite, and Rawpui are almost exclusively agrarian, where farming provides both livelihood and symbolic authority.

However, other villages highlight important variations. In Tawipui 'S', skilled labour distinguishes leadership identity, while Mualcheng 'S' and S. Vanlaiphai reveal the role of government service in shaping community authority. Minor but notable engagements include business in Leite and driving a vehicle in Rawpui, demonstrating selective diversification.

The statistical results ($\chi^2 = 61.68$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.317$) indicate significant variation across villages, suggesting that leadership legitimacy derives from a spectrum of occupational bases, with agriculture central but non-farm work increasingly relevant in some communities.

6.4.3 Secondary Occupation

If primary occupations anchor leaders, secondary ones reveal how flexible or diversified their livelihoods are. The majority of leaders across villages report no secondary occupation, highlighting heavy reliance on a single livelihood. Where diversification occurs, its forms vary. Agricultural labour supplements income in Mualcheng 'S', Tuipui 'D', and Rawpui. Skilled labour persists as a secondary option in Tawipui 'S', reinforcing its distinctive profile. In S. Vanlaiphai, government service appears even as a secondary occupation, showing dual engagement in formal employment and Leadership. Leite shows leaders extending agricultural work, while Rawpui includes small traces of business activity.

Statistical validation ($\chi^2 = 78.593$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.42$) reveals significant inter-village differences, confirming that livelihood diversification, although limited overall, varies meaningfully across local contexts.

6.4.4 Socio-Economic Category

The socio-economic categorisation of leaders highlights the extent to which material security underpins authority. In six of the seven villages, all leaders fall within the non-poor (APL) category, underscoring the strong relationship between financial stability and leadership roles. Zotuitlang diverges sharply, with more than half of its leaders categorised as poor (BPL). This unusual profile suggests that Leadership here can emerge from disadvantaged households, reflecting localised adaptations where poverty does not exclude individuals from community authority.

Statistical tests ($\chi^2 = 45.62$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.716$) confirm these differences, marking Zotuitlang as an outlier and demonstrating that economic security is generally a prerequisite for Leadership, though exceptions exist.

6.4.5 Land Possession Pattern

Landholding provides the most tangible indicator of economic security, and here, sharp contrasts are visible. Tawipui 'S', Leite, and Tuipui 'D' exhibit secure land tenure through settlement certificates, anchoring Leadership in a stable resource base. Mualcheng 'S' and Rawpui show mixed patterns, with some leaders having

permanent rights while others rely on temporary Village Council passes. In S. Vanlaiphai and Zotuitlang, none of the leaders possess permanent land rights, depending entirely on temporary arrangements. In Zotuitlang, this insecurity is compounded by poverty and dependency, resulting in a particularly fragile foundation for leadership.

Table 6.4: Economic Composition of Community Leadership

Sl. No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Taw ipui 'S' n = 16	Mua lche ng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanl aiph ai n = 10	Tuip ui 'D' n = 12	Leit e n = 13	Raw pui n = 13	Zotui tlang n = 11	
I	Earner or Dependent								
	Dependent	81	29	30	75	46	31	55	51
	Earner	19	71	70	25	54	69	45	49
	Pearson Chi-Square	15.503**							
	Cramer's V	0.417**							
II	Primary Occupation								
	Dependent	81	29	30	75	46	31	55	51
	Agriculture	0	64	40	25	46	62	45	39
	Government Service	0	7	30	0	0	0	0	4
	Skilled Labour	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Business	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	1
	Vehicle Driver	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	1
	Pearson Chi-Square	61.68**							
	Cramer's V	.317**							
III	Secondary								

	Occupation								
	None	81	29	30	75	54	31	55	52
	Agricultural Labour	0	14	10	25	38	54	45	26
	Agriculture	0	50	30	0	8	8	0	13
	Skilled Labour	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Government Service	0	7	30	0	0	0	0	4
	Business	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	1
	Pearson Chi-Square	78.5 93**							
	Cramer's V	0.42 **							
IV	Socio-Economic Category								
	Non-Poor(APL)	100	100	100	100	100	100	45	93
	Poor(BPL)	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	7
	Pearson Chi-Square	45.6 2**							
	Cramer's V	0.71 6**							
	Land Possession Pattern								
	Land Settlement Certificate	100	93	0	58	100	46	0	62
	Temporary/VC Pass	0	7	100	42	0	54	100	38
	Pearson Chi-Square	59.0 27**							
	Cramer's V	0.81 4**							

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P <0.05

Statistical validation ($\chi^2 = 59.027$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.814$) underscores the strong association between land tenure and leadership security, highlighting that access to permanent rights significantly differentiates village leadership structures.

The economic analysis shows that while Mizoram's rural Leadership is broadly rooted in agrarian livelihoods, it is neither uniform nor solely dependent on farming. Variations in dependence, occupation, diversification, socio-economic status, and land tenure reveal a mosaic of leadership foundations. Leadership authority thus emerges from the interplay of agricultural stability, selective non-farm diversification, household economic security, and the critical resource of land. These findings also highlight localised vulnerabilities, most evident in Zotuitlang, where dependency, poverty, and insecure tenure combine to weaken leadership legitimacy. Overall, the economic base of rural Leadership demonstrates both continuity with Mizoram's agrarian traditions and adaptation to shifting socio-economic realities.

6.5 Political Affiliation and Party Alignment of Rural Leaders

The political orientations of community leaders across the seven villages reveal how rural Leadership is situated within wider political structures and how party connections influence authority, decision-making, and legitimacy. The analysis considers two dimensions: (i) political affiliation and (ii) party alignment. While many leaders remain outside formal politics, significant inter-village differences emerge, confirmed by statistical tests that reveal meaningful associations.

6.5.1 Political Affiliation

Political affiliation is classified into four categories: no affiliation, sympathisers, members, and office bearers. A majority of leaders across the study villages prefer neutrality, but the degree of engagement varies.

In Tawipui 'S', Leadership is overwhelmingly non-affiliated (81%), though 13% are registered members and 6% hold office positions, showing a small but visible segment of politically active leaders. Mualcheng 'S' presents the highest neutrality, with 93% unaffiliated and only 7% expressing sympathy toward parties, reflecting an apolitical leadership profile. S. Vanlaiphai has 30% sympathisers

alongside 70% unaffiliated, indicating moderate engagement without deep institutional involvement. Tuipui 'D' differs, with only 42% unaffiliated, 33% members, and 2% sympathisers, showing an actively politicised leadership. Leite's leaders are divided: 46% are unaffiliated, 31% are sympathisers, 15% are members, and 8% are office bearers, suggesting a balanced structure. Rawpui presents a similar mix, with 54% unaffiliated, 23% sympathisers, 8% members, and 15% office bearers, indicating stronger institutional connections. Zotuitlang stands out, with 27% office bearers, 36% sympathisers, and 36% unaffiliated, reflecting the most politicised profile. Statistical results ($\chi^2 = 15.503$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.417$) confirm significant inter-village variation, indicating that political engagement is not uniform but context-specific.

Taken together, the analysis shows that while neutrality is dominant, Tuipui 'D' and Zotuitlang reveal stronger participation through membership and office-bearing roles, whereas Mualcheng 'S' and Tawipui 'S' lean toward disengagement. Leite and Rawpui reflect intermediate profiles that combine neutrality with institutional ties. These variations demonstrate that local contexts shape different degrees of formal political involvement among rural leaders.

6.5.2 Political Party Affiliation

Political party alignment offers further insight into the partisan orientations of leaders, revealing not only the degree but also the direction of their political engagement. While many remain unattached, the distribution of party loyalties varies across villages.

In Tawipui 'S', 81% reported no party affiliation, while 19% expressed support for the Zoram People's Movement (ZPM), revealing a largely neutral stance with some ZPM influence. Mualcheng 'S' is even more detached, with 93% unaffiliated and only 7% aligned with ZPM. S. Vanlaiphai shows more diversity, with 70% unaffiliated, 20% with the Mizo National Front (MNF), and 10% with ZPM, suggesting modest party leanings. Tuipui 'D' demonstrates the strongest ZPM engagement (42%), alongside 17% aligned with MNF and 42% unaffiliated, indicating a competitive political environment. Leite is almost evenly split, with 46%

neutral, 46% with ZPM, and 8% with MNF, reflecting contestation. Rawpui shows the strongest MNF inclination (38%), followed by ZPM (12%) and 12% unaffiliated, signalling a consolidated party base. Zotuitlang exhibits the widest pluralism, with 36% neutral, 36% supporting ZPM, 18% backing the Indian National Congress (INC), and 9% backing the MNF, highlighting a diverse partisan landscape. Statistical analysis ($\chi^2 = 40.71$, $p < 0.01$; Cramer's $V = 0.338$) confirms significant denominational variation, with Zotuitlang contributing most to overall diversity.

Table 6.5: Political Affiliation and Party Alignment of Rural Leaders

Sl. No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawipui 'S' n = 16	Mualcheng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanlalpha i n = 10	Tuipui 'D' n = 12	Leite n = 13	Rawpui n = 13	Zotuitlang n = 11	
I	Political Affiliation								
	None	81	93	70	42	46	54	36	62
	Sympathizer	0	7	30	25	31	23	36	20
	Member	13	0	0	33	15	8	0	10
	Office Bearer	6	0	0	0	8	15	27	8
	Pearson Chi-Square	32.620 ^a							
	Cramer's V	0.350							
II	Political Party Affiliation								
	None	81	93	70	42	46	54	36	2
	INC	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	12
	MNF	0	0	20	17	8	38	9	24
	ZMP	19	7	10	42	46	8	36	74
	Pearson Chi-Square	68.306**							
	Cramer's V	0.357**							

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P <0.05

Across all villages, neutrality remains dominant, but ZPM emerges as the most consistently present party, especially in Tuipui 'D', Leite, and Zotuitlang. MNF finds its strongest base in Rawpui, with moderate shares elsewhere, while INC is confined to Zotuitlang. The findings demonstrate that rural Leadership balances a strong preference for neutrality with selective partisan loyalties, shaped by both regional party dynamics and local village contexts.

Taken together, the study reveals that political orientation among rural leaders is neither uniform nor apolitical. While many leaders distance themselves from party politics, others embrace formal roles that integrate Leadership into party structures. This unevenness suggests that rural governance in Mizoram is influenced by both the desire for neutrality and the pull of partisan commitment, creating leadership profiles that combine independence with selective political alignment.

6.6 Organisational Background of Rural Leaders

The organisational background of rural leaders provides insight into the institutional bases that sustain authority in Mizoram's villages. The analysis covers three dimensions: the type of organisations in which leaders are involved, the positions they hold, and the duration of their experience. Together, these factors reveal how participation, authority, and continuity intersect to create both cohesion and variation in rural leadership structures.

6.6.1 Organisation

The organisational affiliations of rural leaders indicate that participation is unevenly distributed across villages, shaped by religious, community-based, and civic orientations. In Tawipui 'S', the Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP) is most prominent, engaging 63 per cent of leaders, followed by the church (19 per cent) and the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP) at 13 per cent. This composition highlights the importance of community-based and gender-sensitive networks in shaping Leadership. Mualcheng 'S' presents a distinct pattern, with 71 per cent of leaders affiliated with the church, and smaller proportions connected to MUP (21 per cent) and MHIP (7 per cent), suggesting that Leadership here is firmly anchored in religious institutions. S. Vanlaiphai reflects an even greater religious orientation,

with 80 per cent of leaders linked to the church and the remainder to MHIP, demonstrating a faith-based leadership base.

Tuipui 'D' displays greater organisational diversity, with leaders engaged in the church (42 per cent), MUP (25 per cent), the Village Council (17 per cent), and MHIP (8 per cent). This spread suggests broader institutional participation beyond purely religious networks. Leite, by contrast, records 31 per cent of leaders unaffiliated with any organisation, while the rest are distributed between the church (38 per cent), MUP (15 per cent), YMA (8 per cent), and VC (8 per cent). The relatively high share of unaffiliated leaders distinguishes Leite from other villages, indicating weaker institutional embedding. Rawpui demonstrates the presence of both religious and civic bases, as 54 per cent of leaders are linked to the church, 23 per cent to the YMA, 15 per cent to MUP, and 8 per cent to political parties. This highlights the interplay of both community associations and political structures. Zotuitlang also reflects a diverse profile, with the church at 55 per cent, YMA and VC each at 18 per cent, and MUP at 9 per cent, indicating a mix of religious, civic, and community-based affiliations.

Overall, while the church remains the central organisational base across most villages, there is notable variation in the presence of community-based groups, such as MUP, YMA, and MHIP, as well as civic institutions, including the Village Council. Mualcheng 'S' and S. Vanlaiphai show strong religious anchoring, whereas Tuipui 'D', Rawpui, and Zotuitlang reflect broader institutional engagement. Leite stands out for its high proportion of unaffiliated leaders, highlighting a weaker institutional base. This weaker embedding also shapes the kinds of positions leaders occupy within these organisations.

6.6.2 Position in Organisation

The positions held by rural leaders indicate their authority, responsibilities, and the extent of concentration within organisations. Across the study area, a significant majority of leaders hold senior positions, such as president or elder, with fewer in roles like general secretary, executive member, or vice president.

In Tawipui 'S', leadership roles are more evenly distributed, with 38 per cent of leaders as presidents or elders, 38 per cent as executive committee members, and 13 per cent as general secretaries. This reflects a relatively balanced organisational structure. Mualcheng 'S', however, demonstrates concentration, with 86 per cent of leaders serving as presidents or elders and 7 per cent as general secretaries, suggesting that top roles dominate. S. Vanlaiphai shows complete concentration, with all leaders serving as presidents or elders, pointing to a centralised leadership structure.

Tuipui 'D' follows a similar pattern, with 92 per cent of leaders in top-tier positions and only 8 per cent as vice presidents. Leite presents a more distributed model, with 46 per cent of leaders serving as presidents or elders, 23 per cent as executive members, 8 per cent as vice presidents, and a small proportion without formal roles, indicating a more dispersed responsibility than in most other villages. Rawpui mirrors Tuipui 'D', with 92 per cent at the top level and the rest in executive positions. Zotuitlang also reflects absolute concentration, with all leaders serving as presidents or elders.

These findings suggest that organisational authority is generally concentrated at the top across villages. S. Vanlaiphai and Zotuitlang show complete centralisation, while Mualcheng 'S', Tuipui 'D', and Rawpui reflect similar concentration with minimal variation. Tawipui 'S' and Leite, however, exhibit greater distribution of roles, suggesting that while authority is mostly centralised, some villages allow more diversified participation. The depth of this authority is further reflected in the length of service of leaders.

6.6.3 Experience in Present Organisation

The experience of leaders in their organisations highlights the stability of leadership roles and the continuity of institutional involvement. In Tawipui 'S', 31 per cent of leaders have served for less than four years, 38 per cent between five and eighteen years, and smaller proportions in higher brackets, reflecting a balance of new and experienced leaders. Mualcheng 'S' shows concentration in medium and long tenures, with 43 per cent between five and eighteen years and another 43 per

cent between nineteen and thirty-two years, indicating stable, long-serving Leadership. S. Vanlaiphai records the most experienced leadership profile, with 60 per cent of leaders serving for more than thirty-three years, showing entrenched authority.

Tuipui 'D' is characterised by diversity, with 50 per cent serving 19 to 32 years, 33 per cent between 5 and 18 years, and a minority at shorter durations, reflecting both continuity and renewal. Leite shows a more mixed pattern, with 39 per cent in the medium range, 15 per cent in the 19 to 32-year range, and 15 per cent over 33 years, suggesting moderate organisational stability. Rawpui is dominated by medium-term leaders, with 46 per cent between five and eighteen years and 39 per cent in the nineteen to thirty-two years range, indicating a reliance on steady but not lifelong service. Zotuitlang records the highest share of medium-term leaders, with 64 per cent between five and eighteen years, supported by 27 per cent between nineteen and thirty-two years, reflecting a younger but consolidating leadership base.

Table 6.6: Organisational Background of Rural Leaders

Sl No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawip ui 'S' n = 16	Mua lche ng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanl aiph ai n = 10	Tui pui 'D' n = 12	Leit e n = 13	Raw pui n = 13	Zot uitl ang n = 11	
I	Organisation								
	None	6	0	0	0	31	0	0	6
	Church	19	71	80	42	38	54	55	49
	MUP	63	21	0	25	15	15	9	24
	YMA	0	0	0	8	8	23	18	8
	MHIP	13	7	20	8	0	0	0	7
	VC	0	0	0	17	8	0	18	6
	Political Party	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	1
	Pearson Chi-Square	68.306*							
	Cramer's V	0.358*							
II	Position in Organisation								
	None	13				31			7

	President/Elder	38	86	100	92	46	92	100	76
	Vice President				8		8		2
	General Secretary	13	7						3
	EC Member	38	7			23			11
	Pearson Chi-Square	51.666*							
	Cramer's V	109*							
II	Experience in the Present Organisation								
I									
	<= 4	31.3			16.7	38.5	15.4	9.1	16.9
	5 - 18	37.5	42.9	20.0	33.3	30.8	46.2	63.6	39.3
	19 - 32	12.5	42.9	20.0	50.0	15.4	38.5	27.3	29.2
	33+	18.8	14.3	60.0		15.4			14.6
	Pearson Chi-Square	38.483**							
	Cramer's V	0.379*							
	Mean	16	23	32	18	14	14	12	18
	Std. Deviation	16	14	12	11	17	9	7	14

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P <0.0

Overall, the variation in organisational experience reveals that some villages, notably S. Vanlaiphai, are led by deeply entrenched leaders with long tenures, while others, such as Tawipui 'S', Leite, and Zotuitlang, balance shorter and medium service terms. Rawpui and Tuipui 'D' rely heavily on medium and long-term leaders, while Mualcheng 'S' combines both. These differences show that rural Leadership is shaped not only by positional authority but also by the length of organisational engagement.

The organisational background of rural leaders reveals three interconnected patterns. First, while religious institutions particularly the church remain central to leadership affiliation, villages differ in the prominence of community and civic groups. Second, organisational roles are overwhelmingly concentrated at the top, with only a few villages displaying more distributed structures. Third, experience

varies across villages, with some showing deeply entrenched Leadership and others reflecting more transitional or balanced cohorts. Collectively, these patterns show that rural Leadership is sustained by a blend of institutional participation, concentrated authority, and varying degrees of tenure stability, which together shape the continuity and legitimacy of Leadership across Mizoram's villages.

6.7 Past Leadership Roles and Cross-Affiliations of Rural Leaders

This section examines how past organisational roles, positions held, and cross-affiliations collectively shape the trajectory and legitimacy of rural Leadership in Mizoram. It highlights how prior experience, the distribution of roles, and institutional ties reinforce authority and extend influence.

6.7.1 Position Earlier in the Organisation

An examination of leadership trajectories across the villages reveals that prior organisational experience serves as a strong foundation for assuming present leadership roles. In villages such as Tawipui 'S' (56.3 per cent) and Mualcheng 'S' (85.7 per cent), a substantial proportion of leaders had held earlier positions, underscoring the continuity of Leadership within the community. S. Vanlaiphai stands out, where all leaders (100 per cent) reported prior organisational roles. Similarly, Tuipui 'D' reflects a well-established leadership pathway with 83.3 per cent of its leaders drawing from earlier experience. These findings indicate that Leadership in many of the villages is institutionally reinforced through prior participation in organisational structures.

However, this trend is not uniform across all contexts. Leite recorded only 38.5 per cent of leaders with previous organisational positions, suggesting comparatively weaker continuity and a more open or fluid entry into Leadership. Rawpui (61.5 per cent) and Zotuitlang (72.7 per cent) represent intermediate levels, where Leadership is partly grounded in prior experience but not as strongly institutionalised as in S. Vanlaiphai or Tuipui 'D'. Overall, these patterns indicate that while previous organisational involvement often serves as a prerequisite in many cases, its significance varies across villages, reflecting differing degrees of

institutionalisation of leadership pathways. This prior involvement directly shapes the kinds of leadership positions later assumed.

6.7.2 Position Held

The distribution of specific leadership roles across villages reveals both concentration in key offices and diversity of responsibilities. These leadership pathways are further shaped by the specific positions leaders occupy, such as President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Executive Member, which emerge as the most frequently held across the villages. Leadership concentration is evident in S. Vanlaiphai, where 90 per cent of leaders reported having held the post of President, and 100 per cent the Treasurer. Similarly high proportions appear in Mualcheng 'S' and Tuipui 'D'. Such patterns indicate that community leaders often progress through formalised and influential organisational hierarchies, gaining legitimacy through service in prominent posts.

In contrast, some villages exhibit more modest engagement across a broader range of roles. Leite shows lower percentages in most positions, suggesting that Leadership is dispersed and not necessarily concentrated in a few offices. Similarly, the presence of roles such as General Secretary, Joint Secretary, and Finance Secretary is uneven, being stronger in S. Vanlaiphai and weaker in villages like Zotuitlang. While these positions anchor authority within single organisations, cross-organisational activities expand the reach and legitimacy of leaders. The overall picture suggests that while certain positions remain pivotal stepping-stones in rural Leadership trajectories, the intensity of role-holding varies, reflecting both organisational strength and local political culture.

6.7.3 Active in Other Organisations

Patterns of cross-organisational activity reveal another critical dimension of leadership development. In villages such as Mualcheng 'S', none of the leaders reported being active in other organisations, highlighting an insular leadership base. By contrast, Tuipui 'D' stands out, with two-thirds (66.7%) of leaders having concurrent involvement elsewhere, indicating highly interconnected leadership

pathways. Similarly, Tawipui ‘S’ (37.5 per cent) and Rawpui (30.8 per cent) also indicate some level of cross-affiliation, though not to the same extent as Tuipui ‘D’.

Villages such as Leite (23.1 per cent) and Zotuitlang (18.2 per cent) display relatively lower external engagement. At the same time, S. Vanlaiphai shows a balanced pattern, with 40 per cent of its members active in other organisations. Together, these variations demonstrate that while cross-organisational activity strengthens leadership versatility and influence in some villages, in others, Leadership remains more contained within single institutional spheres. This unevenness points towards significant differences in the breadth of social networks underpinning leadership structures.

6.7.4 Other Organisation Affiliations

When assessing affiliations beyond immediate leadership contexts, the church emerges as the most prominent organisation across the villages, particularly in S. Vanlaiphai (70 per cent) and Tawipui ‘S’ (31 per cent). This underscores the central role of religious institutions in legitimising and sustaining community leadership. In contrast, affiliations with youth and civic organisations such as the YMA and MUP show considerable variation, being most visible in villages like S. Vanlaiphai and Zotuitlang, where significant portions of leaders have ties with these bodies.

Notably, some villages display distinctive patterns of engagement. For example, Rawpui demonstrates a relatively strong affiliation with the Village Council (15 per cent) and political parties (8 per cent), suggesting a politicisation alongside traditional community-based structures. Leite, however, remains largely disengaged, with 77 per cent of leaders reporting no additional organisational affiliation. Overall, the analysis reveals that religious, youth, and civic organisations play an uneven yet significant role in structuring leadership networks, with the church serving as the most consistent anchor of Leadership across all villages.

Table 6.7: Past Leadership Roles and Cross-Affiliations of Rural Leaders

Sl. No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawipui 'S' n = 16	Mualchheng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanlaihphai n = 10	Tui pui 'D' n = 12	Leite n = 13	Raw pui n = 13	Zotuitlang n = 11	
I	Position: Earlier in this Organisation								
	No	43.8	14.3		16.7	61.5	38.5	27.3	30.3
	Yes	56.3	85.7	100.0	83.3	38.5	61.5	72.7	69.7
	Pearson Chi-Square	14.928*							
	Cramer's V	0.409*							
II	Position Held								
	President	44	57	90	50	31	46	18	47
	Vice President	44	50	70	75	31	46	36	49
	General Secretary	19	7	80	25	8	38	18	26
	Joint Secretary	25	7	30	0	8	8	0	11
	Treasurer	38	64	100	42	31	15	36	45
	Finance Secretary	38	43	80	33	31	15	18	36
	Executive Member	50	86	100	83	38	54	73	67
II	Active in Other Organisations								
	No	62.5	100.0	60.0	33.3	76.9	69.2	81.8	69.7
	Yes	37.5		40.0	66.7	23.1	30.8	18.2	30.3
	Pearson Chi-Square	15.516*							
	Cramer's V	0.417*							
III	Other Organisation								
	No	63	100	60	33	77	69	82	70
	VC	6	0	0	0	0	15	27	7
	YMA	13	7	60	17	8	15	127	31
	MUP	25	14	10	17	23	0	109	27
	MHIP	6	7	0	8	0	0	27	7
	Church	31	21	70	17	15	8	182	45
	Political Party	0	0	30	8	8	8	55	13

Source: Computed

Taken together, the range of positions held, cross-affiliations, and external organisational ties reveal that rural Leadership in Mizoram is grounded in both continuity within institutions and selective expansion across community networks. While prior experience and key organisational roles form the backbone of

legitimacy, cross-affiliations and religious or civic ties diversify leadership pathways. The balance between entrenched authority and openness to broader engagement defines how Leadership is sustained, legitimised, and transmitted across generations in the studied villages.

6.8 Intergenerational Transmission of Leadership among Rural Leaders

The table examines the intergenerational dimensions of Leadership by tracing parental and grandparental involvement in leadership roles across the seven study villages. It seeks to determine the extent to which leadership positions are inherited or socially transmitted within families. This analysis provides insight into whether rural leadership structures are more individual merit-based or embedded in hereditary patterns of authority.

6.8.1 Parents Holding Leadership

The presence of parents in leadership positions reveals notable inter-village differences in the pattern of intergenerational continuity. In Tawipui ‘S’, 37.5 per cent of leaders reported that their parents had held leadership roles, whereas in Mualcheng ‘S’ the absence is striking, with none of the leaders reporting such backgrounds. This suggests that in Mualcheng ‘S’ leadership emergence is largely independent of parental influence. By contrast, villages such as S. Vanlaiphai (60 per cent), Tuipui ‘D’ (58.3 per cent), and Leite (46.2 per cent) demonstrate stronger familial transmission, indicating that leadership roles often follow established family lines. Rawpui (53.8 per cent) and Zotuitlang (36.4 per cent) also reveal moderate levels of inheritance, though not as systematically entrenched as in S. Vanlaiphai or Tuipui ‘D’.

Statistical evidence further substantiates these findings. The Pearson Chi-Square test confirms a significant relationship ($p < 0.05$), while Cramer's V value (0.396) points to a moderate effect size. Together, these results show that parental Leadership exerts a meaningful influence on leadership emergence in rural settings, although its intensity varies across villages. In some communities, particularly Mualcheng ‘S’, leadership pathways appear more meritocratic and less tied to lineage. In contrast, in others, such as S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui ‘D’, family legacy

plays a central role in shaping the profile of community leaders. Building on this evidence of parental influence, the next step examines the specific leadership roles held by parents to see how continuity operates.

6.8.2 Parents' Leadership

The analysis of parents' leadership roles offers more detailed insights into intergenerational continuity. In Tawipui 'S', 38 per cent of leaders reported that their fathers had held leadership positions, while none indicated maternal involvement. Mualcheng 'S' again stands apart, with all leaders reporting no parental leadership, reflecting a distinct break from inherited pathways. In contrast, S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D' exhibit strong paternal transmission, with 50 per cent of each reporting fathers' involvement, and a small share also reporting both parents (10 per cent and 8 per cent, respectively). Leite and Rawpui reflect similar patterns, with 46 per cent acknowledging fathers' roles and a smaller fraction indicating Leadership on both parental sides. Zotuitlang, however, exhibits a more diverse trend, with 18 per cent identifying fathers, 18 per cent both parents, and 64 per cent indicating no parental leadership.

These figures suggest that paternal influence predominates where parental Leadership is present, while maternal involvement remains largely absent. This highlights gendered dimensions of leadership inheritance, with male lineage being the primary conduit for transmission. The data also reinforce the earlier observation that some villages, such as Mualcheng 'S', are characterised by leadership emergence beyond family structures. In contrast, others such as S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui 'D', and Rawpui reflect stronger patterns of intergenerational continuity rooted in paternal authority. While parental influence is strong, the question remains whether such continuity extends further back to grandparents.

6.8.3 Grandparents Holding Leadership

The role of grandparents in leadership inheritance shows a markedly weaker influence compared to parental transmission. In Tawipui 'S', only 6.3 per cent reported grandparental Leadership, while Mualcheng 'S' reported none. S. Vanlaiphai (20 per cent) and Tuipui 'D' (16.7 per cent) demonstrate comparatively

higher transmission, suggesting some continuation of Leadership beyond one generation. Leite shows no cases of grandparental Leadership, while Rawpui (7.7%) and Zotuitlang (9.1%) report minimal continuity. At the aggregate level, the overall share is only 7.9 per cent, indicating the marginal significance of grandparental influence in shaping present-day Leadership.

Table 6.8: Intergenerational Transmission of Leadership among Rural Leaders

Sl. No	Characteristic	Village							Total N = 89
		Tawipui 'S' n = 16	Mualcheng 'S' n = 14	S. Vanaiphai n = 10	Tui pui 'D' n = 12	Leite n = 13	Rawpui n = 13	Zot uitlang n = 11	
I	Parents holding Leadership								
	No	62.5	100.0	40.0	41.7	53.8	46.2	63.6	59.6
	Yes	37.5		60.0	58.3	46.2	53.8	36.4	40.4
	Pearson Chi-Square	13.968*							
	Cramer's V	0.396*							
	Parent's Leadership								
II	None	63	100	40	42	54	46	64	60
	Both	0	0	10	8	0	8	18	6
	Father	38	0	50	50	46	46	18	35
	Grandparents Holding								
III	No	93.8	100.0	80.0	83.3	100.0	92.3	90.9	92.1
	Yes	6.3		20.0	16.7		7.7	9.1	7.9
	Pearson Chi-Square	5.701							
	Cramer's V	0.253							
	Grandparent's Leadership								
	None	94	100	80	83	100	92	91	92
IV	Both	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	1
	Grand Father	6	0	20	17	0	8	0	7

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P <0.05

Statistical testing clarifies the limited scope of this inheritance. The Pearson Chi-Square result indicates a non-significant association, and the Cramer's V value of 0.253 suggests only a weak effect size. This demonstrates that while grandparental Leadership occasionally contributes to leadership continuity, its influence is neither strong nor systematic. Instead, leadership inheritance operates primarily at the parental level, with grandparents playing a negligible role in sustaining leadership pathways across generations.

Taken together, the findings show that intergenerational transmission of Leadership in rural Mizoram is shaped primarily by paternal parental influence, while grandparental roles are marginal. Some villages, such as Mualcheng 'S', display meritocratic pathways where Leadership emerges outside of lineage, whereas others, like S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D', are profoundly shaped by family legacy. The evidence suggests that while family background remains a significant factor, leadership continuity is uneven and contingent upon local contexts. This balance of inherited authority and merit-based emergence reveals that rural Leadership, though influenced by lineage, is not entirely hereditary but reflects a mix of continuity and community-driven selection.

Conclusion

The analysis of rural Leadership across the seven villages shows that authority is neither an isolated personal trait nor a random outcome, but a patterned phenomenon shaped by interlocking foundations. Demographic attributes reveal that Leadership remains concentrated among older, married men with modest educational attainment, suggesting that cultural expectations of maturity and stability still outweigh individual qualifications. Building on these demographic patterns, family structures further anchor legitimacy, with joint and stable households dominating, while family size introduces meaningful variation between villages.

Beyond the household, broader social composition demonstrates the preeminence of the Lusei subtribe, the dominance of commoner clans, and the central role of the Baptist Church. However, pluralism in villages such as Zotuitlang highlights the coexistence of cohesion and diversity, showing that cultural identity

can both reinforce and diversify the bases of authority. If cultural pluralism provides symbolic foundations, economic profiles confirm material ones: leadership is primarily tied to agrarian livelihoods and non-poor households, although exceptions, such as dependent or BPL leaders in Zotuitlang, illustrate how resource constraints can coexist with authority.

Alongside these material bases, political affiliations range from neutrality to selective alignment, reflecting both the desire for independence and the influence of party structures. Organisational backgrounds highlight the centrality of religious institutions, the concentration of top positions, and differing lengths of service, while past leadership roles and cross-affiliations reveal that authority is sustained by both continuity within institutions and selective expansion across networks. Beyond present affiliations, intergenerational analysis reveals that parental influence is significant, albeit not absolute, while grandparental inheritance has waned, indicating a partial detachment from hereditary rule.

Taken together, these findings portray rural Leadership in Mizoram as a living institution, rooted in tradition yet responsive to local variation. Its foundations are simultaneously cultural, familial, economic, political, and organisational, interwoven to confer authority and legitimacy. The chapter thus demonstrates that Leadership in Mizoram is not uniform but layered sustained by continuity, shaped by context, and open to adaptation.

CHAPTER - VII

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Introduction

This chapter introduces community leadership as both an office and a lived relation, shaping perceptions, interactions, networks, and external ties, and situates its analysis within the broader theme of social capital. Leadership in the village is not only a formal role but also a living framework that influences how duties are perceived, how people interact with institutions, how networks cohere, and how external connections are maintained. Because of these multiple functions, leadership emerges as the organising principle of community life.

To examine community leadership in its full breadth, the chapter clarifies its scope: to explore the forms, structures, and variations of leadership as understood by leaders themselves and by the people they serve. To unpack these varied perspectives, the analysis unfolds in four layers. The first considers leaders' role perceptions, revealing how they interpret their own responsibilities. The second examines people's interactions with leadership, showing how authority is encountered in daily life. The third investigates the internal networks of leaders, clarifying how cohesion and solidarity are maintained within these networks. The fourth turns to leaders' external linkages, highlighting how communities connect with wider institutions of governance, services, and political representation. This layered framework together provides a comprehensive view of leadership's reach and significance.

The rationale for this sequencing lies in recognising that leadership cannot be reduced to a single dimension. Self-perceptions gain meaning only when tested against people's evaluations; networks of solidarity become significant only when seen alongside external connections. By progressing step by step from perceptions to interactions, from internal networks to external linkages the chapter ensures that description, structure, and comparison reinforce one another.

Building on this sequencing, the overall aim is to provide a full appraisal of community leadership and its role in generating social capital in Mizoram. Leadership is presented here not as a static role, but as a layered and relational process at once moral and developmental, inwardly cohesive and outwardly connected. In setting out its scope, organisation, and purpose, the chapter establishes a foundation for understanding community leadership as both differentiated and shared, practical and symbolic, sustaining the order and vitality of village life.

7.1. Role Perceptions of Community Leaders

This section, titled Role Perceptions of Community Leaders, examines how leaders themselves perceive their responsibilities, combining descriptive, structural, and comparative analyses to uncover their layered, dimensional, and village-specific role perceptions. Community leadership is not only exercised through visible actions but also through the way leaders define their own duties. Their self-understanding provides insight into the moral, social, and developmental fabric of community life, helping us see how they distinguish between functions they regard as central, those they consider conditional, and those they perform only occasionally.

Because leaders' role perceptions contain multiple layers of meaning, these are examined in three stages. First, the analysis describes the layered hierarchy of leaders' self-perceptions, distinguishing between moral, religious-ethical, socio-economic, and infrastructural duties. Second, it examines the structural dimensions revealed by factor analysis, showing how these multiple roles cluster statistically into developmental–integrative and moral–spiritual domains. Third, it examines inter-village variations in role perceptions, highlighting how developmental custodianship differs significantly across villages, while moral and spiritual guardianship remains relatively uniform.

This threefold organisation ensures that descriptive patterns are not read in isolation but tested against statistical structure and contextual variation. Taken together, these steps provide a comprehensive understanding of leaders' self-conceptions and set the stage for the detailed findings that follow.

7.1.1 Layered Self-Perceptions of Leadership Functions

The findings reveal a three-layered self-perception of community leaders' roles: at the top are moral and religio-ethical duties, followed by socio-economic and cultural responsibilities, and at the base, infrastructural functions. This layered pattern provides insight into how leaders prioritise and evaluate their contributions to community life, distinguishing between those they see as universal obligations and those they perceive as conditional or occasional.

At the highest level, leaders perceive themselves as consistently fulfilling their moral and religious ethical responsibilities. Promotion of religiosity in the community is rated at the maximum level (mean = 4.0 across nearly all villages, effectively "Always"), with no variation. Care and support to people in need (3.6) and promotion of harmony in the community (3.4) are also rated very highly, suggesting that leaders see these roles as integral to their identity. Functions such as promoting Collaboration among organisations and encouraging people's involvement in community life (3.2 each) reinforce this perception of a moral–social core. Having established the centrality of these duties, the analysis turns next to roles that leaders identify as important but less consistently performed.

A second layer of roles emerges at the moderate level, corresponding to the "Mostly" (2.0–2.6) range. The moderate-level roles include livelihood promotion (2.3–2.4), poverty eradication (2.3), defending community interests (2.6–2.9), liaising with government (2.2–2.5), cultural preservation (1.9–2.6), and environmental protection (1.6–2.3). Across villages, this moderate tier is not uniform. Leaders in S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D' report near-universal fulfilment of these roles (close to 3 = "Always"), whereas Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' place themselves closer to the moderate range. For instance, cultural preservation is strongly rated in S. Vanlaiphai and Rawpui (3.5) but only moderately in Tawipui 'S' (1.9). Such variations reveal that leaders' moderate-level role perceptions are contingent on local contexts and available resources.

Table 7.1 Role Perception of Community Leaders

Function of Community Leaders	Village							Total
	Ta wip ui 'S'	M ua lc he ng 'S'	S. Va nla ip hai	Tui pui 'D'	Le ite	Raw pui	Zotuit lang	
Promotion of Religiosity in Community	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0
Providing Care and Support to the Needy	3.2	3.0	3.6	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.6
Promotion of Harmony in the Community	2.6	3.0	3.6	4.0	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4
Defending the Interest of the Community	2.6	2.9	3.2	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.3
Promoting Collaboration among Community Organisations	2.4	2.9	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.2
Promoting People's Involvement in Community Life	2.4	2.9	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.2
Promoting Social Inclusion	2.2	2.8	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.2
Poverty Eradication	2.6	2.3	3.2	3.8	3.2	3.7	3.5	3.1
Liaoning Community with Government	2.2	2.5	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.7	3.1
Promote the Livelihood and Living Conditions	2.4	2.3	3.2	3.8	3.3	3.7	3.5	3.1
Preservation of Culture	1.9	2.6	3.2	3.8	3.2	3.7	3.7	3.1
Environmental Protection	1.6	2.3	3.2	3.8	3.2	3.7	3.5	3.0
Building of physical infrastructure	1.6	1.2	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.5
Building of social infrastructure	1.6	1.2	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.5
Maintenance of Community Infrastructure	1.4	1.2	3.2	2.9	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.4
Promoting Cleanliness	0.8	1.4	3.2	3.2	2.7	3.2	3.2	2.4

Source: Computed

In contrast to moral and developmental responsibilities, infrastructural functions are perceived at the lowest level these cluster around "Sometimes" (1.0–1.8). The building of physical infrastructure (1.6), social infrastructure (1.6), and maintenance of community infrastructure (1.4) are generally viewed as being fulfilled only occasionally. Promotion of cleanliness receives the weakest averages (0.8–1.4), approaching "Never" in some villages. However, here too, leaders' self-perceptions diverge: those in S. Vanlaiphai report much higher fulfilment (3.0), while Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' report much lower levels (1.2–1.6). This contrast suggests that infrastructural functions are not consistently internalised as central leadership duties, even though they are recognised in specific contexts.

Thus, leaders' self-perceptions follow a hierarchy: universally acknowledged religio-ethical functions at the top, variably rated socio-economic responsibilities in the middle, and only occasionally acknowledged infrastructural duties at the base. Villages such as Tuipui 'D', Rawpui, and S. Vanlaiphai project a broader self-image encompassing all three levels, while Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' are more narrowly anchored in religio-ethical responsibilities. This layered pattern highlights the balance leaders perceive between moral authority, social responsibility, and practical development. The next step is to compare these self-perceptions with people's evaluations of service satisfaction, in order to explore points of convergence and disjuncture.

7.1.2. Dimensions of Role Perception: Factor Analytic Evidence

Leaders' role perceptions coalesce into two clusters, one grounded in development and welfare, the other rooted in cultural and symbolic custodianship. Their self-understanding is not fragmented but structured, and the statistical adequacy of this structure is firmly established. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy is 0.88, and Bartlett's test of sphericity yields $\chi^2 = 2183.56$, $p < 0.001$, confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Two components with eigenvalues above unity account for 81.6% of the variance, with the first factor alone accounting for 69.5% and the second for 12.1%. Building on this structural evidence, leaders' self-definitions can be examined in detail.

The first proposition is that leaders primarily perceive themselves as agents of development and welfare. This broad structure becomes clearer when examining the first cluster of roles. Functions such as promoting livelihood and living conditions (loading 0.94), environmental protection (0.92), liaising with government (0.91), poverty eradication (0.90), promoting cleanliness (0.90), preserving culture (0.90), promoting social inclusion (0.89), building physical infrastructure (0.87), maintaining community infrastructure (0.87), fostering Collaboration among organisations (0.86), encouraging people's involvement (0.86), defending community interests (0.78), promoting harmony (0.78), and providing care and support to the needy (0.66) all load strongly on the first factor. The reason is that leaders situate themselves as responsible for both immediate welfare and long-term community advancement. For example, liaising with government positions them as bridges to external institutions, while defending community interests shows their advocacy role. The conclusion is that leaders predominantly perceive themselves as developmental custodians, entrusted with ensuring material welfare and social well-being.

However, their role perception is not limited to development alone. The second proposition is that leaders also perceive a distinct symbolic responsibility that stands apart from their developmental functions. The evidence is that religiosity in community life (loading 0.89) loads strongly on the second factor and minimally on the first. The reason is that religiosity expresses leaders' responsibility not in material but in symbolic terms, as guardians of values, traditions, and spiritual legitimacy. For instance, while building infrastructure addresses physical needs, promoting religiosity affirms leaders' self-understanding as custodians of the community's moral and cultural identity. The conclusion is that leaders perceive themselves not only as practical developers but also as cultural and symbolic guardians, embodying the spiritual ethos of community life.

**Table 7.2 Dimensions of Role Perception of Community Leaders: Rotated
Factor Matrix**

Leaders Function	Communalities	Component01	Component02
Promote the Livelihood and Living Conditions	0.897	0.937	0.136
Environmental Protection	0.882	0.920	0.187
Liaoning Community with Government	0.895	0.913	0.247
Poverty Eradication	0.821	0.904	0.053
Promoting Cleanliness	0.811	0.900	-0.028
Preservation of Culture	0.844	0.897	0.201
Promoting Social Inclusion	0.881	0.891	0.297
Building of physical infrastructure	0.769	0.874	-0.070
Maintenance of Community Infrastructure	0.751	0.867	-0.002
Promoting Collaboration among Community Organisations	0.880	0.862	0.371
Promoting People's Involvement in Community Life	0.861	0.855	0.361
Defending the Interest of the Community	0.821	0.781	0.460
Promotion of Harmony in the Community	0.772	0.777	0.410
Providing Care and Support to the Needy	0.557	0.660	0.348
Promotion of Religiosity in Community	0.794	-0.009	0.891
Eigenvalues		10.422	1.814
% of Variance		69.481	12.096
Cumulative %		69.481	81.577
KMO and Bartlett's Test			
K-M-O Measure of Sampling Adequacy.			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	0.88		
Approx. Chi-Square	2183.56**		
Sig.	0.00		

Source: Computed

** P <0.01

* P <0.01

Thus, integrating both dimensions, the findings reveal that leaders' self-perception is dual in nature. While the developmental-functional role set anchors leadership in everyday responsibilities of livelihood, welfare, and infrastructure, the cultural-symbolic role set highlights its moral depth and spiritual orientation. In summary, leaders perceive themselves as bearing a dual mandate: to function as developmental custodians while also serving as cultural and symbolic guardians, thereby integrating material service with the preservation of values and identity.

7.1.3 Intervillage Variation in Role Perceptions of Community Leaders

Leaders' role perceptions unfold along two dimensions developmental integrative and moral spiritual each revealing a distinct pattern of similarity and difference across villages. These dimensions are understood as expressions of extra-community linkage social capital, connecting leaders to both welfare and value-preservation functions. The adequacy of this categorisation is supported statistically: developmental–integrative leadership shows strong differentiation ($F = 36.42$, $p < 0.001$), while moral–spiritual leadership shows no significant variation across villages ($F = 2.052$, ns). This divergence is most evident in the developmental dimension.

The proposition for the first domain is that leaders perceive themselves differently in their developmental and integrative roles, depending on the village context. The reason lies in the significant ANOVA result, which demonstrates meaningful differences. The evidence is clear from mean scores: Rawpui (0.9 ± 0.5^a), Tuipui 'D' (0.8 ± 0.4^a), and Zotuitlang (0.6 ± 0.5^a) represent the high group; S. Vanlaiphai (0.3 ± 0.5^b) and Leite (0.2 ± 0.6^b) form a moderate tier; while Tawipui 'S' (-1.2 ± 0.7^c) and Mualcheng 'S' (-1.0 ± 0.4^c) fall into the lowest group, as confirmed by LSD tests. For instance, leaders in Rawpui and Tuipui 'D' strongly align themselves with responsibilities such as promoting livelihoods, developing infrastructure, and advocating for the community. In contrast, leaders in Tawipui 'S' identify least with such functions. The conclusion is that developmental custodianship is affirmed most strongly in Tuipui 'D', Rawpui, and Zotuitlang, moderately in S. Vanlaiphai and Leite, and least in Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S'.

**Table 7.3 Intervillage variations in Role Perception of Community Leaders:
ANOVA**

Village	Developmental– Integrative Leadership		Moral–Spiritual Leadership	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Tawipui 'S'	-1.2 ^c	0.7	-0.2 ^a	1.3
Mualcheng 'S'	-1.0 ^c	0.4	0.4 ^a	0.6
S. Vanlaiphai	0.3 ^b	0.5	-0.3 ^a	0.3
Tuipui 'D'	0.8 ^a	0.4	0.4 ^a	0.4
Leite	0.2 ^b	0.6	0.2 ^a	0.5
Rawpui	0.9 ^a	0.5	-0.6 ^a	1.9
Zotuitlang	0.6 ^a	0.5	0.1 ^a	0.4
F	36.42**		2.052	

Source: Computed ** P < 0.01 * P < 0.01

While such variation marks the developmental domain, the moral–spiritual role is perceived more evenly. The reason lies in the non-significant ANOVA ($F = 2.052$, $p = 0.15$), which indicates no systematic difference between villages. The evidence is shown in the means: Mualcheng ‘S’ (0.4 ± 0.6) and Tuipui ‘D’ (0.4 ± 0.4) are somewhat higher, Leite (0.2 ± 0.5) and Zotuitlang (0.1 ± 0.4) are in the middle, while Tawipui ‘S’ (-0.2 ± 1.3), S. Vanlaiphai (-0.3 ± 0.3), and Rawpui (-0.6 ± 1.9) fall slightly lower. However, even where Rawpui records a lower mean, the differences are not statistically significant compared with villages that score higher. This suggests that religiosity and cultural custodianship are widely recognised as part of leadership identity, irrespective of context. The conclusion is that leaders across all villages perceive themselves as moral and spiritual guardians, although the emphasis varies slightly.

Taken together with the differentiated developmental findings, these more uniform spiritual perceptions reveal a dual pattern unlike the developmental dimension, which divides villages into clear tiers of high, moderate, and low custodianship; the spiritual dimension cuts across differences with relative uniformity. Overall, leaders perceive themselves as unequally positioned in

developmental custodianship but equally bound by a shared moral and spiritual mandate, resulting in a dual structure of role perception.

The findings across the seven villages reveal that leaders' self-perceptions are not monolithic but layered, with clear contrasts between developmental custodianship and moral-spiritual guardianship. In developmental roles, leaders in Rawpui, Tuipui 'D', and Zotuitlang align themselves most strongly with responsibilities such as livelihood promotion and infrastructure development. S. Vanlaiphai and Leite show moderate alignment, while Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' stand at the lower end. By contrast, moral-spiritual guardianship anchored in religiosity, harmony, and care for people in need is consistently affirmed across all villages, with slight variation. This dual pattern suggests that while developmental custodianship is shaped by village context, moral and spiritual responsibilities are perceived as universal obligations of leadership. Taken together, the results portray community leadership as both differentiated and cohesive, with elites in some villages prioritising development while all leaders equally uphold their moral role. This layered self-image sets the ground for examining how such perceptions correspond with people's own evaluations of community service satisfaction, which forms the focus of the following subsection.

7.2. People's Interaction with Community Leadership

Leadership in the Mizo village is not an abstract institution but a lived presence, encountered by people in their everyday rhythms of work, worship, and community life. Because leadership is embedded in these daily rhythms, to understand its role in shaping community dynamics, one must first trace the modes through which people actually interact with their leaders. These interactions are neither uniform nor accidental; they exhibit a layered and patterned character, which this section seeks to unravel.

Such unravelling requires conceptual clarity. Here, the term interaction refers not to casual or occasional contact, but to structured and repeated engagements between villagers and leaders of recognised organisations administrative, civic, religious, and cultural alike. By clarifying this definition, the analysis avoids

conflating sporadic encounters with the enduring channels of participation that sustain community life.

The need for this inquiry arises from the recognition that leadership, though institutionally codified, derives its vitality from the extent and manner of people's engagement. If leadership is the framework of authority, interaction is the proof of its legitimacy and reach. Without examining this reciprocal relationship, one cannot adequately grasp the strength or fragility of community institutions. In this sense, the analysis not only clarifies interaction but also connects back to the earlier discussion of institutional services, where leadership emerged as a mediating force in access and satisfaction.

Having established this continuity, the present section moves forward with a structured inquiry. It is organised in three subsections: first, the layers of interaction, mapping the hierarchy from universally accessed leaders to peripheral ones; second, the dimensions of interaction, where statistical analysis identifies the latent axes underlying these patterns; and third, the patterns of variation, which reveal how villages diverge in their engagement with core and cultural leadership.

Thus, people's interaction with leadership is conceptualised here as structured, legitimate, and continuous with institutional analysis, providing a robust foundation for examining its layered, dimensional, and village-specific expressions.

7.2.1 The Layers of Interaction

The people's interaction with community leadership can be understood as a layered structure, moving from universally accessed leaders to selectively engaged ones. Using a four-point scale Always (3), Sometimes (2), Rarely (1), and Never (0) respondents evaluated the frequency of their interactions with different organisational leaders. This framework reveals not only which institutions are consistently engaged but also how the intensity of interaction varies across villages, highlighting the differentiated ways in which social capital is mobilised.

At the foundational level, Village Councils (VCs), the Young Mizo Association (YMA), and Church leadership form the universally accessible layer. Across all villages, these leaders are highly rated (with means between 2.6 and 3.0, effectively indicating "Always"). They represent the constant and reliable channels of leadership interaction. However, even within this universality, subtle differences appear. For instance, Church leaders in Mualcheng 'S' and Rawpui reach the maximum score (3.0), while Tawipui 'S' and Leite show slightly lower averages (2.7–2.8). This consistency coexists with village-specific variations, indicating that while the foundation is solid, its strength is locally inflected. Having established this universal layer, the analysis turns next to leaders of civic-support organisations.

The civic-support layer, represented by MUP and MHIP, is also well established but displays more variation than the core institutions. Leaders' ratings range from 2.2 in Tawipui 'S' to nearly 2.9 in S. Vanlaiphai and Rawpui. Here, interaction is "Mostly" but not "Always." Villages like S. Vanlaiphai and Rawpui consistently record higher engagement, suggesting that civic bodies are more deeply woven into their leadership fabric. At the same time, Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' reveal comparatively weaker ties. This unevenness continues further down the hierarchy, as the analysis shifts to the peripheral organisations.

At the peripheral layer, games and sports associations, as well as cultural clubs, exhibit the weakest and most irregular interaction. Cultural clubs are almost absent in Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S', with mean ratings of zero, while Rawpui records the highest engagement (0.7). Games and sports associations are stronger in Rawpui (2.6), moderately visible in Tuipui 'D' and S. Vanlaiphai (1.5–1.6), but very weak in Mualcheng 'S' (0.5). This gradient of interaction highlights how peripheral organisations are dependent on local initiative and vary widely across villages. The absence of cultural clubs in some villages contrasts with their limited but emerging presence in others, underscoring that not all forms of leadership interaction are equally embedded.

Taken together, the evidence shows a layered but uneven hierarchy of people–leader interactions. Core institutions, such as VC, YMA, and Church leaders, are universally strong; civic organisations, like MUP and MHIP, are moderately but unevenly engaged; and peripheral bodies, such as games and cultural clubs, remain fragile and inconsistent. The pattern of village differences is equally striking. Rawpui

exhibits the most diversified interaction, while Tuipui 'D' and S. Vanlaiphai maintain balanced engagement across layers. In contrast, Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' remain narrow, anchored primarily in core leadership without much civic or cultural extension. These inter-village contrasts suggest that while all communities share a universal leadership foundation, their depth and breadth of interaction diverge. This layered and differentiated pattern provides the entry point for examining the structural dimensions of leadership interaction in the following subsection.

7.2.2 Dimensions of People's Interaction with Community Leadership

The frequency of respondents' interactions with leaders of community organisations was analysed using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation. This technique was selected to reduce multiple observed leadership interactions into latent dimensions that capture the deeper structures of community life. The suitability of the dataset was established by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of .761, which indicates middling to good sampling adequacy, and a Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 1311.168$, $df = 21$, $p < .001$), which confirmed that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. These tests provide *pramāṇa* (valid grounds) for interpreting the factor solution.

Because the tests established valid grounds, the statistical adequacy now allows for meaningful interpretation of the PCA results. The rotated solution yielded two principal components, which together explained 72.7% of the total variance in interactional patterns. This high explanatory power makes it worthwhile to interpret the factors in detail. The findings can be summarised as follows.

First, the dimension of Core Leadership emerged as the strongest factor, explaining 50.3% of the variance. It was defined by very high loadings for the Village Council (.934), the Young Mizo Association (.919), and the Church (.816), along with substantial contributions from the Mizo Upa Pawl (.713) and the Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (.713). These results show that respondents interact most frequently with leaders of these core institutions, which form the administrative, normative, and welfare backbone of Mizo community life. In other words, the *tātparya* (intent) here is that everyday governance, welfare coordination, and social discipline are anchored in these institutions. Studies of community governance in Mizoram (Nunthara, 1989; Lalrinawma, 2005) support this finding, emphasising the enduring centrality of the VC, YMA, and Church in structuring village interactions. While these institutions define the governance backbone of community life, another dimension reflects a different pattern of interaction. Second, the dimension of Cultural Leadership accounted for 22.4% of the variance. It was defined primarily by the Cultural Club (.867) and Games & Sports associations (.594). This second factor highlights a participatory and expressive domain where leadership operates through cultural events, recreational activities, and collective celebrations. The broader meaning here is that community leadership not only regulates but also nurtures solidarity, identity, and youth engagement. This interpretation resonates with scholarship on Mizo cultural practices, which emphasises the role of festivals, sports, and clubs in fostering social cohesion (Lalthangliana, 2011; Zorema, 2017).

The role of cultural associations in cohesion is paralleled by institutional cohesion, where overlap between domains is visible. Third, the overlap of functions becomes most evident in the case of MUP and MHIP, which straddle both dimensions. While firmly embedded in Core Leadership, both organisations also demonstrated moderate cross-loadings (.474 each) on Cultural Leadership. This bridging role indicates that their functions extend fluidly from governance into cultural and participatory domains. Such overlap reflects the lived reality of community leadership in Mizoram, where institutions are multifunctional, simultaneously exercising regulatory authority and expressive participation.

It is precisely this multifunctionality that justifies the conclusion of a dual-axis model of leadership interaction. In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that people's interactions with community leaders are structured along two complementary axes: Core Leadership, which sustains governance, discipline, and welfare, and Cultural Leadership, which reinforces participation, identity, and recreation. Together, these factors account for 72.7% of the total variance, providing a robust statistical and interpretive framework for understanding leadership interactions in Mizoram. The conclusion is that leadership in community organisations cannot be reduced to administration alone; it is bifocal, simultaneously institutional and expressive, embodying both order and solidarity in everyday life.

Table 7.5: Rotated Component Matrix - People's Interaction with Community Leaders

Community Organisation (CO)	Communality (Extraction)	Core Leadership (Factor 1)	Cultural Leadership (Factor 2)
Village Council (VC)	.878	.934	.076
Young Mizo Association (YMA)	.852	.919	.090
Mizo Upa Pawl (MUP)	.733	.713	.474
Mizo Hmeichhe Insuihkhawm Pawl (MHIP)	.733	.713	.474
Church	.668	.816	.052
Games & Sports Association	.467	.339	.594
Cultural Club	.759	-.092	.867
Total Variance Explained:	72.7%.	50.3%	22.4%

Source: Computed Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation (converged in 3 iterations).

7.1.2 Patterns of Variation in Popular Interaction with Community Leadership

This subsection examines whether patterns of people's interaction with community leadership vary systematically across villages, distinguishing between the domains of Core Leadership and Cultural Leadership. Core Leadership refers to institutional and governance-oriented organisations, such as the Village Council,

YMA, MHIP, MUP, and the Church, while Cultural Leadership refers to leaders of cultural and recreational bodies, including Cultural Clubs and Games & Sports Associations.

The findings show a clear difference in patterns. In particular, interactions with Core Leadership follow a stratified structure, while interactions with Cultural Leadership are sharply polarised. The ANOVA results confirm significant inter-village differences in both domains, with moderate differences in the case of Core Leadership ($F(6, 207) = 3.111, p = .006$) and extreme differences in the case of Cultural Leadership ($F(6, 207) = 28.953, p < .001$). To illustrate these differences, the following section details the village-level patterns. These are first examined for Core Leadership, where interactions are structured into clusters of varying intensity. The village-level patterns of Core Leadership interaction can be seen in the form of three distinct clusters. The higher-moderate cluster includes Mualcheng 'S' ($M = 0.37, SD = 0.67$), S. Vanlaiphai ($M = 0.30, SD = 0.63$), and Tuipui 'D' ($M = -0.05, SD = 0.87$). A middle tier consists of Rawpui ($M = 0.18, SD = 0.55$) and Zotuitlang ($M = 0.16, SD = 0.82$). The lowest cluster is formed by Tawipui 'S' ($M = -0.24, SD = 1.32$) and Leite ($M = -0.48, SD = 1.17$). This stratification suggests that governance institutions, although universally present, generate unequal levels of interaction across villages, resulting in three distinct engagement classes: high, moderate, and low. In contrast to this stratification, the sharper variation in Cultural Leadership highlights a different pattern of village interaction.

Unlike the tiered distribution of Core Leadership, the sharper variation in Cultural Leadership is most evident in Rawpui ($M = 1.13, SD = 0.68$), which alone constitutes the highest engagement cluster. A moderate class includes S. Vanlaiphai ($M = 0.39, SD = 0.93$), Tuipui 'D' ($M = 0.47, SD = 1.02$), Leite ($M = 0.48, SD = 0.78$), and Zotuitlang ($M = -0.35, SD = 0.45$). At the lowest level, Tawipui 'S' ($M = -0.70, SD = 0.56$) and Mualcheng 'S' ($M = -0.97, SD = 0.57$) consistently fall behind. This polarisation shows that cultural and recreational organisations thrive in some settings while remaining weak in others. The exceptional position of Rawpui implies a particularly vibrant associational life, while the consistently low levels in Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' point to weaker institutional bases for cultural

participation. Such unevenness in village-level cultural vitality has also been noted in studies of Mizo associational life (Lalrinawma, 2017).

Taken together, this unevenness in cultural vitality and the stratification of governance underline that popular interaction with community leadership is not random but patterned. Core Leadership produces a stratified distribution of engagement, distinguishing villages into high, moderate, and low classes. Cultural Leadership produces a polarised distribution, distinguishing vibrant centres such as Rawpui, moderately engaged villages such as S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui ‘D’, Leite, and Zotuitlang, and weakly engaged contexts such as Tawipui ‘S’ and Mualcheng ‘S’. These results establish that leadership in Mizoram functions simultaneously through two distinct modes of community interaction: governance-related institutions provide steady though tiered engagement. At the same time, cultural organisations reflect the sharper contours of social vitality across villages.

Table 7.6: People’s Interaction with Community Leaders - ANOVA and LSD test

Village	Core Leadership	Cultural Leadership
Tawipui ‘S’	-0.242 ± 1.317^c	-0.700 ± 0.555^c
Mualcheng ‘S’	0.365 ± 0.670^a	-0.973 ± 0.573^c
S. Vanlaiphai	0.300 ± 0.633^a	0.393 ± 0.928^b
Tuipui ‘D’	-0.052 ± 0.870^a	0.469 ± 1.022^b
Leite	-0.481 ± 1.168^c	0.480 ± 0.777^b
Rawpui	0.178 ± 0.550^b	1.128 ± 0.681^a
Zotuitlang	0.155 ± 0.822^b	-0.352 ± 0.453^b
F	3.111**	28.953**

Note: Superscripts indicate means not significantly different at $p < .05$

Having traced the layers, dimensions, and village-level variations, the analysis now converges on its larger meaning. Overall, people's interaction with leadership in Mizo villages emerges as a bifocal process anchored in core institutions while simultaneously enriched or constrained by cultural vitality. At one level, the universal and reliable presence of the Village Council, YMA, Church, MHIP, and MUP anchors the institutions of governance, welfare, and discipline. However, beyond this core anchoring, another level emerges: the vibrancy of cultural clubs and games associations, which expresses identity, recreation, and solidarity, though in

sharply uneven ways across villages. Taken together, these findings confirm that interaction is neither random nor uniform, but layered, dimensional, and patterned by local contexts a pattern further clarified by the statistical evidence of two axes, Core Leadership and Cultural Leadership. Village-level contrasts, from Rawpui's diversified associational life to Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S's restricted cores, establish that the reach of leadership depends not only on institutional design but on cultural vitality and people's willingness to engage. In this way, leadership interaction functions as both the skeleton and the heartbeat of community life, sustaining structure while animating participation. Thus, people's interaction with community leadership in Mizoram is not only structured by universal cores but also shaped by uneven cultural vitality, resulting in a dual model that sustains order while enabling solidarity. This dual and differentiated pattern of interaction provides the bridge to the following discussion on the structural dimensions of leadership.

7.3. Internal Network of Community Leaders

The focus here is on the internal networks of community leaders, examined to understand how their structure, cohesion, and patterns of solidarity shape leadership relations in villages. The aim is to interpret these networks in a layered way: first, by analysing their structural properties; second, by assessing the bonding social capital embedded in them; and finally, by classifying the resulting types of solidarity. This layered approach not only highlights variation across villages but also clarifies the foundations upon which community development outcomes rest.

The first of these foundations lies in the structural properties such as size, diameter, and average path length which determine the scale, inclusiveness, and efficiency of leadership networks. To unpack these foundations step by step, we begin with an assessment of network size and distance. Building on these foundations, the next layer is revealed through bonding social capital measures, which capture how ties are concentrated, clustered, or stratified, and how solidarity is sustained within leadership groups. This middle layer helps explain whether cohesion is hierarchical, egalitarian, or a mix of both. Finally, these measures are consolidated into a typology of bonding social capital, distinguishing elite-driven,

egalitarian, and hybrid forms. This typological synthesis integrates earlier findings, demonstrating how different network logics give rise to contrasting modes of solidarity across villages.

Together, the three layers structural properties, bonding measures, and typology offer a comprehensive picture of how leaders' networks function as both organisational structures and reservoirs of community solidarity.

7.3.1 Structure of Community Leaders' Internal Networks: Network Properties

The topic here is the structural properties of community leaders' internal networks. The purpose is to examine how the size, reach, and efficiency of these networks shape the foundations of leadership relations in villages. These properties are not measures of social capital themselves but provide the baseline upon which bonding social capital will later be assessed. With this foundation in mind, the first property to consider is the size of leadership networks.

Leadership networks differ in size across the villages, and this variation shapes the scope of participation. Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' have the most extensive networks, each with 14 leaders, while S. Vanlaiphai has only five leaders, reflecting the narrowest circle. Tuipui 'D' with seven leaders, Leite with 8, Rawpui with 9, and Zotuitlang with 10 fall in the mid-range. Larger leadership networks have the potential for broader representation and a greater diversity of voices, while smaller networks tend to concentrate decision-making in fewer hands. The implication is that the scale of a leadership network sets the stage for the inclusiveness and diversity of community governance. Having seen variation in scale, the next issue is the distance among leaders, expressed through diameter.

The diameter of leadership networks captures the farthest relational distance between leaders. Tawipui 'S' has a diameter of 4, whereas all other villages record a compact diameter of 2. This means leaders in Tawipui 'S' may need up to four steps to reach one another, while elsewhere only two steps are required. The breadth of Tawipui 'S' thus comes at the cost of cohesion, while smaller networks maintain tighter reachability. The inference is that compact diameters facilitate faster consensus building, whereas extended diameters may lead to subgrouping or delays

in communication. If diameter reflects the maximum distance in leadership networks, average path length captures the efficiency of everyday communication.

The average path length shows how directly and efficiently leaders are connected. Tuipui 'D' has the shortest path length at 1.29, closely followed by S. Vanlaiphai at 1.45, Zotuitlang and Rawpui at 1.32, and Mualcheng 'S' at 1.56. Tawipui 'S' again stands out with the most extended average path length at 1.85. In smaller or mid-sized villages, leaders can communicate more directly, while in Tawipui 'S', despite its large leadership base, interactions are more stretched. Thus, efficiency in leadership networks tends to decline as size increases, unless supported by dense cross-links. When size, diameter, and path length are considered together, the structural properties of leadership networks reveal a spectrum that ranges from large and diffuse to small and compact.

Taken together, the network properties reveal that Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' represent broad leadership bases, but Tawipui 'S' also demonstrates internal distance. Tuipui 'D' is small yet highly efficient, while Rawpui and Zotuitlang achieve a balance of moderate size and compactness. Leite shows similar mid-sized efficiency, and S. Vanlaiphai represents a small but limited network.

Leadership networks across villages differ in scale, cohesion, and efficiency. Large networks provide breadth but risk distance, while small networks enhance compactness and speed. These structural properties form the foundation for understanding the stock of bonding social capital in leaders' relationships.

Table 7.7 Properties of Community Leaders' Internal Networks

Village	Size of Network (No. of Leaders)	Diameter	Average Path Length	Structural Characterisation
Tawipui 'S'	14	4	1.85	Large, broad leadership base, but more stretched and less cohesive
Mualcheng 'S'	14	2	1.56	Large, compact and moderately efficient
S. Vanlaiphai	5	2	1.45	Small, compact, but limited in scale
Tuipui 'D'	7	2	1.29	Small, highly compact and efficient
Leite	8	2	1.36	Mid-sized and efficient
Rawpui	9	2	1.32	Mid-sized, balanced density and compactness
Zotuitlang	10	2	1.32	Mid-sized, compact and efficient

Source: Computed.

7.3.2 Bonding Social Capital Measures of Leaders' Networks

Community leaders' internal networks reveal distinct contrasts in how solidarity is organised. Patterns of tie concentration, brokerage, subgroup cohesion, and core-periphery layering together shape how bonding capital is generated and sustained. Networks such as Tawipui 'S' (degree centralisation = 0.59) and Tuipui 'D' (0.47) illustrate structures where influence is concentrated in a small set of leaders. These networks allow decisive coordination but reduce inclusiveness. In contrast, Leite (0.163) demonstrates very low centralisation, showing that ties are widely distributed among leaders, which fosters collective responsibility and more inclusive solidarity.

The manner in which cohesion is maintained also differs when brokerage is taken into consideration. Zotuitlang (0.10) and S. Vanlaiphai (0.08) exhibit a pattern in which a handful of leaders act as intermediaries, connecting others. By

comparison, Leite (0.005) shows almost no reliance on intermediaries, since leaders are directly connected. A heavy reliance on brokers introduces potential fragility, whereas networks with direct and evenly spread ties consolidate trust and cohesion.

Table 7.8 Social Network Measures of Bonding Social Capital: Internal Network

Village	Degree Centralisation	Betweenness Centralization	Average Clustering Coefficient	Density	Approximate Core–Periphery Fit (ACPF)
Tawipui 'S'	0.59	0.03	0.25	0.22	3.06
Mualcheng 'S'	0.41	0.03	0.25	0.19	3.06
S. Vanlaiphai	0.33	0.08	0.87	0.80	1.25
Tuipui 'D'	0.47	0.07	0.73	0.67	1.25
Leite	0.163	0.005	0.841	0.857	1.05
Rawpui	0.36	0.02	0.84	0.72	0.63
Zotuitlang	0.37	0.10	0.75	0.67	0.75

Source: Computed

The strength of solidarity becomes most visible when clustering and density are examined. Villages such as S. Vanlaiphai (0.87; 0.80), Leite (0.841; 0.857), and Rawpui (0.84; 0.72) exhibit highly cohesive leadership structures, where close-knit clusters generate redundancy of ties and mutual support. Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' (0.25; 0.22 and 0.19), however, are sparsely connected and depend on central leaders rather than collective reinforcement.

Core–periphery structuring further differentiates patterns of bonding. Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' (ACPF = 3.06) are sharply stratified, with inner cores dominating and peripheral leaders remaining marginal. In Rawpui (0.63) and Zotuitlang (0.75), the fit is flatter, indicating that solidarity is more evenly spread. Stratified networks mobilise efficiently through elites, while flatter networks sustain more equitable and participatory cohesion.

Taken together, the evidence suggests three distinct modes of bonding capital. Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' exemplify elite-driven solidarity, where hierarchy and central elites dominate. Leite, Rawpui, and S. Vanlaiphai reflect egalitarian solidarity, grounded in dense, trust-based clusters. Zotuitlang and Tuipui 'D' represent hybrid solidarity, balancing centralisation with clustering to sustain cohesion through both authority and inclusiveness.

In sum, leaders' networks reveal a threefold pattern of bonding social capital: elite-driven, egalitarian, and hybrid. Each form represents a distinct balance between concentration of power and distribution of cohesion, providing the ground for the classification of communities that follows.

7.3.3 Typology of Bonding Social Capital in Leaders' Internal Networks

This discussion examines how bonding social capital is structured within the internal networks of community leaders. The aim is to interpret higher-order network measures centralisation, clustering, density, and core–periphery structuring not merely as technical indicators but as markers of solidarity, inclusiveness, and collective capacity. The following analysis examines how various combinations of these measures yield three distinct typologies of bonding social capital.

Table 7.9: Typology of Bonding Social Capital in Leaders' Internal Networks

Type of Bonding Social Capital	Criteria (Network Measures)	Villages	Characterisation
Elite-Driven Bonding Capital	High degree centralization (>0.45); strong core–periphery fit (>3.0); low density (<0.3); low clustering (<0.3)	Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S'	Large networks, dominated by central elites; solidarity mediated through inner circles; weaker subgroup cohesion
Egalitarian Bonding Capital	Low centralization (<0.20 – 0.35); weak or flat core–periphery (<1.0); high density (>0.7); high clustering (>0.8)	Leite, Rawpui, S. Vanlaiphai	Small to mid-sized networks have ties evenly spread; leaders are tightly interconnected, with solidarity based on trust and mutual support.
Hybrid/Mixed	Moderate	Zotuitlang,	Balanced networks; some

Type of Bonding Social Capital	Criteria (Network Measures)	Villages	Characterisation
Bonding Capital	centralisation (0.35–0.47); moderate density (0.6–0.7); clustering (0.7–0.75); mixed brokerage	Tuipui 'D'	concentration of power, but also cohesive clusters; solidarity both through brokers and direct ties

The first mode is elite-driven solidarity, shaped by the concentration of ties. Tawipui 'S' (degree centralisation = 0.59; ACPF = 3.06) and Mualcheng 'S' (0.41; 3.06) exemplify this pattern. These networks are large but exhibit low density (0.22 and 0.19) and weak clustering (0.25), indicating that solidarity depends more on a few dominant figures than on broad interconnections. In Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S', cohesion is therefore maintained through hierarchy and inner circles rather than inclusiveness.

If elite-driven solidarity reflects hierarchical concentration, a contrasting form emerges in networks where inclusiveness and clustering dominate. Leite (centralization = 0.163; clustering = 0.841; density = 0.857), Rawpui (0.36; 0.84; 0.72), and S. Vanlaiphai (0.33; 0.87; 0.80) illustrate this egalitarian type. These networks are smaller or mid-sized, with weak core–periphery structuring ($ACPF \leq 1.25$), and ties are widely distributed among leaders. In such contexts, solidarity is sustained not by elites but by dense, trust-based interconnections and mutual reinforcement.

Between the hierarchical and egalitarian poles lies a third form, hybrid solidarity. Zotuitlang (degree centralization = 0.37; clustering = 0.75; density = 0.67) and Tuipui 'D' (0.47; 0.73; 0.67) demonstrate this balance. Here, some leaders occupy brokerage positions (betweenness centralisation = 0.07–0.10), ensuring coordination across subgroups, while clustering fosters cohesion within them. These networks sustain bonding capital by concentrating influence without undermining trust and inclusiveness.

This contrast between sparsely connected and tightly cohesive networks becomes sharper when layering is taken into account. Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' reveal strongly stratified cores, while Rawpui and Zotuitlang demonstrate flatter

structures. Stratified networks can mobilise efficiently through elites, whereas flatter networks distribute solidarity more equitably across members.

Thus, across all villages, three relational modes of solidarity emerge: elite-driven, egalitarian, and hybrid. Each expresses a distinctive balance between authority and inclusiveness. The next step is to consolidate this typology into a formal classification of communities, as presented in the following table.

In summary, the analysis of community leaders' internal networks reveals that structural properties, bonding measures, and typological distinctions together provide a coherent understanding of leadership solidarity across villages. Large and diffuse networks such as Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' sustain solidarity through hierarchical concentration, while mid-sized and compact networks such as Leite, Rawpui, and S. Vanlaiphai generate cohesion through dense and trust-based ties. Between these two poles, villages like Zotuitlang and Tuipui 'D' occupy an intermediate position, balancing authority with inclusiveness and combining selective centralisation with clustering to sustain solidarity. Together, these contrasting and hybrid forms of solidarity clarify the typology of leadership networks. Building on these variations in authority and cohesion, the analysis shows that the internal organisation of leadership is not uniform but varies systematically, shaping how leaders mobilise resources, maintain cohesion, and exercise authority. This systematic variation forms the basis for distinguishing leadership typologies, and this typology in turn provides the foundation for linking leadership structures with broader indicators of living conditions and community service satisfaction in the subsequent discussion.

7.4. Leaders' External Linkages

The external linkages of community leaders represent the channels through which they interact with service providers, administrators, political actors, and other institutions beyond the immediate village. Due to this wider reach, external linkages become crucial mechanisms for mediation and negotiation. These linkages are critical for mobilising resources, negotiating support, and maintaining the community's interface with wider structures of governance and development. Given

their significance, the present section analyses leaders' external linkages in a threefold manner.

The first subsection identifies the layers of access across professional, service, administrative, and political actors, revealing who is more closely connected and who remains distant. Beyond these layers, the second subsection turns to the structural depth of external linkages by examining their underlying dimensions through principal component analysis (PCA). The third subsection examines intervillage variations in external linkages, evaluating how these differences impact the capacity of leaders to represent and secure benefits for their communities. Taken alongside the analysis of layers and dimensions of external linkages, these variations provide a holistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of leadership connections across villages.

Thus, by sequencing the analysis into layers, dimensions, and variations, this section constructs a comprehensive view of leaders' external linkages as the channels that shape both the inclusiveness of village governance and the effectiveness of its integration into wider institutional systems. The following subsection begins by

mapping the layers of leaders' access, which provides the entry point into this broader analysis.

7.4.1 Layers of Access to External Actors

The present discussion focuses on the external networks of community leaders, as assessed through a distance-scaling measure. Leaders rated their access to various officials and representatives on a five-point scale: Benefited (4), Met personally (3), Seen (2), Seen in Photograph (1), Do not Know (0). This scale captures not only contact but also the depth of engagement, ranging from concrete benefit to mere recognition at a distance. With this gradation in mind, the analysis begins at the closest distance.

At the closest distance, frontline service providers such as doctors, NRHM workers, and principals are universally rated at the maximum (mean = 4.0 across all

seven villages). These figures represent direct, routine, and tangible engagement with leaders in every community. This uniformity gives way to differences once mid-level officials are taken into consideration.

At the intermediate level, variation across villages becomes evident. Access to bank managers and police officers is rated high overall (3.5–4.0), but falls in Rawpui (3.3) and Zotuitlang (3.5), indicating weaker administrative linkages. The divide is further magnified at higher administrative and academic levels.

At this higher layer, district commissioners and university professors reveal striking inter-village variation. S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D' report strong access (3.4–4.0), while Tawipui 'S' and Rawpui record much weaker ties (2.0–2.7). These differences suggest that while some villages benefit from strong bureaucratic and academic linkages, others remain relatively isolated from higher-level influence. This exclusion is mirrored at the farthest distance.

At the farthest distance, political representatives are rated lowest, and this again reveals divergence across villages. MPs and ministers receive modest ratings (2.0–2.8) in Tuipui 'D', Leite, and S. Vanlaiphai, but approach minimal recognition in Tawipui 'S' (0.4–2.1) and Mualcheng 'S' (1.9–2.4). These contrasts underscore the fact that political-symbolic ties are not uniformly distributed but stratified by village.

Table 7.10 Community Leaders External Linkages

	Tawip ui 'S'	Mualche ng 'S'	S. Vanlaip hai	Tuip ui 'D'	Leit e	Rawp ui	Zotuitla ng	Tot al
Village	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Doctor MO	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Nurse NRHM Worker	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Head Master	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Bank Manager	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.6	3.9	3.9

Police Officer	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.3	3.5	3.8
SDO P E	4.0	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.9	3.1	3.7
District Agriculture Officer	4.0	3.6	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.6	2.9	3.6
District Horticulture Officer	3.8	3.6	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.6	2.9	3.6
BDO	3.9	2.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.0	3.1	3.5
District Commissioner	2.7	2.6	3.4	3.8	3.3	2.0	2.2	2.8
University College Professor	0.4	2.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	2.7	3.1	2.8
District Social Welfare Officer	3.8	2.9	3.2	3.3	2.3	0.9	1.5	2.6
MLA	2.4	2.4	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.6
Minister	2.3	2.4	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.5	2.5
Megistrate	0.6	2.9	2.8	3.3	2.3	0.9	0.9	1.9
Chief Minister	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.8	2.4	1.5	1.6	1.9
MP	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.0	1.5	1.4	1.3	0.7

Source: Computed

Thus, across service, administrative, academic, and political layers, leaders' external networks diverge sharply. Tuipui 'D' and S. Vanlaiphai enjoy broad and multi-level access, Leite and Zotuitlang achieve moderate but consistent linkages, while Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S', and Rawpui remain relatively distanced. These variations provide a comparative foundation for classifying villages based on the depth and layering of their external networks, which will be explored in the following discussion.

7.4.2 Dimensions of Leaders' External Linkages

Leaders' external linkages, assessed through position generators, cohere into three statistically valid domains of social capital administrative, political, and intellectual that together extend community access to wider institutions. To assess

these external connections, we employed principal component analysis with varimax rotation. This approach permits the mapping of external linkages into structured domains, thereby revealing how community leaders embed themselves in wider networks of state, politics, and knowledge. These networks are not diffuse but can be grouped systematically into domains.

The proposition is that such clusters represent structured forms of social capital. Having identified their broad grouping, it is necessary to test the statistical adequacy of their grouping. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.756, and Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded a χ^2 of 1322.15 ($p < 0.01$), both of which confirm that the dataset is well-suited for factor analysis. Furthermore, three principal components with eigenvalues greater than unity emerged, collectively accounting for 74.5% of the variance, with rotation converging in five iterations, thereby ensuring the reliability of the solution. Building on this reliable statistical base, the rotated factors reveal three distinct clusters.

The first of these clusters is the administrative-service network of social capital. District agriculture and horticulture officers, police officers, bank managers, SDOs, and BDOs all loaded strongly on this component, with loadings ranging from 0.71 to 0.93. This pattern arises because villagers' daily access to schemes, credits, and services is mediated by such officials, making them the essential bureaucratic bridge between the state and community. Beyond providing access, in functional terms, this means that, unlike political elites, these officials supply immediate services rather than long-term policy access, thereby shaping the everyday security of livelihood.

Table 7.11 Rotated Component Matrix: Leaders External Linkage

Position	Communalities	Component		
	Extraction	1	2	3
District Agriculture Officer	0.90	0.93	0.19	-0.08
Police Officer	0.90	0.93	0.21	-0.01
District Horticulture Officer	0.81	0.88	0.17	-0.07
SDO P E	0.80	0.84	0.29	-0.08
Bank Manager	0.66	0.79	0.09	0.14
BDO	0.67	0.71	0.38	0.12
District Commissioner	0.74	0.49	0.70	0.07
District Social Welfare Officer	0.79	0.43	0.69	-0.37
University College Professor	0.41	0.38	0.30	0.42
Magistrate	0.66	0.28	0.75	-0.15
Chief Minister	0.65	0.15	0.73	0.30
Minister	0.83	0.13	0.87	0.23
MLA	0.87	0.12	0.89	0.24
MP	0.73	-0.10	0.13	0.84
Eigenvalues		5.0	4.1	1.3
% of Variance		36.1	29.1	9.3
Cumulative %		36.1	65.1	74.5
KMO and Bartlett's Test				
KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.756			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity				
Approx. Chi-Square	1322.15**			

Source: Computed

**P< 0.01

*P< 0.05

In contrast to service providers, authority figures anchor the second domain: the political–judicial network of social capital. This cluster includes district commissioners, social welfare officers, magistrates, ministers, MLAs, and the chief minister himself, with strong loadings, many exceeding 0.70. This clustering reflects the reliance of communities on political and judicial authority to negotiate welfare, law, and order. Beyond the bureaucratic connections of the first domain, these figures command legitimacy through authority and power, and leaders’ linkages with them enable negotiation of policy enforcement and welfare delivery.

The political and judicial connections enable enforcement and welfare delivery, and beyond these lie a third set of linkages: the legislative–intellectual network of social capital. Members of parliament showed a strong communality of 0.84, while university professors registered a weaker communality of 0.41. However,

the co-presence of MPs and professors suggests that community leaders' ties extend both to the macro-political sphere and the symbolic domain of knowledge. The association of MPs and professors arises because both connect leaders to arenas of national decision-making, public discourse, and ideas. Though the professor's communality is lower, their symbolic weight in extending cultural legitimacy makes them indispensable, though distinct in character.

Thus, despite their varied emphases, the domains together constitute a coherent pattern. Taken together, these domains illustrate a consistent structure of external linkages. Applying these results back to the proposition, the evidence confirms that leaders' external connections are neither dispersed nor random, but form a patterned triad: administrative-service, political-judicial, and legislative-intellectual. Each provides distinct resources—bureaucrats ensure access to service, political elites guarantee authority and welfare, and intellectual-legislative figures extend symbolic and cognitive legitimacy.

Accordingly, leaders' social capital is structured across three complementary domains, together forming a trinity of bureaucratic access, political authority, and intellectual-legislative legitimacy. Interwoven, these domains sustain the capacity of leaders to act as effective mediators between the village and the larger institutional world. In effect, the preceding analysis highlights concrete implications: this structured triad not only reflects how leaders extend their influence but also shapes community outcomes, including access to welfare, resilience in times of crisis, and the negotiation of collective aspirations.

7.4.3 Community Leaders' External Linkages across Villages

Village leaders' external linkages, when examined systematically, fall into three domains that reveal both uniformities and stark asymmetries in the distribution of social capital. To assess these linkages, position generators were employed, and the resulting data were subjected to statistical analysis, including ANOVA and LSD multiple comparisons. This analytical process permits the mapping of how villages vary in their access to administrative services, political-judicial, and legislative-intellectual networks.

Building on this framework of domains, the proposition is that these three types of external social capital are not uniformly distributed across the villages. Having outlined the scope of inquiry, it is necessary to test whether statistically significant differences exist. The results confirm the adequacy of this claim: administrative-service linkages ($F = 4.537$, $p = 0.001$) and legislative-intellectual linkages ($F = 13.230$, $p = 0.000$) both show significant inter-village variation, whereas political-judicial linkages ($F = 0.990$, $p = 0.438$) display no meaningful differences. Against this background of mixed statistical results, the three domains can now be examined in turn.

Turning first to administrative-service linkages, the analysis demonstrates a marked inequality among villages. Tawipui 'S' ($M = 0.31 \pm 0.31$), S. Vanlaiphai ($M = 0.42 \pm 0.32$), Tuipui 'D' ($M = 0.44 \pm 0.24$), and Leite ($M = 0.45 \pm 0.30$) recorded higher mean values, while Rawpui ($M = -0.87 \pm 1.60$) and Zotuitlang ($M = -0.53 \pm 1.14$) were significantly lower, as confirmed by LSD comparisons at the 0.05 level. These differences suggest that proximity to administrative hubs strengthens access to officers in agriculture, banking, and block development. At the same time, Rawpui and Zotuitlang remain disadvantaged due to the greater distance from such service centres. The conclusion, therefore, is that Tawipui 'S', S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui 'D', and

Leite form the advantaged tier in bureaucratic-service social capital, while Rawpui and Zotuitlang are clearly disadvantaged.

Unlike the uneven distribution of service linkages, political-judicial linkages show relative balance across the villages. Tuipui 'D' ($M = 0.38 \pm 0.83$) and S. Vanlaiphai ($M = 0.31 \pm 1.14$) recorded somewhat higher scores, while Rawpui ($M = -0.37 \pm 0.83$) fell lower, yet these differences are statistically insignificant ($F = 0.990$, $p = 0.438$). This evenness reflects the nature of political and judicial authority, which is dispersed widely through elected representatives and state institutions. Leaders in all villages can connect with commissioners, magistrates, and politicians regardless of geographic constraints. The conclusion, therefore, is that political-

judicial social capital is evenly spread, with no village enjoying a decisive advantage or suffering a clear disadvantage.

By contrast, when examining legislative-intellectual linkages, the disparities are most pronounced. Leite ($M = 0.90 \pm 0.97$), Rawpui ($M = 0.67 \pm 0.76$), and Zotuitlang ($M = 0.75 \pm 0.66$) constitute a high-capital bloc with strong ties to MPs and professors. Tawipui 'S' ($M = -0.79 \pm 0.58$) and Mualcheng 'S' ($M = -0.73 \pm 0.69$) remain weakest, while S. Vanlaiphai ($M = 0.04 \pm 0.97$) and Tuipui 'D' ($M = -0.53 \pm 0.47$) fall in between. These patterns are statistically robust ($F = 13.230$, $p = 0.000$; LSD significant at 0.05). They illustrate how Rawpui, despite being disadvantaged in bureaucratic ties, compensates through intellectual and legislative strength, which is likely linked to historic patronage or the influence of prominent individuals. In contrast, Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' remain doubly disadvantaged, lacking both service and symbolic capital. The conclusion, therefore, is that Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang are advantaged in legislative-intellectual linkages; S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D' occupy an intermediate tier. At the same time, Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' are weakest.

These contrasts highlight the cumulative imbalance across domains. Thus, when viewed in combination, the three domains reveal a coherent but asymmetrical pattern of leaders' external social capital. Administrative-service and legislative-intellectual linkages are unevenly distributed, resulting in tiers of advantage and disadvantage, whereas political-judicial linkages remain uniform. Taken together, this reconciliation shows that villages occupy distinct niches: Leite enjoys dual advantage in both bureaucratic and symbolic ties; Rawpui and Zotuitlang are weak in service capital but strong in symbolic capital; S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D' hold middle ground; and Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' remain disadvantaged across multiple domains.

Accordingly, the conclusion is that leaders' external linkages are differentiated into distinct tiers of strength and weakness. These disparities carry practical implications: villages weak in bureaucratic access may struggle to secure welfare schemes and everyday services. At the same time, those strong in symbolic

and legislative ties may exert influence at higher levels of decision-making. The structured triad thus reveals not only the uneven distribution of social capital but also the unequal capacity of villages to leverage these connections for development, resilience, and collective aspirations.

The analysis of leaders' external linkages reveals a layered, multidimensional, and unevenly distributed pattern of social capital across the seven villages. This unevenness manifests differently at each level of access. At the service layer, all communities enjoy uniformly close ties with frontline providers such as doctors, nurses, and principals, reflecting a shared foundation of everyday engagement. At higher administrative and academic levels, however, variation becomes pronounced: Tuipui 'D', S. Vanlaiphai, and Leite sustain stronger access to officials and professors, while Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S', and Rawpui remain more distant. By contrast, at the symbolic-political level, MPs and ministers generally receive lower ratings, with Rawpui and Leite leveraging stronger symbolic-intellectual linkages. In contrast, Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' are least connected.

Table 7.12 Intervillage Differences in External Linkages of Community Leaders

Village	Administrative–Service		Political–Judicial		Legislative–Intellectual	
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
Tawipui 'S'	0.31 ^a	0.31	-0.15 ^a	1.04	-0.79 ^c	0.58
Mualcheng 'S'	-0.23 ^a	1.19	0.12 ^a	1.03	-0.73 ^c	0.69
S. Vanlaiphai	0.42 ^a	0.32	0.31 ^a	1.14	0.04 ^b	0.97
Tuipui 'D'	0.44 ^a	0.24	0.38 ^a	0.83	-0.53 ^b	0.47
Leite	0.45 ^a	0.3	0.06 ^a	1.12	0.9 ^a	0.97
Rawpui	-0.87 ^b	1.6	-0.37 ^a	0.83	0.67 ^a	0.76
Zotuitlang	-0.53 ^b	1.14	-0.27 ^a	0.98	0.75 ^a	0.66

Source: Computed

**P< 0.01

*P< 0.05

Taken together, these contrasts highlight the interplay of bridging and linking social capital. Bridging capital is evident in villages such as Tuipui 'D' and S. Vanlaiphai, where leaders maintain multi-level service and administrative ties, ensuring effective access to programs and welfare delivery. Linking capital, in turn, is more visible in Rawpui and Leite, where leaders' connections extend upward into legislative and intellectual domains, providing symbolic legitimacy and influence in higher decision-making. However, villages such as Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' remain disadvantaged, lacking both bridging and linking strength, and therefore risk weaker capacity in negotiating benefits for their communities.

Thus, leadership effectiveness rests not only on internal bonding but equally on external bridging and linking ties. Villages differ in how they balance these forms: some achieve a dual advantage in both bureaucratic and symbolic capital, others compensate for weakness in one domain by strength in another. At the same time, a few remain weak across the board. In conclusion, the differentiated distribution of bridging and linking social capital across Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S', S. Vanlaiphai, Tuipui 'D', Leite, Rawpui, and Zotuitlang shapes not only their current access to welfare and authority but also their long-term resilience and capacity to integrate into wider governance structures.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated, in a layered and connected way, how community leadership generates social capital through roles, interactions, networks, and linkages. Such social capital sustains the everyday cohesion of village life. However, beyond sustaining cohesion, its true significance lies in how it is mobilised for collective progress this transition from sustaining to developing marks the bridge to the next stage of analysis. The next chapter, therefore, turns to Community Leadership and Rural Development, where the focus shifts to how leadership transforms its stock of social capital into tangible developmental outcomes for rural communities.

CHAPTER - VIII

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Community leadership and rural development are closely connected, shaping both the material foundations of life and the social bonds that sustain them. This chapter examines the intersection of community development, leadership roles, and social capital in the context of Mizoram. The concern is not simply whether development has reached households. However, it is also important to consider how it is distributed, how it is perceived, and how leaders mediate its experience. This point becomes more apparent when viewed in light of the evidence from the study villages.

The evidence shows that progress has been unevenly distributed across the villages. Electricity, water, and LPG connections are now nearly universal, while sanitation and communication reveal significant deficits. Household incomes appear broadly similar, yet expenditure levels highlight sharper differences in living standards. People report intense satisfaction with Education, health, and road services, but lower ratings in water, Drainage, and waste management. Leadership strengthens solidarity in some respects but does not always build confidence in formal institutions. Together, these observations illustrate how development divides into contrasting layers of achievement and neglect.

Because development is experienced unevenly across material, perceptual, and institutional domains, the chapter is organised into four subsections. The first section examines the households' access to amenities and economic resources. Next, the underlying dimensions and inter-village variations of people's service satisfaction are presented. In the third, the relationship between objective indicators and subjective perceptions is explored. In the final subsection, how leadership and social capital interact with the subjective and objective aspects of community development. In this way, the discussion outlines a pathway for understanding how community development is structured through both objective conditions and lived experiences.

8.1 Objective Aspects of Community Development

Community development requires attention to objective indicators that reveal the material basis of well-being. Amenities such as electricity, water, sanitation, and communication facilities, along with income and expenditure, provide the concrete context in which households sustain livelihoods and everyday life. The purpose of this section is to examine how these indicators vary across the study villages and to interpret the implications of these differences for development. To interpret these differences, the analysis first turns to households' access to amenities and facilities.

8.1.1 Households' Access to Amenities and Facilities

Access to basic household amenities provides the first dimension of objective development. Electricity, water, fuel, sanitation, and communication are not only conveniences but also markers of equity and the reach of state development policies. The purpose here is to examine inter-village variation in these amenities, to identify converging patterns where development has been universalised, and to highlight domains where gaps persist and create inequality. To begin, the analysis turns to the cluster of converging indicators electricity, water, and LPG connections.

The proposition is that these utilities are almost universally available across all villages. The reason is that households in each settlement report near-complete coverage of these services. For example, Tawipui 'S', Mualcheng 'S', and S. Vanlaiphai record 100 per cent coverage for electricity and water, while Leite (97–99 per cent), Rawpui (97–99 per cent), Tuipui 'D' (90–100 per cent), and Zotuitlang (97 per cent) also achieve saturation levels. The application shows that policy-led provisioning of electricity, safe water, and cooking fuel has been effective across the board. The conclusion is that this frontier of development has been largely completed. However, the picture changes when attention shifts to sanitation, the service that is most unevenly distributed.

The diverging indicator is sanitation, measured by septic tank coverage. The proposition is that sanitation infrastructure remains highly unequal. The reason is that

while some villages report almost universal coverage, others fall far behind. For example, Tawipui 'S' records 92 percent, S. Vanlaiphai 88 percent, Leite 89 percent, and Rawpui 87 percent. Tuipui 'D' shows a middling 67 per cent, but Mualcheng 'S' falls drastically to 16 per cent, and Zotuitlang collapses further to 37 per cent, with only 1 per cent improvement in sanitation. The application of these contrasts demonstrates that, unlike utilities, sanitation cannot be explained solely by infrastructure roll-out, but rather requires community awareness, behavioural change, and institutional follow-up. The conclusion is that sanitation marks the sharpest line of exclusion, positioning Mualcheng 'S' and Zotuitlang at a structural disadvantage. This development gap is reflected in access to communication, particularly in terms of television ownership.

Table 8.1 Households' Access to Amenities and Facilities across Villages

Village	N	Non-Poor Households		Electric Connections		Water Connections		LPG Connections		Television Connections		No. of Households with Septic Tank	
		Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%
Tawipui 'S'	435	305	70	435	100	435	100	420	97	400	92	435	100
Mualcheng 'S'	192	142	74	192	100	192	100	120	63	30	16	192	100
S. Vanlaiphai	453	112	25	453	100	453	100	450	99	400	88	448	99
Tuipui 'D'	223	70	31	225	101	222	100	200	90	150	67	223	100
Leite	192	83	43	187	97	190	99	190	99	170	89	192	100
Rawpui	206	47	23	203	99	200	97	206	100	180	87	206	100
Zotuitlang	136	24	18	144	106	150	110	132	97	50	37	2	1

Source: Village Schedule Canvased through KobCollect

The parallel indicator is communication, represented by television ownership. The proposition is that this amenity follows the same unequal pattern observed in sanitation. The reason is that television ownership is near universal in some villages but very low in others. For example, Tawipui 'S' records 97 percent, S. Vanlaiphai 99 percent, Leite 99 percent, and Rawpui 100 percent. Tuipui 'D' is moderate at 90 per cent, but Mualcheng 'S' lags at 63 per cent, and Zotuitlang at 37 per cent. The application reveals that access to information and communication reinforces the same divide seen in sanitation: a cluster of advantaged villages, one moderately placed, and two persistently left behind. The conclusion is that informational inclusion, like sanitation, reflects uneven social infrastructure.

These inequalities in sanitation and communication, when combined with the universality of utilities, reveal a dual reality. On the one hand, electricity, water, and LPG have been universalised, demonstrating the success of state provisioning. On the other hand, sanitation and communication remain deeply uneven, highlighting that infrastructural success in one domain does not guarantee progress in others. Tawipui 'S', S. Vanlaiphai, Leite, and Rawpui consistently show advantage, Tuipui 'D' is moderately placed, while Mualcheng 'S' and Zotuitlang emerge as critically disadvantaged. Thus, while utilities converge across all households, sanitation and communication diverge sharply, confirming that the map of community development is uneven and layered.

8.1.2 Household Income and Expenditure

If amenities reflect the infrastructural reach of development, income and expenditure reveal the economic strength and capacity of households to translate resources into living standards. Household economic resources thus form the second dimension of objective community development. The purpose of this section is to examine whether there are significant inter-village differences in household income and spending, and to understand what these patterns reveal about the economic foundations of development. To assess this, the analysis tests whether incomes and expenditures differ significantly across villages.

The proposition is that while per capita annual income does not differ significantly across villages, expenditure does. The reason is evident in the ANOVA results: income variation is statistically insignificant ($F = 1.06$), whereas expenditure variation is statistically significant ($F = 6.12$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that villagers may have broadly similar income levels, but their actual spending patterns are more differentiated.

For example, Tawipui 'S' records the highest per capita monthly expenditure at ₹2,820, significantly higher than all other villages, while Mualcheng 'S' reports the lowest at ₹1,389. A middle group S. Vanlaiphai (₹1802), Tuipui 'D' (₹1869), Leite (₹1632), Rawpui (₹1442), and Zotuitlang (₹1488) shares moderate expenditure levels. Among this middle group, however, Zotuitlang presents an important anomaly: despite reporting expenditure on par with other villages, it remains severely disadvantaged in basic amenities such as sanitation. By contrast, per capita annual income clusters in a narrower range: Tawipui 'S' at ₹6935, Leite at ₹6554, Tuipui 'D' at ₹5980, S. Vanlaiphai at ₹5803, Rawpui at ₹5302, and Zotuitlang at ₹5523, all broadly comparable with Mualcheng 'S' at ₹4169. The application of these results shows that incomes are similar across the villages. However, the ability or willingness to convert income into consumption varies considerably, with Tawipui 'S' leading and Mualcheng 'S' falling behind.

This contrast highlights that household expenditure offers a more precise indicator of economic well-being than income alone. Villages such as Tawipui 'S' combine high spending with strong amenities, reflecting both economic strength and infrastructural support. Mualcheng 'S' is disadvantaged in both respects, while the other four villages maintain a middle position. Zotuitlang, however, stands out as an exception: despite moderate expenditure levels, it suffers acute deficits in sanitation and communication. This shows that expenditure strength does not automatically translate into infrastructural well-being.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that community development is shaped more by expenditure behaviour and less by income generation, which more accurately reflects differences in living standards across villages. Although incomes

are broadly similar, expenditure exposes apparent inequalities, with Tawipui 'S' advantaged,

Mualcheng 'S' disadvantaged, and Zotuitlang anomalous, confirming that spending patterns best capture economic well-being.

The analysis of amenities and economic resources reveals that objective development across the villages is not evenly distributed but instead structured into distinct clusters of advantage and disadvantage, with each village exhibiting its own characteristic profile. Tawipui 'S' emerges as the most advantaged, combining high access to amenities with the highest expenditure. Leite, Rawpui, and S. Vanlaiphai perform strongly in sanitation and maintain moderate expenditure. Tuipui 'D' shows modest but balanced levels. Mualcheng 'S' is consistently disadvantaged, while Zotuitlang presents a paradox of good electricity and television access but severe sanitation deficits. Taken together, the uneven distribution of amenities, the sharper disparities in expenditure, and the clustering of villages into high, middle, and low groups confirm that objective development is differentiated rather than uniform.

8.2. Community Service Satisfaction of People

This section examines how villagers assess the effectiveness of community services, providing insight into the complex, structured, and uneven realities of rural development. Community service satisfaction reflects not only the adequacy of institutions, amenities, and infrastructures but also the ways people experience development in practice. To capture this lived development experience, the section examines satisfaction across three steps: first, by mapping layered patterns of high, moderate, and low ratings; second, by consolidating these perceptions into underlying dimensions; and third, by tracing variations across villages.

8.2.1 Layers of Satisfaction

The respondents rated their satisfaction with community services on a five-point scale: Very High (5), High (4), Moderate (3), Low (2), and Very Low (1). This measure provides not only an index of perceived service delivery but also a layered picture of how communities evaluate their everyday development environment.

Within this gradation, three distinct layers of satisfaction emerge, marking differences between sectors that are widely appreciated, those seen as moderately effective, and those experienced as persistently weak.

At the highest layer, Education, healthcare, and road services stand out with mean values above four across most villages. In Leite and Rawpui, both education and healthcare score above 4.7, reflecting very high levels of confidence in these services. Even Tawipui 'S' and S. Vanlaiphai, though showing some variation, record consistently high satisfaction in these domains. The strength of these ratings indicates that institutional delivery in Education, health, and road connectivity is widely acknowledged as practical and accessible, forming the strongest base of perceived community development. Building on this, attention shifts to the next cluster of services.

The middle layer encompasses banking, postal services, Transportation, electricity, employment, and peace-related indicators, with scores typically ranging between 3.5 and 4.0. Villages such as Tuipui 'D' and Leite report relatively strong satisfaction with banking and postal services, while Rawpui and Zotuitlang record noticeably weaker evaluations, especially in banking (≈ 2.3 – 2.4). Transportation, electricity supply, and employment opportunities are generally seen as adequate but not uniformly high, reflecting moderate functionality. This suggests that while these services are present and functional, their reliability varies across communities. The contrast with the higher layer shows that satisfaction declines once sectors require more complex infrastructure or sustained administrative coordination.

The lowest layer is marked by Drainage, water supply, and solid waste management, which consistently receive the weakest ratings, often below three. Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' rate water supply and Drainage particularly low (≈ 2.2 – 2.5), while S. Vanlaiphai alone records higher ratings in water supply (≈ 4.0). Solid waste management remains a persistent concern across all villages, with satisfaction rarely exceeding 2.7. These findings suggest that basic infrastructure related to sanitation and water continues to lag behind other sectors, shaping a layer

of dissatisfaction that cuts across most communities. This weakest tier highlights the sharp contrast with the high levels of satisfaction in Education and health.

Taken together, the three layers reveal a clear hierarchy in perceived community development: Education, healthcare, and road services at the top; banking, employment, Transportation, and electricity in the middle; and water supply, Drainage, and waste management at the bottom. However, the pattern is not uniform across villages. Leite and Rawpui emerge as communities with consistently high ratings in Education, health, and road services, while Tawipui 'S' and Mualcheng 'S' stand out for their lower evaluations in several domains, especially water and sanitation. S. Vanlaiphai and Tuipui 'D' occupy an intermediate position, scoring well in most services but still reflecting gaps in basic infrastructure. This inter-village variation demonstrates that while people broadly agree on the hierarchy of services, the intensity of satisfaction differs by local context.

Thus, the layered analysis provides both a general picture and a comparative map of satisfaction across villages. It highlights that community development, as seen from the perspective of everyday service delivery, is structured in tiers of high, moderate, and low satisfaction. This lays the foundation for the following subsection, which will examine whether these layered perceptions can be statistically consolidated into underlying dimensions through factor analysis.

8.2.2 Dimensions of People's Community Service Satisfaction

Understanding community service satisfaction requires moving beyond isolated indicators to uncover the deeper, latent dimensions through which people perceive both institutional infrastructure and everyday amenities as foundations of well-being. These deeper structures emerge because services ranging from physical infrastructure and institutional provisions to everyday utilities and social relations are not evaluated in isolation. They cluster in patterned ways that reflect how people conceptualise well-being in their everyday lives. To capture this underlying structure, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was employed.

Because PCA was employed to capture the underlying structure, the results revealed a transparent and interpretable pattern of two principal dimensions. The first

dimension represents Institutional Service Satisfaction, while the second reflects Community Amenities Satisfaction. Together, these two dimensions account for 76.5 per cent of the total Variance, which demonstrates that community satisfaction is structured, interpretable, and strongly patterned rather than diffuse.

Since community satisfaction is strongly patterned, the first of these dimensions can be identified as Institutional Service Satisfaction, which captures the backbone of community development. It is defined by high loadings for Banking (.956), Road (.973), Post Office (.974), Education (.928), and Health Care (.963), with Transportation (.911) and Drainage (.564) also contributing. These services form the institutional capital of the community the formal structures through which access, mobility, and opportunities are mediated. Because they mediate these critical aspects, their dominance in the factor structure highlights that people's evaluation of community well-being is anchored in the strength and reliability of institutional infrastructure. In developmental terms, this factor corresponds to the enabling environment for livelihood and social mobility, consistent with frameworks that emphasise the role of physical and institutional capital in shaping human development.

Table 8.2 Objective Indicators of CD: ANOVA and LSD of Income and Expenditure

Sl.No	Village	Per Capita Annual Household Income		Per Capita Monthly Household Expenditure	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	Tawipui 'S'	6935 ^a	6982	2820 ^a	2292
2	Mualcheng 'S'	4169 ^a	2844	1389 ^c	446
3	S. Vanlaiphai	5803 ^a	3229	1802 ^b	891
4	Tuipui 'D'	5980 ^a	2173	1869 ^b	571
5	Leite	6554 ^a	5104	1632 ^b	1003
6	Rawpui	5302 ^a	3882	1442 ^b	870
7	Zotuitlang	5523 ^a	4012	1488 ^b	932
	Total	5995	4804	1970	1485
	F	1.06		6.12*	

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P<0.05

Note: Means sharing the same superscript are not different (p > 0.05)

Table 8.3: Rotated Factor Matrix for Community Service Satisfaction

Variable	Communality (Extraction)	Factor 1: Institutional Service Satisfaction	Factor 2: Community Amenities Satisfaction
Electricity Supply	.702	-.027	.837
Water Supply	.630	-.034	.793
Drainage	.481	.564	.403
Banking	.915	.956	-.018
Road	.946	.973	-.024
Transportation	.881	.911	.228
Post Office	.950	.974	.022
Education 002	.860	.928	.007
Health Care	.928	.963	.038
Solid Waste Management	.456	.261	.623
Safety and Security	.721	.049	.848
Interpersonal Relations	.709	.015	.842
Eigenvalue		5.968	3.210
% Variance Explained		49.7%	26.8%

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy: .856

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: $\chi^2 (66) = 3190.368, p < .001$

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalisation.

While the first dimension emphasises institutional capital, the second dimension reflects the lived quality of everyday community life, captured as Community Amenities Satisfaction. Strong loadings indicate that it is associated with Electricity Supply (.837), Water Supply (.793), Safety and Security (.848), and Interpersonal Relations (.842), with Solid Waste Management (.623) and Drainage (.403) also linked to this component. This cluster points to the convergence of utilities and social relations in shaping satisfaction. In particular, access to basic amenities ensures dignity and functioning in daily life, while feelings of safety and

positive interpersonal relationships reflect trust, belonging, and cohesion. Together, these elements emphasise that satisfaction is not limited to physical provisions but extends to the relational and social environment that gives meaning to community life.

Because satisfaction extends beyond physical provisions into social relations, the two factors together confirm that community service satisfaction is a dual-dimensional phenomenon. The first dimension, Institutional Service Satisfaction, reflects the structural foundations of community life through formal services and infrastructure. The second, Community Amenities Satisfaction, reflects the lived environment of utilities, safety, and social trust. Variables such as Drainage and Solid Waste Management act as bridges across the two, linking infrastructure with everyday experience. The two dimensions together explain more than three-fourths of the Variance, offering a comprehensive and theoretically coherent structure for understanding community well-being. This structure also provides a foundation for policy and social work interventions, as it highlights the dual importance of institutional services and everyday amenities.

8.2.3 Inter-Village Variation in People's Community Service Satisfaction

Community service satisfaction is best understood as a dual-dimensional construct, whose variation across villages reveals patterns of polarisation in institutional services and moderation in community amenities. Villages differ in infrastructure, service systems, and everyday amenities. Because these differences encompass both structural and relational aspects, they are best understood through two dimensions of satisfaction. This section, therefore, examines how institutional services and community amenities vary across seven villages. The analysis highlights that these differences are not uniform; instead, each dimension reveals its own distinctive pattern of variation.

The first dimension, institutional service satisfaction, is sharply polarised across the villages. The ANOVA confirms highly significant variation ($F = 75.28$, $p < .001$). Rawpui (0.74 ± 0.48), Leite (0.59 ± 0.58), and Tawipui 'S' (0.57 ± 0.55) report the highest levels of satisfaction, while Mualcheng 'S' (-1.76 ± 0.39) and

Zotuitlang (-1.55 ± 0.60) remain at the lowest end. S. Vanlaiphai (0.10 ± 0.53) and Tuipui 'D' (-0.42 ± 0.81) lie in the middle, illustrating a clear divide between advantaged and disadvantaged communities. This divide between advantaged and disadvantaged communities is evident in institutional services, whereas the second dimension, community amenities, displays a more balanced pattern with fewer sharp divides.

For community amenities satisfaction, the ANOVA again shows significant variation ($F(6, 207) = 7.35, p < .001$), though the spread is less extreme. S. Vanlaiphai (0.66 ± 0.80) and Rawpui (0.24 ± 0.76) emerge as relatively better placed, while Leite (-0.52 ± 0.79) and Tawipui 'S' (-0.37 ± 0.97) fall on the lower side. Other villages Mualcheng 'S', Tuipui 'D', and Zotuitlang cluster near the middle, suggesting a more balanced distribution of amenities compared to institutional services. This contrast highlights a key overall finding: the two dimensions move in opposite directions when examined together.

Table 8.5 Objective and Subjective Aspects of CD: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Indicators	Inco me	Expendi ture	People : Inst. Service Sat.	People: Comm. Amenities Sat.
Per Capita Annual Income	1.0	0.653	-0.501	0.552
Per Capita Monthly Expenditure	0.653	1.0	-0.785*	0.529
People: Institutional Service Sat.	- 0.501	-0.785*	1.0	-0.026
People: Community Amenities Sat.	0.552	0.529	-0.026	1.0

Source: Computed

** P<0.01

* P<0.05

This difference between polarisation in institutional services and moderation in amenities becomes clear when both dimensions are considered together. Taken together, the findings confirm that service satisfaction is dual-dimensional and unevenly distributed across villages in distinct ways. Institutional services follow a polarised pattern, exposing structural inequalities in access to development

infrastructures. Community amenities follow a moderate pattern, reflecting uneven but more balanced distribution of everyday utilities and social provisions. The analysis demonstrates that while institutional services polarise communities into clear categories of advantage and disadvantage, community amenities distribute more moderately, and together these patterns reveal that both extremes of institutional inequality and subtler differences in everyday amenities shape well-being. Well-being in these communities rests simultaneously on institutional infrastructures and amenities of daily life, and disparities in either dimension decisively shape how villagers experience their quality of life.

The findings across the three steps confirm that community service satisfaction reveals a layered and structured picture, differentiated by village contexts. In terms of specific sectors, Education, health, and road services anchor the highest satisfaction; water, sanitation, and waste management persist as the weakest, while other services occupy a middle tier. Beyond these descriptive layers, factor analysis confirms that satisfaction rests on two foundations formal institutional services and everyday amenities while inter-village comparisons show polarisation in infrastructure and moderation in amenities. Taken together, these contrasts demonstrate that community well-being is shaped simultaneously by structural inequalities in services and subtler differences in daily amenities. In summary, satisfaction is a complex, multifaceted, and unevenly distributed concept, making it a crucial lens for understanding the everyday foundations of rural well-being. The dual picture of layered services and structured dimensions also sets the stage for the next section, which examines how objective measures of service delivery interrelate with the subjective dimensions of perception and meaning in community development.

8.3. Relationship between Objective and Subjective Indicators of CD

The purpose of this analysis is to examine how household living conditions, people's community service satisfaction, and leaders' community service satisfaction are interrelated. The question is pursued across four relational dimensions: the relationship among the objective indicators of living conditions themselves, between

living conditions and people's satisfaction, between living conditions and leaders' satisfaction, and finally between people's satisfaction and leaders' satisfaction.

The relationship among the objective indicators of household living conditions shows a coherent pattern. Household income and household expenditure are strongly correlated ($r = 0.653$), demonstrating that these two measures reflect interconnected aspects of material well-being. Income and expenditure together thus provide a consistent baseline for examining how household living conditions relate to people's satisfaction and leaders' satisfaction. With this baseline in place, the next step is to ask how such living conditions influence people's satisfaction.

Table 8.5 Objective and Subjective Aspects of CD: Pearson Correlation Matrix

Indicators	Income	Expenditure	People: Inst. Service Sat.	People: Comm. Amenities Sat.
Per Capita Annual Income	1.0	0.653	-0.501	0.552
Per Capita Monthly Expenditure	0.653	1.0	-0.785*	0.529
People: Institutional Service Sat.	-0.501	-0.785*	1.0	-0.026
People: Community Amenities Sat.	0.552	0.529	-0.026	1.0

Source: Computed ** $P < 0.01$ * $P < 0.05$

The relationship between household living conditions and people's satisfaction with community service reveals divergence across domains. Higher household expenditure is strongly and negatively correlated with people's institutional service satisfaction ($r = -0.785$, $p < 0.05$), while income also shows a negative association ($r = -0.501$, $p = 0.05$). As households spend more, people report less institutional satisfaction, possibly because rising expectations outpace the institutions' ability to deliver. By contrast, people's satisfaction with community amenities correlates positively with both income ($r = 0.552$) and expenditure ($r =$

0.529), although these relationships are not statistically significant. People's satisfaction is therefore linked with amenities in a supportive direction but with institutions in a conflicting one. This divergence in people's satisfaction stands in contrast to leaders' satisfaction, which responds differently to household living conditions.

The relationship between household living conditions and leaders' satisfaction with community service is selective and inconsistent. Leaders' socio-civic satisfaction correlates moderately with income ($r = 0.603$, $p = \text{n.s.}$), suggesting that stronger living conditions may reinforce civic engagement in a community. However, leaders' institutional access satisfaction correlates negatively with both income ($r = -0.485$) and expenditure ($r = -0.382$), while leaders' infrastructural satisfaction shows only weak associations ($r = 0.263$ with income; $r = 0.082$ with expenditure). Leaders' satisfaction, therefore, reflects household living conditions only in the socio-civic sphere and remains detached from institutions and infrastructure. Having contrasted people's satisfaction and leaders' satisfaction separately in relation to living conditions, the analysis now turns to their direct relationship with one another.

The relationship between people's satisfaction and leaders' satisfaction shows partial convergence. People's institutional service satisfaction aligns moderately with leaders' institutional access satisfaction ($r = 0.618$, $p = \text{n.s.}$) and weakly with leaders' infrastructural satisfaction ($r = 0.182$, $p = \text{n.s.}$). This suggests that when leaders report higher institutional access satisfaction, people are also more likely to express institutional satisfaction, though the statistical evidence is weak. In contrast, people's satisfaction with community amenities does not correlate with leaders' satisfaction in any dimension, underscoring that amenities are judged independently at the household level. Institutional services, therefore, represent the only limited meeting ground between people's satisfaction and leaders' satisfaction.

Taken together, the four sets of relationships reveal a fragmented web of connections. Household living conditions are coherently measured by income and expenditure, but their influence diverges when connected with people's satisfaction

and leaders' satisfaction. People's satisfaction rises with amenities but declines with institutions as living conditions improve. Leaders' satisfaction reflects socio-civic vitality more than service systems. Convergence between people's satisfaction and leaders' satisfaction occurs only around institutions.

The interrelationship of household living conditions, people's satisfaction, and leaders' satisfaction is uneven, converging only in institutional services while diverging in amenities and infrastructure.

8.5. Relationship between Leadership, Social Capital and Community Development

Community development in these villages emerges through the interplay of two aspects: the objective outcomes of household economy and institutional services, and the subjective experiences of amenities and well-being. Leadership generates social capital across four domains role perceptions, people's interaction, internal networks, and external linkages and their combined influence shapes how development is both experienced and sustained.

Table 8.6 Leadership, Social Capital and Community Development: Pearson's r

Variables	HH Income	HH Expenditure	Inst. Service Sat.	Comm. Amenities Sat.
Leadership Role Perception				
Dev–Int Lead	-0.005	-0.511	0.146	0.484
Moral–Spiritual	-0.189	-0.171	-0.634	-0.435
Peoples Interaction				
Core Lead	-0.825	-0.471	-0.561	0.719
Cultural Lead	0.196	-0.289	0.623	0.408
Internal Network				
Density of Leadership Network	0.248	-0.402	0.361	0.357
External Network				
Admin–Service	0.202	0.173	-0.003	-0.268
Political–Judicial	-0.2	-0.176	-0.332	-0.257
Legislative–Intellectual	0.269	-0.123	-0.026	-0.094

Source: Computed

Leaders' self-understanding shows uneven associations with development outcomes. Development–integrative role perception is almost unrelated to household income ($r = -0.005$), weakly negative with expenditure ($r = -0.511$), and weak to moderate positive with institutional satisfaction ($r = 0.146$) and community amenities satisfaction ($r = 0.484$). By contrast, moral spiritual role perception shows modest negative correlations with income ($r = -0.189$) and expenditure ($r = -0.171$), as well as stronger negative correlations with institutional satisfaction ($r = -0.634$) and amenity satisfaction ($r = -0.435$). The negative correlations observed here suggest that symbolic and ethical orientations provide legitimacy in the moral domain but do not reinforce either institutional confidence or material outcomes. If role perception highlights symbolic legitimacy, interaction reveals how such legitimacy is lived and experienced by villagers.

People's interaction with leadership presents the most substantial relational effects. Interaction with core leaders is strongly negative with household income ($r = -0.825$), moderately negative with expenditure ($r = -0.471$) and institutional satisfaction ($r = -0.561$), but strongly positive with amenities satisfaction ($r = 0.719$). This contrast between material deficits and subjective assurance highlights the compensatory role of core leaders: villagers rely most heavily on them where institutional supports are weakest, yet the same reliance strengthens everyday feelings of safety and solidarity. Interaction with cultural leaders reveals a different picture: a weakly positive relationship with income ($r = 0.196$), a strong optimistic relationship with institutional satisfaction ($r = 0.623$), and a moderately positive relationship with amenity satisfaction ($r = 0.408$). Cultural associations thus appear to strengthen trust in institutions and modestly enhance well-being. Unlike villagers' interaction with leaders, the internal cohesion among leaders themselves provides another channel of influence.

The cohesion of leadership networks makes a modest but balanced contribution. Density correlates positively with income ($r = 0.248$), institutional satisfaction ($r = 0.361$), and amenities satisfaction ($r = 0.357$), while showing a weak negative correlation with expenditure ($r = -0.402$). These associations suggest that where leaders are tightly connected, villagers report steadier satisfaction in both

institutional and everyday domains. Internal cohesion sustains development in an even, though not dramatic, manner. However, while cohesion is modestly positive, the outward-facing dimension of leadership produces a more fragile picture.

External linkages show the weakest and most inconsistent associations. Administrative–service linkages are only weakly positive with income ($r = 0.202$) and expenditure ($r = 0.173$), but nearly zero with institutional satisfaction ($r = -0.003$), and negative with amenity satisfaction ($r = -0.268$). Political–judicial networks display weakly negative associations across all domains (income $r = -0.200$; expenditure $r = -0.176$; institutional satisfaction $r = -0.332$; amenities satisfaction $r = -0.257$). Legislative–intellectual linkages are somewhat more positive with income ($r = 0.269$) but negative or negligible with expenditure ($r = -0.123$), institutional satisfaction ($r = -0.026$), and amenities satisfaction ($r = -0.094$). These results suggest that while external networks provide symbolic or representational legitimacy, their immediate effect on community satisfaction is limited.

Taken together, these relationships reveal that villagers' development experiences depend most on everyday contact with leaders, are modestly reinforced by internal solidarity, and are only weakly shaped by external ties. Community development arises not through a single cause but through the interplay of symbolic assurance, reliance on leaders, internal cohesion, and external negotiation. Objective outcomes, such as income and institutional services, and subjective experiences, including amenities and social cohesion, are shaped differently by these domains, producing a complex yet interpretable balance of strengths and limitations.

Conclusion

The analysis across the sections of this chapter demonstrates that objective aspects of community development, service satisfaction, and leadership dynamics together produce a picture of growth that is uneven but interpretable. Universal access to electricity, water, and cooking fuel contrasts sharply with persistent deficits in sanitation and communication. Household incomes remain broadly comparable, yet expenditures reveal striking differences in living standards. People's evaluations

of services follow a layered hierarchy: Education, health, and roads anchor the highest satisfaction; employment and electricity fall in the middle; and water, Drainage, and waste management form the weakest tier. Factor analysis further reveals that these perceptions cluster into two dimensions: institutional service satisfaction and community amenities satisfaction, which exhibit distinct patterns across the villages.

Beyond these village-level contrasts, another part of the story emerges in the relationship between material living conditions and perceptions of development. Improvements in household resources do not automatically produce greater institutional satisfaction, but they are more closely tied to amenities. Leadership dynamics complicate this picture: villagers rely most heavily on core leaders where institutional support is weakest. Cultural leaders strengthen trust in services, internal cohesion among leaders modestly reinforces well-being, while external linkages exert only limited influence. These paradoxical profiles reveal a dual and layered structure, underscoring that rural development must be understood as both material and relational, both objective and subjective, both institutional and communal.

Building on these findings, the complexity of community development translates into uneven but interpretable growth across the villages. The result is a differentiated map: some communities combine infrastructural strength with high satisfaction, others remain persistently disadvantaged, and still others present anomalies where expenditure or amenities do not align with perceptions. In sum, rural development emerges here as layered, dual, and differentiated reminding us that equity and dignity must guide the next steps in both policy and practice. To consolidate this perspective, the next chapter will present an integrated discussion of the preceding five chapters the comparative community profile, the composition and distributional features of communities, the demographic, social, economic, and organisational background of community leaders, community leadership and social capital, and community leadership and development bringing them together into a comprehensive synthesis.

CHAPTER - IX

INTEGRATED DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study on rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Mizoram. The results highlighted the complex interplay between historical legacies, institutional arrangements, gender dynamics, infrastructure, and community perceptions in shaping local leadership and developmental outcomes. Leadership in Mizoram villages emerged not as a singular function but as a dual mandate, combining moral–spiritual guardianship with developmental custodianship. This combination of moral–spiritual guardianship and developmental custodianship proved central to sustaining cohesion, ensuring legitimacy, and guiding community responses to change.

Building on these dynamics, the discussion proceeds by integrating empirical insights with theoretical perspectives and comparative literature. The findings are examined through the lenses of legitimacy, typologies of rural communities, access and inequality, relational versus material well-being, leadership networks, aspirational gaps, and the role of faith-based institutions. Each section explores not only how the findings corroborate or challenge existing scholarship but also how they extend theoretical debates on rural governance, development, and social capital in non-Western contexts.

By drawing on interdisciplinary frameworks including Weberian legitimacy, social capital theory, Sen's capabilities approach, feminist critiques, Indigenous governance models, and postcolonial perspectives the chapter positions Mizoram's leadership system as a distinctive case of governance that is both culturally grounded and developmentally adaptive. In doing so, it highlights the significance of local moral legitimacy, relational trust, and community-based institutions in sustaining development, while acknowledging the challenges posed by gender exclusion, aspirational gaps, and infrastructural disparities. This discussion aims to situate the findings within broader debates on rural governance in the Global South, thereby offering both localised insights and globally relevant contributions.

9.1 Moral Spiritual Legitimacy and the Dual Mandate

One of the central findings of this study is that leadership in Mizoram villages is sustained through a dual mandate: moral spiritual guardianship and developmental custodianship. Leaders derive authority from their ability to safeguard the moral and spiritual well-being of their communities, while simultaneously mediating access to developmental resources and services. This combination of moral-spiritual guardianship and developmental custodianship distinguishes Mizoram's leadership from models found in caste-based rural North India, where legitimacy is often tied to caste hierarchies and economic dominance (Jeffrey, 2001; Philip, 2017). In Mizoram, spiritual legitimacy serves as the foundation upon which developmental authority is established.

Weber's concept of traditional and charismatic legitimacy offers a helpful framework for understanding this phenomenon. Leaders embody traditional legitimacy through their adherence to cultural norms and moral responsibility, while also exercising charismatic authority by demonstrating ethical commitment and moral capital (Gladstone & Pepion, 2017; Barisione, 2023). This combination creates a form of legitimacy that is culturally resonant and widely accepted within communities.

Comparative evidence from Indigenous contexts reinforces this pattern. Among the Khamtis of Arunachal Pradesh, leadership authority is tied closely to ritual practices and spiritual values (Gogoi, 2022). Similarly, the Oromo Gada system in Africa and the Māori collective leadership model integrate spirituality into governance, highlighting the global relevance of Mizoram's dual mandate (Aliye, 2020; Spiller et al., 2020). These examples underscore that spirituality and governance need not be separate but can operate synergistically.

Feminist perspectives add further nuance by highlighting the often-overlooked role of women in moral and spiritual leadership. Women across Indigenous communities construct leadership identities by negotiating cultural contradictions and resignifying their multiple roles; yet, their contributions remain underrecognised (Ospina et al., 2023; Sengupta, 2018). In Mizoram, leadership is

overwhelmingly male, but the recognition of women's moral capital offers potential pathways for greater inclusivity. Moral authority, far from being a male preserve, is a resource that women can and do mobilise.

The role of faith-based organisations further strengthens this dimension. In Mizoram, Baptists and other denominations not only provide moral legitimacy but also act as service providers, mobilising social capital and strengthening community trust. Similar dynamics have been observed in South Africa, Kenya, and Sri Lanka, where faith-based organisations integrate spirituality with developmental services, demonstrating that spiritual institutions often serve as vital actors in development (Toit, 2019; Moyer et al., 2012; Candland, 2001). This dual role highlights both the potential and complexity of mobilising spiritual legitimacy for governance.

In sum, moral–spiritual legitimacy and developmental custodianship form the twin pillars of leadership in Mizoram. This model resonates with global Indigenous practices and challenges the secular–religious divide common in Western theory. At the same time, it calls for a more inclusive recognition of women's contributions and a critical reflection on how spiritual legitimacy is mobilised in contexts of denominational pluralism and secular governance. To illustrate how these mandates unfold, it is important to consider the typologies of Mizoram's villages.

9.2 Typologies of Rural Communities in Mizoram

The study identified distinct typologies of villages in Mizoram: legacy-driven, faith-centred, civic-innovative, state-reliant, and demographically fragile. These categories highlight the diverse ways in which history, institutional foundations, and demographic shifts shape community structures and leadership dynamics. While these typologies are not explicitly reflected in the anthropological literature on Mizoram, they resonate with broader discussions of tribal fluidity and community classification in India.

Scholars have long recognised the fluidity of tribal identities and the impact of state classifications on community development trajectories. For example, the Kudmi-Mahatos in Eastern India have historically navigated between tribal and non-tribal statuses, reflecting the dynamic nature of identity construction (Kamra, 2024).

Similarly, critiques of the term “*adivasi*” emphasise that no single label can accurately represent the diversity of tribal communities (Nixon, 2025). These insights underscore

that Mizoram's typologies, rather than being rigid categories, reflect a process of continuous negotiation shaped by history, migration, and state interventions.

In contrast, caste-based typologies in other parts of India remain more rigid and entrenched. The right-hand/left-hand divisions in South India (Mines, 1982) and agrarian class categories elsewhere (Taylor, 2017) illustrate hierarchical systems that are historically and religiously embedded. Mizoram’s village classifications differ fundamentally in that they remain open, adaptable, and closely tied to community histories and religious institutions rather than caste or class hierarchies.

Comparative Indigenous governance systems offer useful parallels. The Oromo Gada system in Africa, with its cyclical leadership and spiritual sanctioning, demonstrates how community typologies can be fluid and adaptive (Aliye, 2020). Māori leadership practices emphasise collective and ecosystemic well-being, integrating kinship, spirituality, and governance (Spiller et al., 2020). The Blackfeet Confederacy similarly roots authority in ritual and cultural legitimacy (Gladstone & Pepion, 2017). Mizoram’s classifications mirror these Indigenous patterns more closely than they do caste or agrarian typologies, positioning the state within a broader global context of adaptive tribal governance.

At the same time, the diversity of Mizoram's village typologies carries implications for leadership and development. Legacy-driven villages may enjoy stability but risk insularity, while civic-innovative villages demonstrate adaptability but may lack historical depth. Faith-centred villages draw strength from religious cohesion but must negotiate denominational pluralism, while state-reliant villages may struggle with overdependence. Demographically fragile villages face challenges from out-migration and shrinking populations, threatening sustainability. Recognising these typologies is therefore crucial for designing context-sensitive development policies that align with the lived realities of diverse communities.

These typologies are further conditioned by geography and access, shaping trajectories of inequality.

9.3 Geography, Infrastructure, and Inequality

Geographic location and infrastructural endowments emerged as decisive factors in shaping community well-being and leadership agendas. Villages situated at higher altitudes, such as S. Vanlaiphai, faced heavier infrastructural burdens compared to low-lying settlements like Tuipui 'D'. Proximity to urban centres also played a critical role: villages closer to towns, such as Leite, benefited from easier access to services, while remote sites like Mualcheng S experienced exclusion due to distance. These spatial inequalities confirmed that geography is not merely a backdrop but an active determinant of leadership and development.

The problem of single-node dependency was particularly striking. Villages relying on a single hub for services and connections such as S. Vanlaiphai proved more vulnerable to disruption and service gaps. At the same time, multi-nodal access, as seen in Rawpui, provided resilience. This finding on single-node dependency aligns with broader research showing that dependence on isolated facilities undermines healthcare and education delivery in rural India (Verma & Dash, 2020). It also echoes studies of tribal communities where cultural preferences and limited mobility further complicate access (Cáceres et al., 2023).

The digital divide exacerbated these inequalities. While Zotuitlang enjoyed relatively strong connectivity, Tuipui 'D' lagged significantly, reflecting a broader pattern in Mizoram and the Northeast where poor infrastructure, high costs, and limited digital literacy hinder digital inclusion (Dhaygude et al., 2022; Fang et al., 2023). This divide shaped not only access to information but also opportunities for education, health services, and economic participation.

Theories of the social determinants of health (Mukherjee et al., 2022) and Sen's capabilities approach (Tripathi et al., 2024) illuminate why outcomes remain uneven despite infrastructure improvements. Health and education indicators cannot be explained solely by facilities, but must be understood in relation to literacy, income, gender, and cultural practices. Mizoram's findings reinforce this, showing

that physical infrastructure is necessary but insufficient to secure equitable well-being. The underlying social and economic conditions ultimately determine whether services translate into real improvements.

In sum, geography and infrastructure structured patterns of inequality across Mizoram's villages. Distance, terrain, service dependency, and digital access combined to shape developmental trajectories, while broader social determinants conditioned the outcomes. These structural inequalities directly influenced both material sufficiency and relational trust in the villages. These inequalities not only limit access to services but also affect perceptions of well-being, where relational trust often compensates for material shortfalls.

9.4 Relational and Material Well-being

A key insight from the study is the interdependence of relational and material dimensions of well-being in Mizoram's villages. While material indicators, such as income, expenditure, and access to services, provide one measure of development, community satisfaction often hinges more strongly on relational aspects such as trust in leaders, everyday interactions with institutions, and perceptions of harmony and safety. This combined focus on material sufficiency and relational trust underscores that well-being is not reducible to economic sufficiency alone.

Relational perspectives on well-being provide useful parallels. White (2017) argues that well-being must be understood relationally, with social inclusion and connectedness serving as critical dimensions of this understanding. Peña-López et al. (2017) similarly emphasise that relational goods, such as trust and solidarity, can outweigh the influence of material assets on subjective well-being. Mizoram's findings align with these insights, showing that strong community ties and responsive leadership can compensate for material deficiencies in specific contexts.

At the same time, the risk of overstating relational well-being must be acknowledged. Studies, such as Milbourne's (2014) work in rural Wales, reveal that cultural belonging and social connection can mitigate, but not erase, material hardship. Critics of communitarian approaches to social capital also caution that focusing solely on relational dimensions may obscure structural inequalities and

power imbalances (García, 2014). Mizoram's case demonstrates this tension: while relational trust sustains satisfaction, poverty and inequality remain visible and consequential.

Comparative Indigenous perspectives reinforce the relational emphasis. Ensemble and collective leadership theories from Māori and other Indigenous contexts highlight the centrality of relational ties in governance and resilience (Rosile et al., 2018; Spiller et al., 2020). Mizoram's hybrid leadership networks, which combine spiritual guardianship with everyday developmental engagement, reflect this integration of relational and material well-being.

Faith-based organisations also exemplify this duality. The Salvation Army in Zambia and Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Movement show how spiritual communities deliver both material aid and relational meaning (Davey et al., 2021; Candland, 2001). In Mizoram, churches fulfil a similar function by providing not only religious guidance but also education, health services, and a sense of belonging.

Overall, the findings suggest that sustainable well-being in Mizoram depends on striking a balance between material sufficiency and relational cohesion. Both dimensions are essential: material conditions provide the foundation for livelihood security, while relational trust and community integration ensure resilience, participation, and legitimacy. Development strategies that address only one dimension risk falling short of community needs and aspirations. Having established their role in balancing material and relational dimensions, it is helpful to examine the structure and function of leadership networks in detail.

9.5 Leadership Networks and Governance

Leadership networks in Mizoram's villages displayed diverse structures that shaped governance and service satisfaction. Some networks were elite-driven, concentrating authority among a few influential figures, while others reflected more egalitarian or hybrid forms that distributed power across leaders and organisations. These structures had significant implications for cohesion, trust, and community development.

Comparative evidence helps situate these findings. Kinship networks in Imperial China stabilised governance by aligning elite interests with state-building, showing how dense networks can serve broader goals (Wang, 2022). In egalitarian tribal societies, leadership emerges through kin and exchange networks that foster cooperation without concentrating authority (Rueden et al., 2014). However, other studies highlight the risks of elite-dominated networks, where strong ties foster favouritism or governance capture (Akbari et al., 2020; Gallo et al., 2019). Mizoram's hybrid networks balancing central authority with cohesive clusters seem to avoid these extremes by combining stability with adaptability.

Theories of network governance shed light on why these structures are important. Dense and cohesive networks enhance cooperation and stability, while fragmented or insular ones hinder coordination and limit trust (Larson, 2017). Mizoram's case demonstrates that internal cohesion among leaders has contributed steadily to satisfaction with both institutions and amenities, albeit not dramatically. External linkages, meanwhile, added symbolic legitimacy more than tangible dividends, reflecting patterns observed elsewhere where administrative, political, and intellectual ties expand recognition without necessarily improving everyday services (Imperial et al., 2016).

Relational leadership models from Indigenous contexts further enrich this discussion. Māori ensemble leadership emphasises distributed authority, and Australian Indigenous leaders have developed relational leadership styles rooted in kinship and cultural identity (Rosile et al., 2018; Stewart & Warn, 2017). Mizoram's leadership networks, which integrate church, village councils, and civic organisations such as YMA and MHIP, reflect a similar blend of relationality and institutional anchoring.

Overall, leadership networks in Mizoram underscore the importance of structure and inclusivity. Elite-driven systems risk capture, egalitarian networks foster cohesion, and hybrid forms provide balance. The findings suggest that Mizoram's resilience lies in its capacity to integrate spiritual legitimacy, kinship ties, and modern institutions into a cohesive but adaptive governance model. However,

even cohesive networks cannot fully contain the frustrations caused by rising aspirations and unmet institutional delivery. Expectations form another decisive layer in community life, shaping satisfaction and legitimacy.

9.6 Aspirational Gaps and Rising Expectations

Another critical insight from the study is the phenomenon of rising expectations outpacing institutional delivery. Even as services improved in areas such as education, health, and infrastructure, community satisfaction did not always increase. Instead, heightened aspirations often produced frustration when delivery fell short, creating an expectations–performance gap.

This paradox has been observed in multiple contexts. Abeles (1976) noted that social movements can intensify when improvements raise expectations that remain unmet, while the expectancy-disconfirmation model explains dissatisfaction as a result of performance lagging behind expectations (Petrovsky et al., 2017). Mizoram’s findings confirm these dynamics, showing that rising consumption and educational attainment elevated aspirations beyond what state systems could meet.

Theories of relative deprivation provide a strong explanatory framework. Dissatisfaction arises not only from absolute poverty but from perceived disparities between what people expect and what they receive (Rajagopal, 2022). In Pakistan, for example, economic development and increased mobility generated new aspirations that, when unmet, fueled political discontent (Healy et al., 2017). Mizoram’s case parallels this dynamic, where improvements raised expectations, but institutional constraints prevented their fulfilment.

Giddens’ reflexive modernity also sheds light on the issue. In late modern societies, individuals constantly reassess their conditions and expectations, leading to dissatisfaction even amid progress (Hoogenboom & Ossewaarde, 2005). Mizoram’s villagers, increasingly aware of their entitlements and comparisons beyond their localities, developed aspirations that far exceeded the capacity of institutions to deliver.

At the same time, the phenomenon must be put into context. In Western rural settings, institutional reliability mitigates aspirational gaps (McKay et al., 2023). The Global South, however, faces what Graebner and Strunk (2023) describe as the "twin problem of global dependencies," where global consumption patterns influence aspirations while local systems remain constrained. Mizoram's case exemplifies this broader critique of modernisation theory, underscoring the structural limitations of state-led development.

The implications are profound. Development cannot be measured solely by infrastructure or resources; it must also address the psychological and cultural dimensions of aspiration. Without mechanisms to align expectations and institutional capacity, dissatisfaction will persist. This calls for development strategies that combine service delivery with participatory dialogue, ensuring that aspirations are realistic, inclusive, and grounded in local contexts. One important buffer against aspirational dissatisfaction has been the role of faith-based organisations, which combine spiritual authority with practical service provision.

9.7 Faith-Based Organisations and Development

Faith-based organisations (FBOs) in Mizoram and the broader Global South demonstrate how spirituality and development are intricately intertwined in practice. The findings showed that churches in Mizoram not only serve as sites of worship but also as central institutions for education, healthcare, and welfare services, thereby reinforcing leadership legitimacy through moral capital and service provision. This dual role reflects a broader global pattern where FBOs act as mediators of both material and spiritual well-being.

In South Africa, for example, FBOs integrate spiritual faith as a motivating force for practical action, delivering both hope and material support (Toit, 2019). In Kenya, FBOs are recognised for their rootedness in local communities, which enables them to effect sustainable change by leveraging social capital and moral authority (Moyer et al., 2012). Similarly, Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Movement demonstrates how spiritual awakening can be linked with economic empowerment and collective action (Candland, 2001).

Comparative evidence from Africa and Latin America further confirms this role. African Initiated Churches (AICs) function as development actors by providing coping mechanisms and fostering resilience in times of crisis (Öhlmann et al., 2016). In Zambia, the Salvation Army's inclusion of spiritual well-being in service delivery highlights how faith can enhance both hope and governance outcomes (Davey et al., 2021). These cases parallel the situation in Mizoram, where Baptist and other denominations build trust, mobilise resources, and reinforce community cohesion. Building on the dual role of faith-based organisations, theories of religion as social capital provide a conceptual framework for understanding these dynamics (Putnam, 2000; Candland, 2001). Religion fosters networks of trust, reciprocity, and shared values that strengthen governance and community resilience. These integrative roles of spiritual institutions lay the groundwork for a broader synthesis of rural leadership and community development in Mizoram.

9.8 Conclusion and Synthesis

The study of rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Mizoram reveals a governance system deeply rooted in moral and spiritual legitimacy, as well as resilience, yet oriented toward developmental custodianship. Leadership in these villages is neither purely traditional nor wholly modern but a layered synthesis of cultural legitimacy, spiritual guardianship, and practical custodianship. This dual mandate fosters cohesion while navigating the demands of modernisation and state-led development, drawing on comparative insights from Indigenous governance models, such as the Oromo Gada system (Aliye, 2020) and Māori collective leadership (Spiller et al., 2020).

Typologies of villages are legacy-driven, faith-centred, civic-innovative, state-reliant, and demographically fragile demonstrate that community trajectories are shaped by history, geography, and institutional depth. These typologies resonate with anthropological critiques of rigid tribal classifications in India (Kamra, 2024; Nixon, 2025) and comparative studies of flexible Indigenous systems (Gladstone & Pepion, 2017). Geography and infrastructure further sharpen these distinctions, as altitude, distance, service dependency, and the digital divide create uneven pathways

of opportunity and exclusion, paralleling findings on infrastructural inequalities in rural India and Northeast Asia (Verma & Dash, 2020; Fang et al., 2023).

These inequalities in access shape not only material sufficiency but also the relational dimensions of trust and satisfaction. The interdependence of relational and material well-being emerged as a defining insight, aligning with White's (2017) call for relational well-being frameworks and Peña-López et al.'s (2017) emphasis on relational goods such as trust and solidarity. While relational trust sustains satisfaction, structural inequalities confirm Milbourne's (2014) caution that belonging cannot erase hardship. Mizoram's findings echo critiques of communitarian social capital approaches that overlook inequality (García, 2014), while also resonating with ensemble leadership practices in Indigenous contexts (Rosile et al., 2018).

Leadership networks proved to be a crucial mechanism for balancing relational and material dimensions. Mizoram's hybrid networks, which integrate Village Councils, churches, and civic organisations such as organisations YMA and MHIP, mirror both egalitarian and elite-driven structures studied elsewhere (Rueden et al., 2014; Wang, 2022). These networks demonstrated internal cohesion but limited external linkages, reflecting similar tensions observed in rural governance studies (Imperial et al., 2016; Larson, 2017). The neglect of systematic network analysis in prior rural leadership studies (Das, 2005; Carcary, 2024) highlights the contribution of this study in mapping both bonding and bridging ties.

The phenomenon of aspirational gaps where expectations outstrip institutional delivery further exposed the psychological dimensions of development. Mizoram's findings confirm the dynamics of relative deprivation (Rajagopal, 2022) and expectancy-disconfirmation effects (Petrovsky et al., 2017), showing that rising aspirations can generate dissatisfaction even amid improvement. These insights extend critiques of modernisation theory in the Global South (Graebner & Strunk, 2023) and illustrate the concept of reflexive modernity as described by Giddens (1991).

Faith-based organisations emerged as buffers against aspirational dissatisfaction, offering compensatory legitimacy and delivering services. Their role in Mizoram mirrors broader patterns of FBO-led resilience in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Candland, 2001; Öhlmann et al., 2016; Davey et al., 2021). This dimension underscores the emic foundations of leadership legitimacy in Mizoram, where *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* sustain trust alongside denominational institutions (Hong, 2013).

Taken together, these insights reveal that Mizoram's rural development is both material and relational, as well as spiritual and institutional. It is shaped by history, space, networks, and aspirations, woven together through the moral legitimacy of leaders and the resilience of community institutions. This integrative framework addresses key gaps in the literature including the integration gap (Van De Valk, 2008), contextual gap (Mubangizi, 2024; Olanipekun et al., 2025), network gap (Das, 2005; Carcary, 2024), and role perception gap (Park et al., 2005; Prasad & Modi, 2020) by embedding Mizoram's emic realities into broader theoretical debates.

Mizoram's experience thus offers a distinctive pathway of governance rooted in moral capital, sustained by social trust, and negotiated through the daily practices of communities that enriches global debates on leadership, social capital, and community development. Building on these integrative insights, the concluding chapter will consolidate the findings and clarify their broader theoretical and applied significance for future research, policy, and social work practice.

CHAPTER - X

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

Every scholarly inquiry must return, at its end, to the ground from which it began. The preceding chapters have traced the pathways of history, geography, demography, leadership, and development in the rural communities of Lunglei District. Each layer whether in the lineage of villages, the shape of family and household life, the structure of leadership, or the distribution of resources and opportunities has offered fragments of understanding. The task of this concluding chapter is to gather these fragments into a coherent whole.

This chapter begins by restating the central thread of the study: that rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Mizoram are best understood not as isolated variables, but as interwoven processes rooted in historical memory, infrastructural reach, social composition, and everyday interactions between leaders and people. From this vantage point, the findings are revisited, the conclusions distilled, and the implications extended.

The chapter, therefore, proceeds in three movements. First, a Summary of Findings consolidates the substantive insights from the analysis. Second, the Conclusion clarifies the conceptual patterns that explain resilience and inequality. Third, the Implications extend the lessons for policy, practice, and research. In this way, the chapter closes the empirical journey while opening future directions for reflection, dialogue, and intervention.

10.1 Summary of Findings

The following section consolidates the substantive insights generated by the study into a coherent body, providing the structural basis for drawing conclusions and implications. Each domain is revisited not as isolated evidence but as part of an interconnected frame that explains the dynamics of resilience, inequality, and adaptation across villages in Lunglei District.

10.1.1 Historical and Infrastructural Foundations

The resilience of Lunglei's villages rests on how history and infrastructure combine to sustain or weaken their adaptive capacity. Villages with deep memory, such as Rawpui's revival after insurgency or S. Vanlaiphai's missionary–civic balance, display continuity and strength, while younger or stagnating settlements like Zotuitlang and Tuipui 'D' struggle with leadership fatigue and infrastructural fragility. Geography, altitude, and remoteness stratify opportunity, making connectivity and digital access decisive. Where both history and infrastructure remain strong, growth continues; where either weakens, stagnation follows.

Yet resilience cannot be explained by history and infrastructure alone, for it also depends on the demographic and social fabric that determines who participates and how energy circulates within communities.

10.1.2 Demographic and Social Structures

The demographic composition of villages demonstrates that balance or imbalance shapes community participation. Female-majority or balanced populations enable inclusiveness, while male- or elderly-heavy populations impose strain. Household forms deepen this effect: joint and stable families provide cohesion, yet nuclearisation, reconstitution, and female headship create new vulnerabilities. Ethnic plurality and denominational diversity exist within Lusei dominance, while political mobilisation differs sharply across villages.

These social energies, however, only form one side of the story; the other lies in the agrarian economy, where tenure arrangements and livelihoods determine the material stability that underpins participation and authority.

10.1.3 Agrarian Tenure and Livelihoods

The agrarian order reveals that land tenure is central to livelihood security. Temporary passes sustain low-investment cultivation and perpetuate risk, while permanent titles, though unevenly distributed, unlock stability and investment. Land distribution varies widely, from balanced to polarise to concentrated, with clear implications for equity. Agriculture remains the backbone of livelihoods, but non-

farm diversification is patchy, and expenditure inequalities highlight new vulnerabilities. This economic foundation also conditions leadership, for those with secure tenure and household stability are more likely to emerge as leaders. At the same time, communities with fragile agrarian bases often struggle to sustain authority.

10.1.4 Leadership and Social Capital

Leadership in Lunglei villages demonstrates that authority is socially constructed rather than individually possessed. Leaders are overwhelmingly older, married men embedded in joint households, drawing legitimacy from kinship, clan, and the church. While moral-spiritual guardianship is consistently affirmed, developmental custodianship varies with context. Social capital manifests in three internal forms elite-driven, egalitarian, and hybrid and in three external domains administrative-service, political-judicial, and legislative-intellectual unevenly distributed across villages.

The accurate measure of these leadership patterns, however, lies in their translation into development outcomes, where institutional delivery and people's satisfaction intersect with everyday leadership presence.

10.1.5 Community Development Outcomes

Development outcomes reveal both achievement and deficit. Utilities such as electricity, water, and LPG are nearly universal; yet, sanitation and communication remain the weakest frontiers. Household incomes appear similar, but expenditure reveals sharper inequalities, making it a more reliable measure of well-being. People's evaluations fall into two dimensions: institutional services, such as education, health, roads, and banking, and community amenities, including utilities, safety, and social relations. Higher resources often raise expectations, which can lower institutional satisfaction while modestly improving amenity satisfaction. Leadership people interactions emerge as the strongest compensatory mechanism, enhancing solidarity and perceived security even when institutions falter.

These contrasts, when drawn together, point toward broader archetypes that integrate history, demography, leadership, and lived perceptions of well-being.

10.1.6 Integrative Patterns

Across the villages, distinct archetypes crystallise. Some are legacy-driven, others faith-centred, still others civic-innovative, while a few remain state-reliant and stagnating. Social capital configurations range from elite-driven to egalitarian to hybrid, producing divergent capacities for cohesion. Development is experienced as dual objective and subjective, institutional and communal, with disparities cutting across these layers. Most decisively, the people–leader interface stands out as the primary driver of well-being, shaping trust, cohesion, and adaptation.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that Mizoram’s rural development is layered and uneven anchored in history, mediated by social structures, conditioned by agrarian tenure, shaped by leadership ecologies, and experienced through both objective and subjective dimensions of community life.

10.2 Conclusion

Leadership and development in Mizoram villages are sustained through a dual foundation of moral and spiritual legitimacy, as well as developmental custodianship. Historical legacies and institutional foundations produce diverse community types, and just as the Oromo Gada system in Africa combines spiritual sanction with governance cycles, the typologies of Mizoram villages anchor authority while shaping the balance between guardianship and custodianship. This grounding in history interacts directly with geography, amplifying inequalities in access to resources. Geographic and infrastructural disparities condition service delivery, and much like Māori collective leadership that leans on kinship ties to offset scarcity, Mizoram communities depend on trust and cohesion to stabilise satisfaction despite uneven resources. These community structures are further strained by inequality, yet relational well-being often compensates for material shortfalls. This pattern, similar to the role of African Initiated Churches that weave moral authority into welfare provision, is echoed in Mizoram's Baptist institutions, which reinforce both spiritual legitimacy and practical outcomes. Rising aspirations

outpace institutional delivery, producing discontent, but these tensions are absorbed and reframed through community trust and faith-based resilience. Faith-based organisations act as buffers against aspirational dissatisfaction by providing compensatory trust and moral legitimacy, paralleling how Indigenous systems elsewhere bridge fragility through cultural legitimacy. Thus, Mizoram's villages demonstrate that rural development flourishes not only through material sufficiency but also through the integration of moral authority, relational trust, and adaptive governance a distinctive pathway that enriches global debates on leadership, social capital, and community development.

10.3. Implications

The findings and conclusions drawn so far establish a ground for reflection on what should follow in research, policy, and practice. The question that arises is: how can the layered realities of Mizoram's rural villages be translated into actionable directions? This section turns to that task. It organises the implications into three domains further research, community development policy, and social work intervention each carrying its own priority, rationale, and pathway. The implications of this study are multi-layered, extending from further research to community development policy and finally to social work intervention, forming a continuum where knowledge informs policy and practice sustains everyday resilience.

10.3.1 For Further Research

The findings of this study open up specific avenues for scholarly exploration. Within this continuum, the first task is to expand inquiry through further research. Future research should investigate how variations in land tenure reform directly shape leadership legitimacy, extending the present analysis into longitudinal studies that capture transitions over decades. It is equally important to examine youth participation in leadership pipelines, since generational shifts are already visible but remain underexplored. Comparative studies with other Northeast states could test whether the dual foundation of moral-spiritual guardianship and developmental custodianship is unique to Mizoram or part of a wider regional pattern. Such focused

inquiries will refine both the conceptual understanding of rural leadership and the research base for policy design.

10.3.2. For Community Development Policy

Building on this research base, policy must also respond to what inquiry reveals about gaps in institutional delivery. Policy frameworks must recognise that universal provisioning does not automatically translate into satisfaction; sanitation and communication remain critical bottlenecks even where electricity and water are nearly universal. Programs should therefore prioritise closing the expectation–performance gap by improving the reliability of services most visible in everyday life. Targeted investment in digital connectivity is especially urgent, as disparities in access exacerbate inequalities in opportunity. Moreover, community development policy should adopt a differentiated village typology approach: legacy-driven villages require conservation of civic strengths, while stagnating or state-reliant villages demand infrastructural infusion and leadership renewal. Thus, what research identifies as structural gaps must be addressed at the policy level, ensuring interventions that are more responsive, efficient, and equitable.

10.3.3 For Social Work Intervention

Equity in policy, however, achieves meaning only when it is translated into lived practice, a responsibility that falls to social work. Social work practice must be anchored in the duality of material and relational well-being. Interventions should not only strengthen agricultural livelihoods and reduce the costs of education and healthcare, but also consolidate relational trust through participatory forums, community dialogues, and faith-based collaborations. Social workers can play a catalytic role in bridging intergenerational gaps, encouraging youth engagement while respecting the authority of elders. They can also help to strengthen women’s participation, especially in villages where female headship is rising but remains socially fragile. Most importantly, social work should consciously leverage existing institutions such as churches, YMA, MHIP, and MUP as platforms for inclusive development, transforming them from symbolic anchors into active agents of service delivery and community resilience. This is where practice bridges policy and people,

ensuring that the equitable orientation of policy finds its practical complement in social work intervention.

Taken together, further research, responsive policy, and grounded social work create a reinforcing chain where evidence sharpens knowledge, policy secures equity, and practice sustains resilience in everyday community life.

APPENDICES

Rural Leadership, Social Capital and Community Development in Lunglei District, Mizoram

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(Confidential and For Research Purpose only)

A. Identification information

1	Schedule No.	
2	Date and Time	
3	Field Investigator	

B. Village Location Distance and Connectivity

1	Village	
2	Block	
3	Distance to Block HQ	
4	Distance to District HQ	
5	Nearby Town	
6	Distance to Nearby Town	
7	Type of Road Connectivity	1 National Highway (NH) 2 State Highways (SH) 3 Major District Road (MDR) 4 Other

		District Road (ODR)
8	Type of Transport Connectivity	1 Public Transport 2 Private Maxi Cab or Sumo Service 3 Own Two Wheeler 4 Own Four Wheeler
9	Quality of Telephone Connectivity	0 No Connectivity 1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Good
10	Quality of Cell Phone Connectivity	0 No Connectivity 1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Good
11	Quality of Internet Connectivity	0 No Connectivity 1 Poor 2 Fair 3 Good
12	GPS	

C. Respondent Profile

1	Name of the Respondent	
2	Gender	1 Male 2 Female
3	Age	
4	Education	
5	Position in VC	1 VC President 2 VC Secretary 3 Member
6	Leadership Position in any other Community Organisations	1 None 2 YMA 3 MHIP 4 MUP 5 Church

D. Gender and Poplulation

1	Name of the Respondent	
2	Gender	1 Male 2 Femalw
3	Age	
4	Education	

E. Socio-Economic Profile

1	Total Number of Households	
2	Households Migrated into the Community the last 10 Years	
3	No.of AAY Households	
4	No.of BPL Households	
5	No.of APL Households	
6	No.of Electric Connections	
7	No.of Water Connections	
8	No.of LPG Connections	
9	No.of Television Connections	
10	No.of Households with Pit Latrines	
11	No.of Households with Septic Tank	

F. Community to Service Distance

Please write down the distance from your community to the following facilities

Sl.No	Service	Distance
1	Post Office	
2	Bank	
3	Cell Phone Tower	
4	Vegetable Market	
5	Drugs Store	
6	Primary Health Sub Centres	
7	Primary Health Centres	
8	Private Hospital	
9	Civil Hospital	
10	ASHA Booth	
11	Anganwadi Centre	
12	Primary School	
13	Middle School	
14	High School	
15	Higher Secondary School	
16	College	
17	Nearest Police Station	

G Participatory Community Assessment:

- (Append Images with Discussion Notes on Each Map)
- Historical Development of Community

Timeline: Elderly Men and Women Separately

- Infrastructure, Facilities and Amenities : Social and Resource Map:
 - *YMA and MHIP Leaders Separately*
- **Services and Opportunities Map**
 - *Poor Men and Women Separately*

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Community Leader Interview Schedule

(Confidential and For Research Purpose only)

A. Identification Information

1	Schedule	
2	Village	
3	Block	
4	Date and Time of Interview	
5	Field Investigator	

B. Demographic Profile

1	Name	
2	Gender	1.Male 2.Female
3	Age	
4	Marital Status	1.Unmarried 2.Married 3.Divorced/Seperated 4.Widowed
5	Education	
6	Type of family	1. Joint 2.Nuclear
7	Form of family	1.Stable 2.Broken 3.Reconstituted
8	Size of family	

C. Social Background

1	Ethnicity	1.Mizo 2.Non-Mizo
2	Type of Clan	1.Rulling 2.Commoner 3.None 4.Don't know
3	Religion	1.Christianity 2.Hinduism 3. Buddhism 4. Islam
4	Denomination	BCM, PCI, UPC NEI, UPC M, SA, IKK, others, N/A

D. Social Background

1	Primary Occupation	Agriculture, Agricultural Labour, Government Service, Skilled Labour, Business, Others.
2	Socio Economic Category	1.AAy 2.BPL 3.APL

E. Agrarian Structure: Land Possion Ownership and Cultivation

1	Land Possion Pattern	1 Community Land 2 Temporary Land/ VC Pass 3 Land Settlement Certificate 4 Leased in Land 5 Leased out Land

F. Political Background

1	Political Affiliation	1.None 2.Symphathizer 3.Member 4.Office Bearer
2	Political Party Affiliation	MNF, INC, ZPM, BJP, Others

G. Organizational Profile

1	Organisation	VC, YMA, MUP, MHIP, Church, Political Party, None
2	Position in Organisation	President, Vice President, General Secretary, EC Member, Elder, None.
3	Experience in present Organisation	
4	Position held earlier in this	1.Yes 2.No

	organisation	
5	Active in other Organisations	1.Yes 2.No

H. Household Income

Sl.No	Sources	
1	Agriculture	
2	Livestock Rearing	
3	Government Service/Pension	
4	Skilled labour	
5	Business/Petty Trade	
6	Agricultural Labour	

I. Household Expenditure

1	Food Items	
2	Education	
3	Mobile	
4	Medical	
5	Electricity/Power	
6	Clothing	
7	Transport	
8	Recreation	

9	Church Related Contribution	
10	Contribution to Community Organisations	
11	Charity	
12	Water	
13	Pan, Tobacco and Gutkha	

J. Leadership Position of Parents and Grandparents

1	Parents holding a leadership position	1. Yes 2. No
2	Grandparents holding leadership	1. Yes 2. No

K. External Networks of Leaders

1	Chief Minister	
2	Minister	
3	MLA	
4	MP	
5	District Commissioner	
6	BDO	
7	Doctor/MO	
8	Nurse/NRHM Worker	
9	University/ College Professor	

10	Head Master	
11	District Agriculture Officer	
12	District Horticulture Officer	
13	SDO (P&E)	
14	Police Officer	
15	Bank Manager	
16	Megistrate	
17	District Social Welfare Officer	

L. Community Leader Nomination

1	Name	
2	Position held by	1 President/Elder 2 Vice President 3 General Secretary 3 EC Member 4 None
3	Level of Influence	1 Very High 1 High 3 Moderate 4 Low 5 Very Low

M. Role Perception of Leaders in Community Development

Sl. No	Role of Leaders in Community Development	Always	Mostly	Someti mes	Rarel y	Neve r
1	Promote the Livelihood and Living Conditions					
2	Poverty Eradication					
3	Environmental Protection					

4	Preservation of Culture					
5	Promotion of Harmony in the Community					
6	Promotion of Religiousity in Community					
7	Providing Care and Support to the Needy					
8	Defending the Interest of the Community					
9	Building of Soc Infrastructure					
10	Maintenance of Community Infrastructure					
11	Promoting Social Inclusion					
12	Liaisoning Community with Government					
13	Promoting People Involvement in Community Life					

N. Community Service Satisfaction

Sl.No	Community Service Satisfaction	V.High	High	Moderate	Low	V.Low
1	Electric Supply					
2	Water Supply					
3	Drainage					

4	Banking					
5	Road					
6	Transportation					
7	Post Office					
8	Education					
9	Health Care					
10	Solid Waste management					
11	Peace in the Community					
12	Safety and Security					
13	Care and Support					
14	Employment Opportunities					
15	Interpersonal Relations					

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Household Interview Schedule

(Confidential and For Research Purpose only)

A. Identification Information

1	Schedule	
2	Village	
3	Block	
4	GPS	
5	Date and Time of Interview	
6	Field Investigator	

B. Household Composition (Roster For all members of the household)

1	Name	
2	Gender	1.Male 2.Female
3	Age in	Years Completed
4	Marital Status	1.Unmarried 2.Married 3.Divorced/Separated 4.Widowed
5	Education	Number of Years Completed
6	Earner Status	0 Dependent 1 Earner
7	Primary Occupation	0 None 1 Shifting Cultivation 2 Settled Agriculture, 3 Agricultural Labour, 4 Government Service, 5 Skilled Labour, 6 Petty Business, 7. Large Business 8 Others(specify).
8	Secondary Occupation	0 None 1 Shifting Cultivation 2 Settled Agriculture, 3 Agricultural Labour, 4 Government Service, 5 Skilled Labour, 6 Petty Business, 7. Large Business 8

		Others(specify).
9	Relationship to Head	1 Head 2 Spouse 3
10	Respondent	0 No 1 Yes

C. Social Background

1	Type of Family	1 Joint 2 Nuclear
2	Form of family	1.Stable 2.Broken 3.Reconstituted
3	Ethnicity	1.Mizo 2.Non-Mizo
4	Subtribe	1.Lusei 2. Hmar 3. Lai 4. Mara 5.Ralte 6. Paite 7.Pachauau 8. Sailo 9. Kuki-Chin 10. Bawm 11. Chakma 12. Bru 13.Gorkhali
5	Type of Clan	1.Rulling 2.Commoner 3.None 4.Don't know
6	Religion	1.Christianity 2.Hinduism 3. Buddhism 4. Islam
7	Denomination	1 BCM, 2 PCI, 3 UPC NEI, 4 UPC M, 5 SA, 6 IKK, 7 Others, N/A
8	Socio Economic	1.AAY 2.BPL 3. APL

	Category	
9	Political Affiliation	1.None 2.Symphathizer 3.Member 4.Office Bearer
10	Political Party Affiliation	0 None; 1 MNF, 2 INC, 3 ZPM, 4 BJP, 5 Others

D. Pattern of Land Ownership

1	Land Possion Pattern	1 Community Land 2 Temporary Land/ VC Pass 3 Land Settlement Certificate 4 Leased in Land 5 Leased out Land

E. Household Income

Sl.No	Source	Monthly (Rs)
1	Agriculture	
2	Livestock Rearing	
3	Government Service/Pension	
4	Skilled labour	
5	Business/Petty Trade	
6	Agricultural Labour	

F. Household Expenditure (Monthly)

Sl. No	Items	Monthly Expenses (Rs)
1	Food Items	
2	Education	
3	Mobile	
4	Medical	
5	Electricity/ Power	
6	Clothing	
7	Transport	
8	Recreation	
9	Church Related Contribution	
10	Charity	
11	Water	
12	Pan, Tobacco and Gutkha Products	

G. Interaction with Community Leaders and Community Participation

Frequency of your participation in the community organisations

SLNo	Organisation	Frequency of Interaction with Leaders				Frequency of participation in Activities			
		Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	VC	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0
2	YMA	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0
3	MUP	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0
4	MHIP	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0
5	Church	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0
6	Games and Sports	3	2	1	0	3	2	1	0
7	Cultural Club	3	2	1	0	3	2	0	0

H. Functions of Community Leaders: Peoples' Perception

Sl.No	Functions of Leaders	Always	Mostly	Sometime	Rarely	Never
1	Promote the Livelihood and Living Conditions	4	3	2	1	0
2	Poverty Eradication	4	3	2	1	0
3	Environmental Protection	4	3	2	1	0
4	Preservation of Culture	4	3	2	1	0
5	Promotion of Harmony in the Community	4	3	2	1	0
6	Promotion of Religiosity in Community	4	3	2	1	0
7	Providing Care and Support to the Needy	4	3	2	1	0
8	Defending the Interest of the Community	4	3	2	1	0
9	Building of Physical Infrastructure	4	3	2	1	0
10	Building of Social Infrastructure	4	3	2	1	0
11	Maintenance of Community Infrastructure	4	3	2	1	0
12	Promoting Cleanliness	4	3	2	1	0

13	Promoting Social Inclusion	4	3	2	1	0
14	Promoting Social Justice and Equality	4	3	2	1	0
15	Promoting Community Cohesion	4	3	2	1	0
16	Liasoning Community with Government	4	3	2	1	0
17	Promoting Collaborative Work Among Community Organisations	4	3	2	1	0
18	Promoting People's Involvement in Community Life	4	3	1		

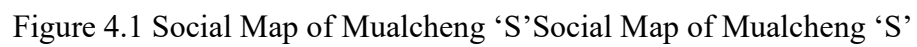
I. Community Service Satisfaction

How far have you been satisfied with the following services in your community?

Sl. No.	Community Service	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
1	Electricity Supply	5	4	3	2	1
2	Water Supply	5	4	3	2	1

3	Drainage	5	4	3	2	1
4	Banking	5	4	3	2	1
5	Road	5	4	3	2	1
6	Transport	5	4	3	2	1
7	Post Office	5	4	3	2	1
8	Education	5	4	3	2	1
9	Health Care	5	4	3	2	1
10	Solid Waste Management	5	4	3	2	1
11	Peace in the community	5	4	3	2	1
12	Safety and Security	5	4	3	2	1
13	Care and Support	5	4	3	2	1
14	Employment Opportunities	5	4	3	2	1
15	Interpersonal Relations	5	4	3	2	1

Mualcheng 'S



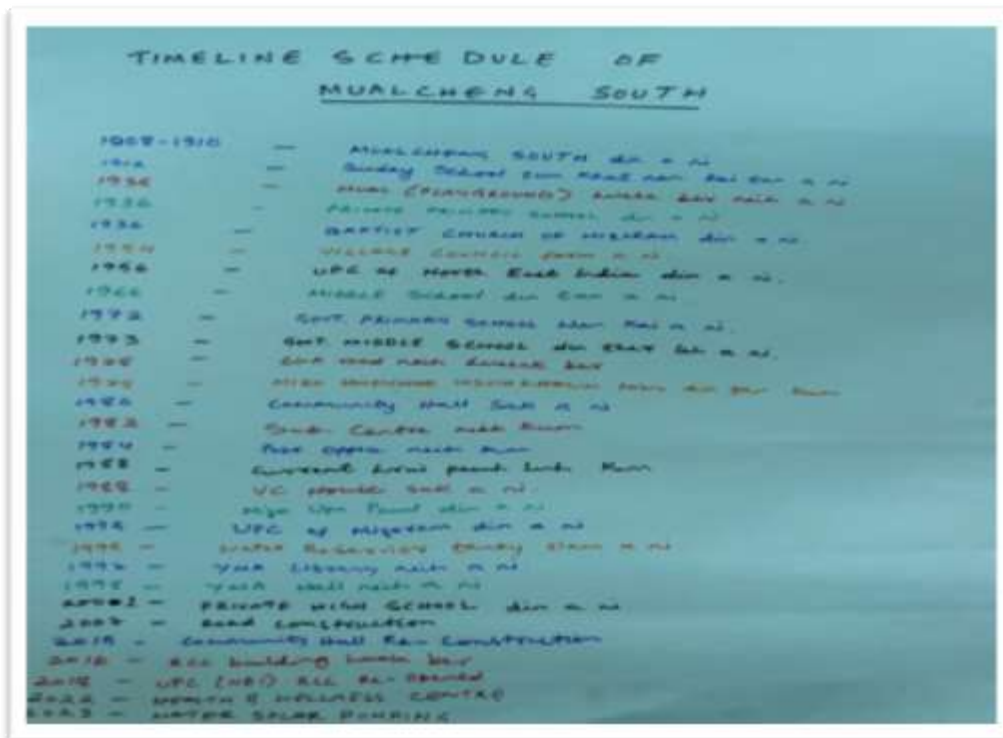


Figure 4.2 Timeline of Mualcheng ‘S

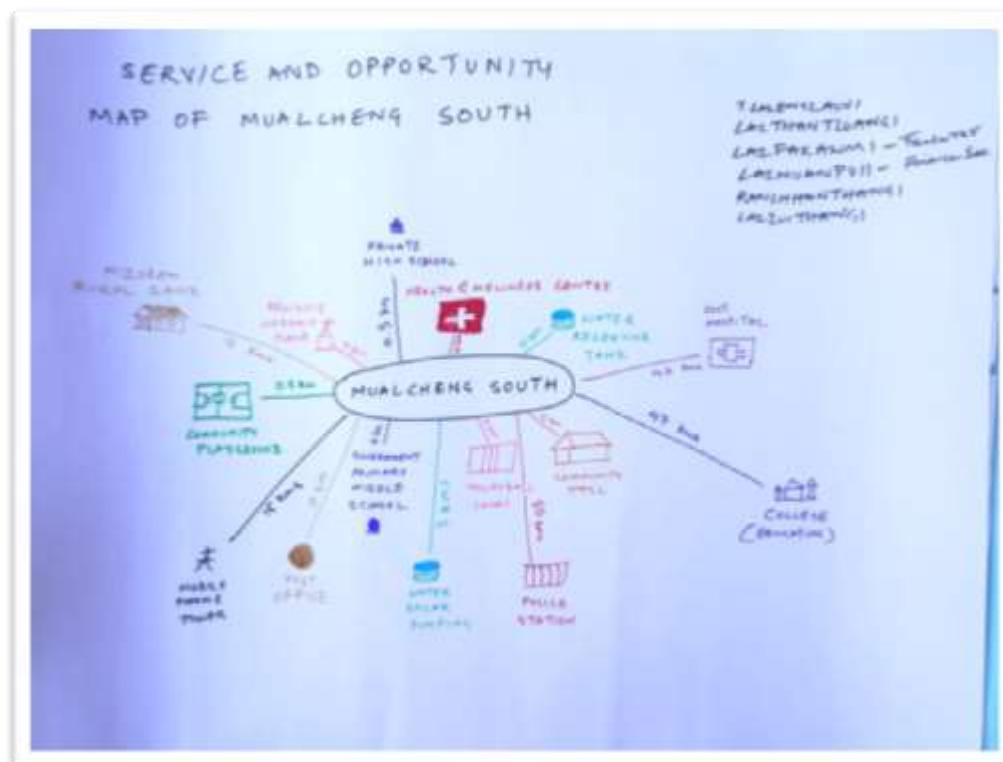


Figure 4.3 Services and Opportunities Map of Mualcheng ‘S’

Tawipui 'S'



Figure 4.4 Social Map of Tawipui 'S' Social Map of Tawipui 'S'



Figure 4.5 Timeline of Tawipui 'S'



Figure 4.6 Services and Opportunities Map of Tawipui 'S'

S. Vanlaiphai

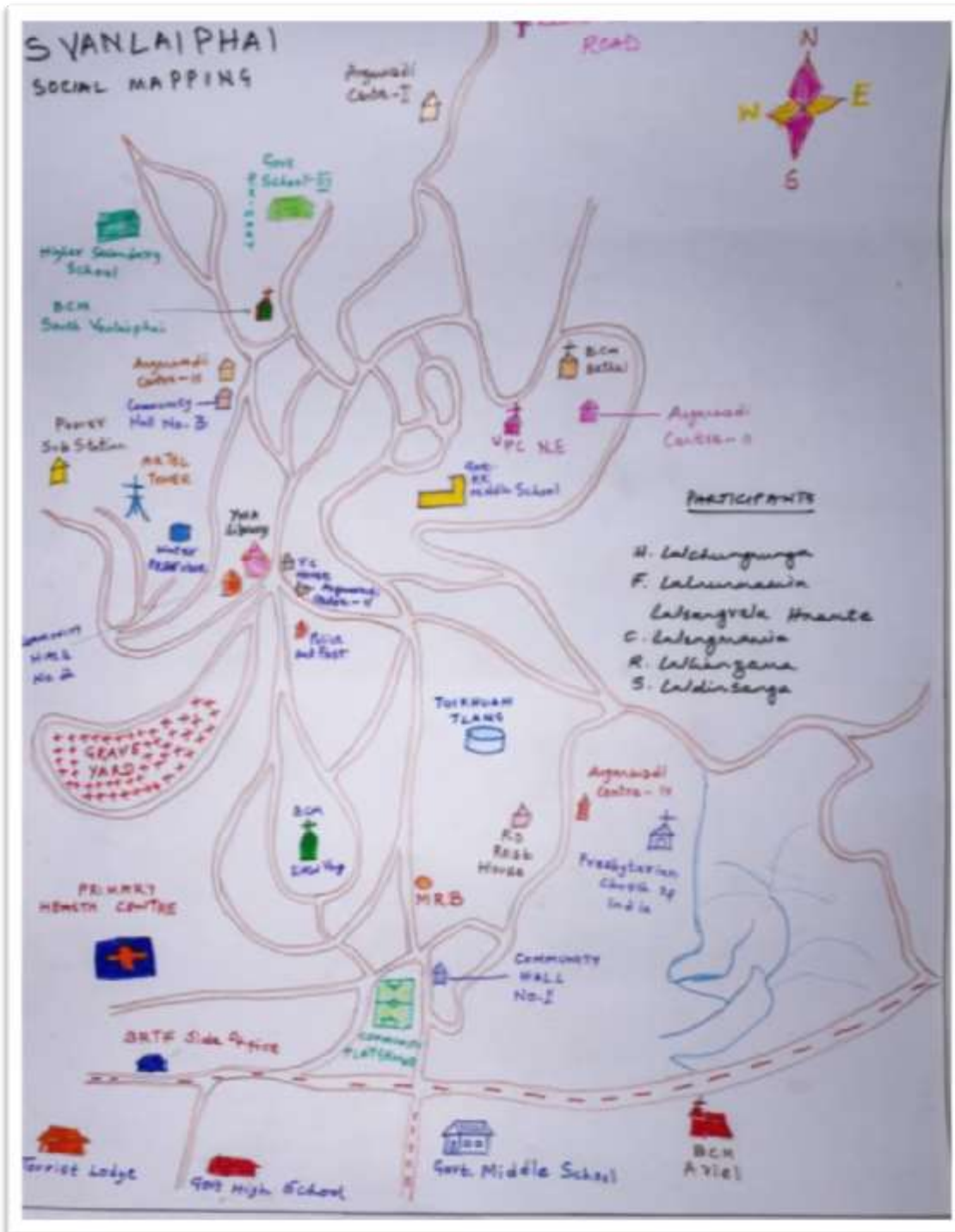


Figure 4.7 Social Map of S. Vanlaiphai

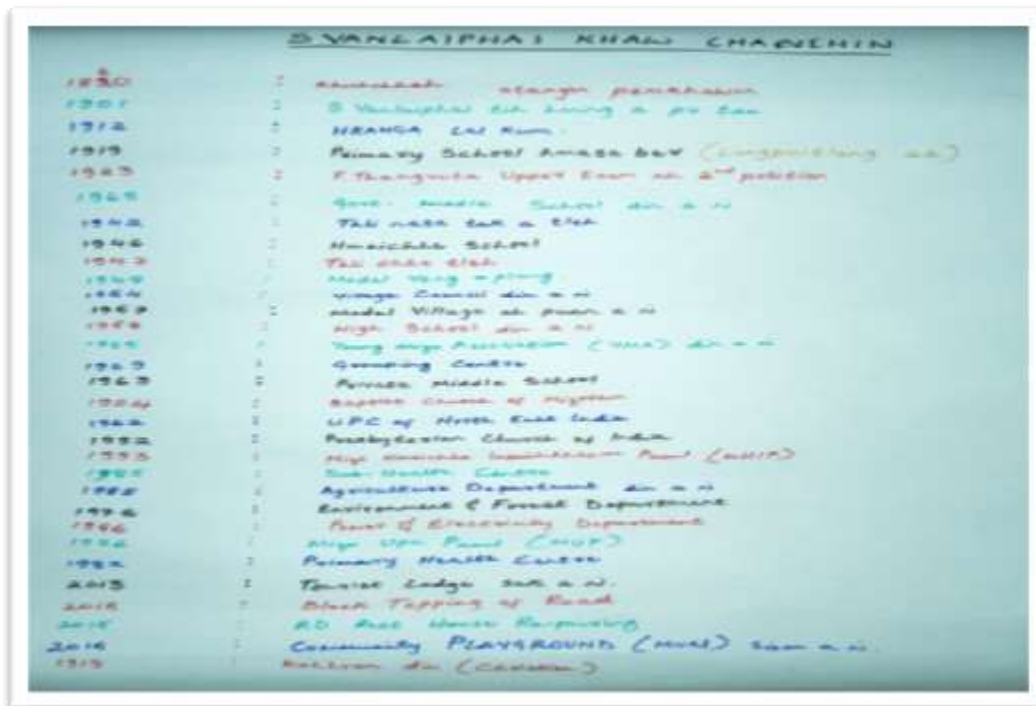


Figure 4.8 Timeline of S. Vanlaiphai

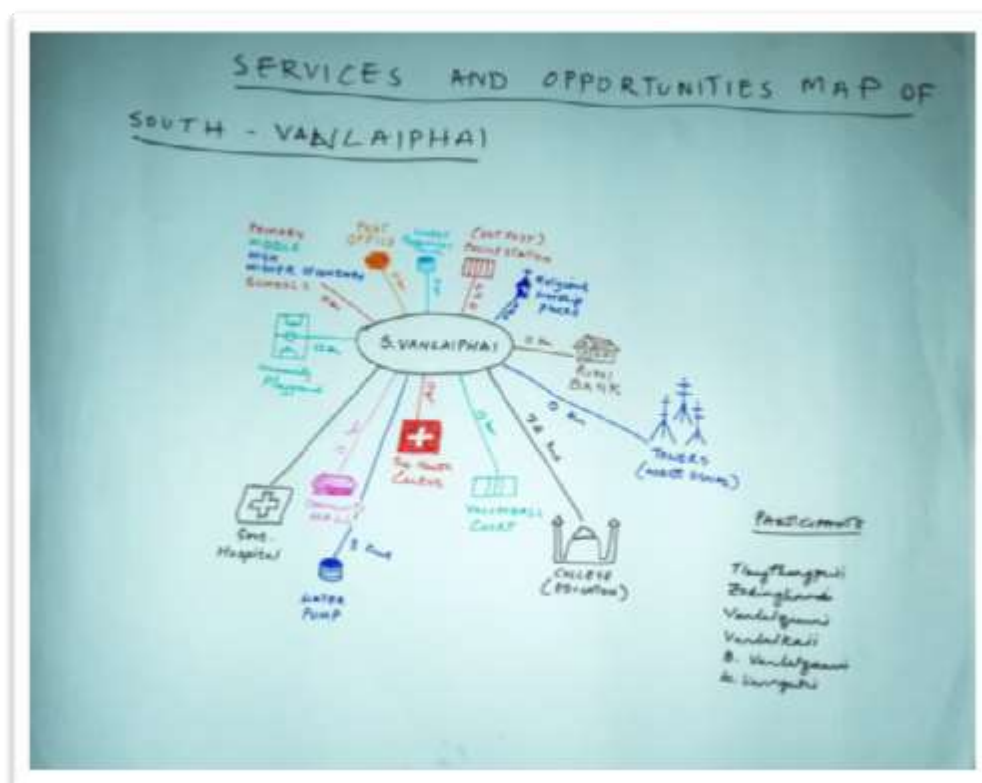


Figure 4.9 Services and Opportunities Map of S. Vanlaiphai

Tuipui 'D'

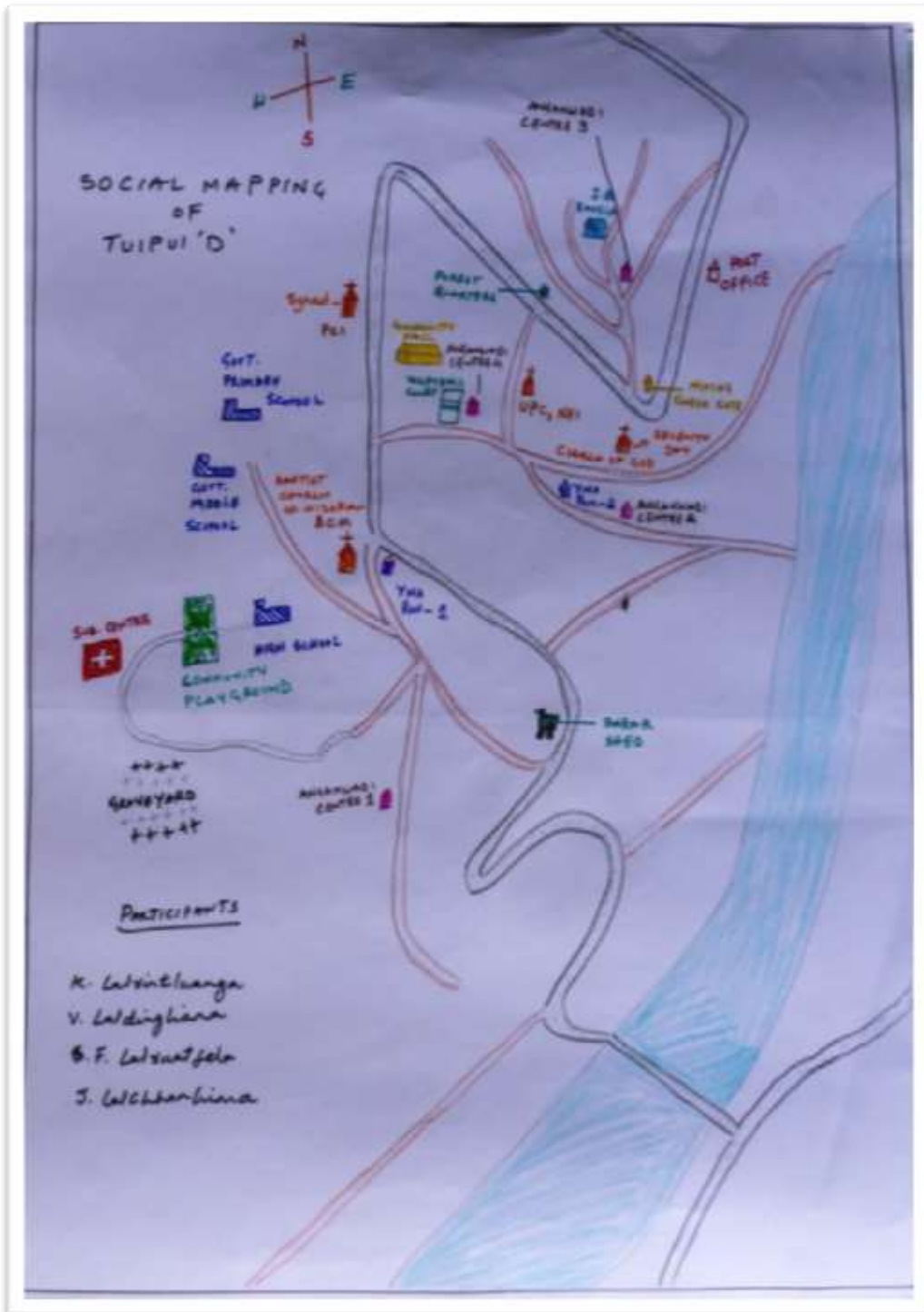


Figure 4.10 Social Map of Tuipui 'D'



Figure 4.11 Timeline of Tuipui 'D'

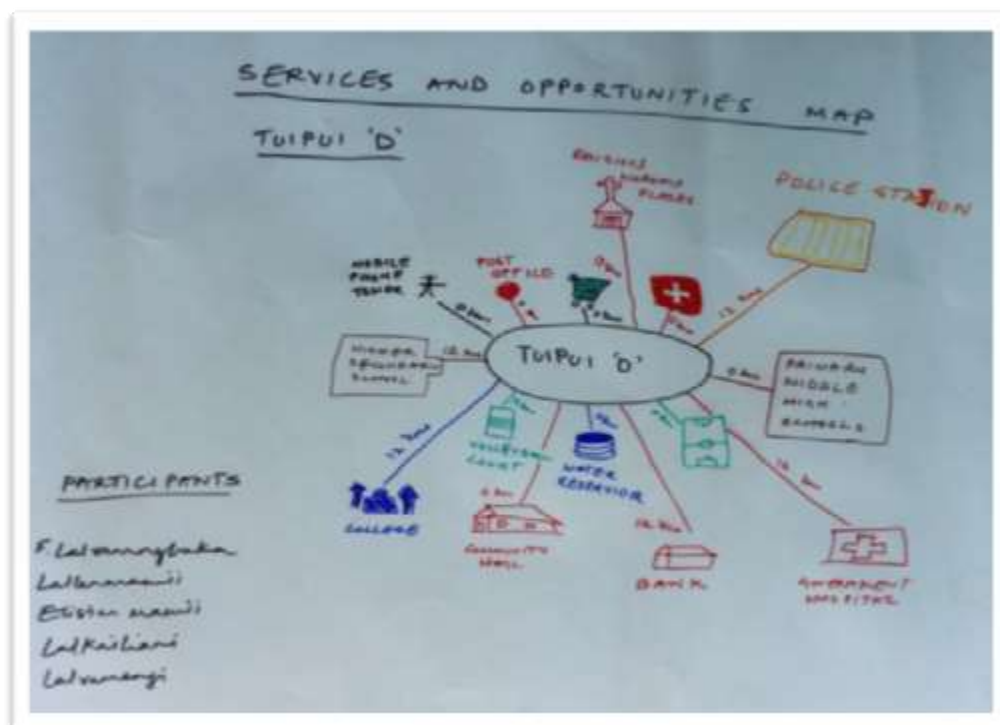


Figure 4.12 Services and Opportunities Map of Tuipui 'D'

Leite



Figure 4.13 Social Map of Leite

Rawpui

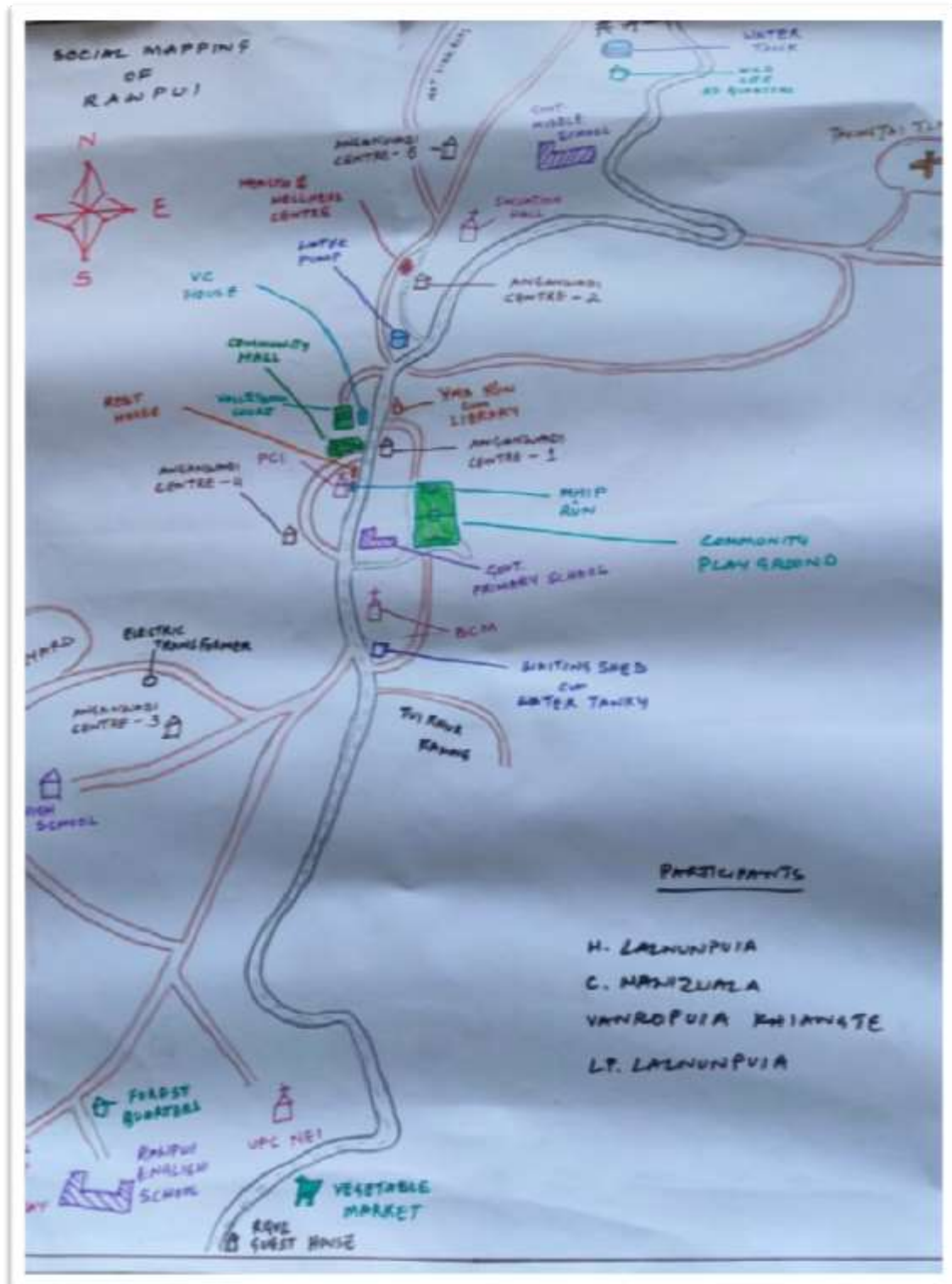


Figure 4.16 Social Mapping of Rawpui

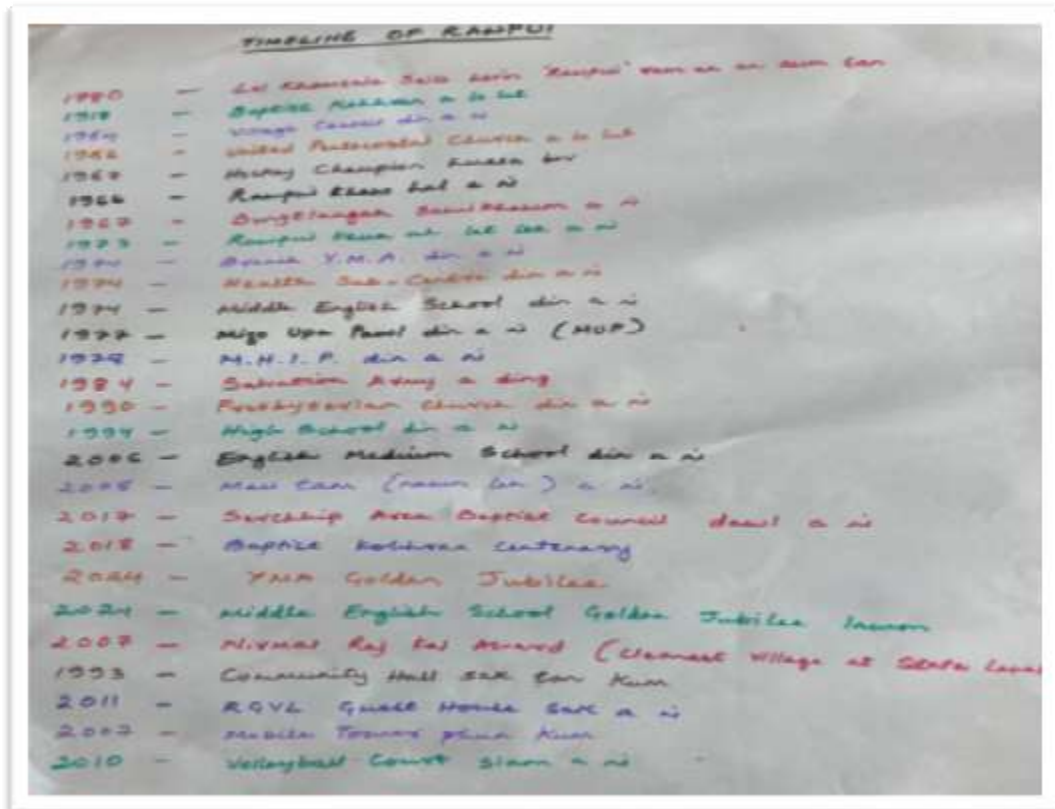


Figure 4.17 Timeline of Rawpui



Figure 4.18 Services and Opportunities of Rawpui

Zotuitlang



Figure 4.19 Social Map of Zotuitlang

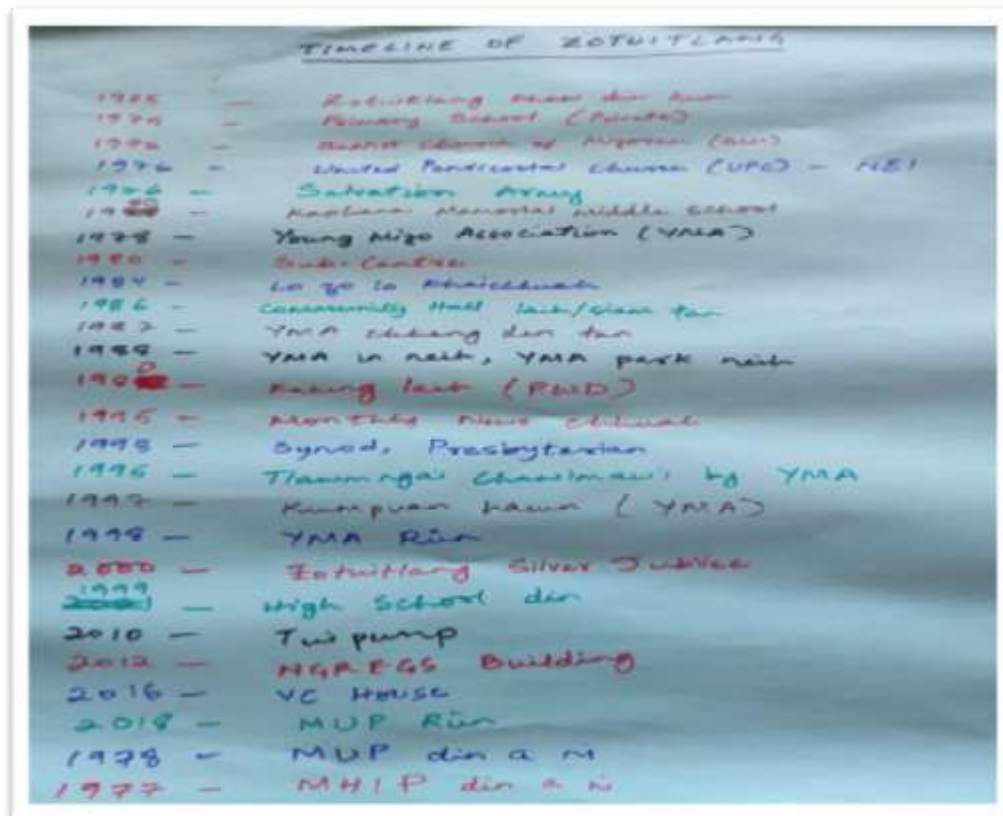


Figure 4.20 Timeline of Zotuitlang

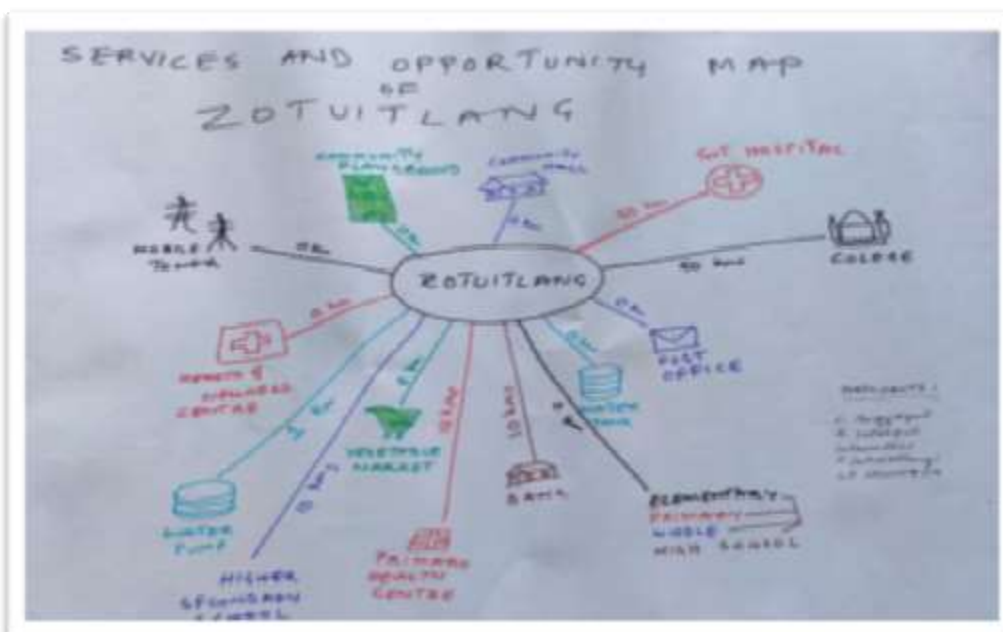


Figure 4.21 Services and Opportunities of Zotuitlang

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ABSTRACT

**RURAL LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT IN LUNGLEI DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

**AN ABSTRACT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF
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**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
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SEPTEMBER 2025**

**RURAL LEADERSHIP, SOCIAL CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT IN LUNGLEI DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

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Submitted
In partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work of Mizoram University, Aizawl

Introduction

This study explores the dynamic interplay of rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Lunglei District, Mizoram. Its central claim is that development outcomes at the village level both tangible, such as infrastructure and amenities, and intangible, such as collective well-being and trust are not simply the by-products of state intervention but arise from the synergy of leadership role perceptions and social capital networks.

Rural development in India has historically been viewed through the lens of decentralisation, grassroots participation, and the mobilisation of local resources. Within this framework, rural leadership and social capital are seen as indispensable drivers of community transformation. Mizoram, a small, hilly state in Northeast India, provides a vibrant context for studying these dynamics. The Mizo society has long been celebrated for its communitarian ethos, encapsulated in values such as *tlawmngaihna* (the moral duty of selfless service) and practices like *hnatlang* (voluntary collective labour). These cultural traditions embody solidarity, cooperation, and reciprocity essential ingredients of social capital. However, despite these strong cultural underpinnings, developmental outcomes across villages in Mizoram remain uneven. Some villages demonstrate remarkable progress in education, health, infrastructure, and livelihood diversification, while others lag, struggling to translate solidarity into concrete developmental achievements.

This paradox raises important questions about the role of leadership and social capital in shaping community development outcomes. If solidarity and cooperation are deeply embedded in Mizo culture, why do some villages succeed in mobilising these resources for sustainable development while others do not? What distinguishes effective rural leadership from weaker forms of leadership in such a communitarian society? How do networks of trust, reciprocity, and external linkages translate into development, and under what conditions do they falter?

The present study seeks to address these questions by examining the interrelationships between rural leadership, social capital, and community development in selected villages of Lunglei District, Mizoram. It argues that the differential developmental outcomes observed across villages can be explained by variations in leadership role perceptions, mobilisation of social capital, and the ability of leaders and communities to create linking mechanisms with external institutions. By integrating leadership studies, social capital theory, and participatory development perspectives, the study develops a triadic framework of relational governance suited to Mizoram's socio-cultural environment.

This research is significant not only for advancing the theoretical understanding of leadership and social capital but also for its policy and practice implications. In a state where communitarian values remain strong but economic opportunities are limited, strengthening the relationship between leadership, social networks, and developmental initiatives is critical. Furthermore, the findings contribute to social work practice by offering culturally grounded strategies for community mobilisation and participatory development.

Overview of Literature

The study is anchored in three interrelated bodies of scholarship: rural leadership, social capital, and community development.

Globally, rural leadership has been theorised as both formal authority through elected representatives and informal influence exercised by respected community figures. Classic accounts (Bonjean & Olson, 1964) conceptualise leadership beyond individual attributes, framing it as positions, reputations, and decisions embedded within networks. More recent studies emphasise contextual and relational leadership, noting that styles such as transformational leadership enhance inclusion and sustainability, while authoritarian leadership does not.

In India, rural leadership has often been examined within the framework of Panchayati Raj, with a focus on decentralisation, political participation, and local governance. However, these accounts sometimes underplay the role of moral legitimacy and cultural authority in sustaining rural governance.

Social capital, developed by Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1990), and Putnam (2000), is conceptualised as networks, trust, and reciprocity that enable cooperation for mutual benefit. Contemporary work identifies three key forms: bonding (close-knit ties), bridging (across groups), and linking (vertical ties to institutions). These operate through structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions (Bassett & Moore, 2013; Cheng et al., 2024). In Mizoram, *tlawmngaihna* captures the cognitive and moral dimension of altruism. At the same time, *hnatlang* reflects structural and relational capital through collective labour. Scholarship also warns of the "darker side" of social capital, where dense bonding ties may entrench exclusion or clientelism (Das, 2005; Saito-Jensen et al., 2010; Carcary, 2024).

Community development literature underscores participation, empowerment, and collective action. Globally, it has been advanced as a process of enabling ownership and sustainability (Chambers, 1997; Ledwith, 2011). However, critiques caution that participatory rhetoric can mask tokenism and symbolic inclusion (Cornwall, 2008). In India, scholarship highlights decentralisation and grassroots planning, with Panchayati Raj institutions positioned as instruments of empowerment (Mathew, 1994; Prasad & Modi, 2020). In Northeast India, studies emphasise the resilience of customary institutions, ethnic diversity, and hybrid governance (Baruah, 2004; Haokip, 2021, 2022; Wouters, 2022).

Within Mizoram, Village Councils, churches, and voluntary associations, such as the YMA, MHIP, and MUP, embody a moral-institutional ecology where communitarian norms are translated into governance. Scholars note that *tlawmngaihna* and *hnatlang* function as ethical infrastructures that underpin welfare schemes, disaster relief, and development (Shyamkishor,

2016; Chakraborty, 2012; Mitra & Das, 2023; Gupta et al., 2000). However, despite rich descriptions, there remains little empirical work on how these institutions and values concretely mediate leadership perceptions and development outcomes. Recent debates have highlighted whether these cultural norms persist or erode under modern pressures, such as urbanisation and denominational diversification (Head, 2007; Mansuri & Rao, 2012; Cardozo, 2023).

Thus, the literature reveals both insights and gaps. Leadership, social capital, and community development are often studied in isolation rather than in an integrated framework (Bonjean & Olson, 1964; Xin, 2018). Northeast India, and Mizoram in particular, remain underrepresented in comparative studies (Olanipekun et al., 2025; Mubangizi, 2024). Moreover, context-specific practices such as clan

solidarity, church-led initiatives, and voluntary organisations are often overlooked (Shyamkishor, 2016; Chakraborty, 2012). Few studies systematically map leadership networks (bonding, bridging, linking), and even fewer capture leaders' own perceptions of their roles (Park et al., 2005; Prasad & Modi, 2020). These gaps justify the present study's empirical focus on Lunglei District, Mizoram, and its integration of leadership, social capital, and development into a single relational framework.

Statement of the Problem

Although Mizo villages are widely recognised for their strong traditions of solidarity and cooperation, developmental outcomes across them remain uneven. This unevenness becomes clearer when we observe that while solidarity is present across all villages, some communities translate collective energy into visible improvements in infrastructure, livelihoods, and well-being. In contrast, others falter despite comparable cultural resources. This raises a central research doubt: why do some villages with strong solidarity succeed in achieving development outcomes, while others fail? The present study aims to address this divergence in village outcomes by examining the interplay between

leadership and social capital. It examines the specific configurations of leadership and community networks that account for these differences. The purpose is not only to address an empirical gap but also to generate insights that can inform interventions at the micro, meso, and macro levels in Mizoram and similar regions. Clarifying the dynamics of leadership and social capital in this context requires framing precise research questions that are tailored to the specific context.

Methodology

The study is cross-sectional in nature and follows a descriptive design. Such designs are widely used in leadership and community research to provide a snapshot of social dynamics and relational patterns (Cameron, 2024). It relies primarily on primary data collected through a sequential combination of participatory, qualitative, and quantitative methods. This design mirrors mixed-methods approaches adopted in community-based participatory research (CBPR), which emphasise community voice and trust-building (DeJonckheere et al., 2019; Lucero et al., 2018). Participatory exercises were conducted first to contextualise village life, followed by surveys of community leaders and households.

The sequential mixed-methods approaches have been successfully applied in global community research (Maleku et al., 2021). They are chosen here to ensure contextual grounding (participatory), leadership focus (qualitative–quantitative), and empirical rigour (statistical–network). With this rationale in place, the study proceeded with a carefully structured sampling strategy.

Research Objectives

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To understand village communities from both emic and etic perspectives in terms of time and space.
2. To examine the demographic, social, and economic composition of

village communities.

3. To investigate the social, economic, and organisational bases of rural community leadership.
4. To explore leaders' perceptions of their role in community welfare and development.
5. To assess social capital in terms of people's interactions and leaders' internal and external networks.
6. To evaluate the community development of villages in terms of household living conditions and satisfaction with community services.
7. To examine the relationship between leaders' role perception, social capital and community development in Lunglei District.

Sampling

The unit of analysis is the village community, while the study population includes all villages in Lunglei District. A multi-stage sampling strategy was adopted to select villages, community leaders, and households, consistent with global practices in community research (Gan, 2022).

Selection of Villages:

Villages were classified into high- and low-development categories using a Socioeconomic Development (SED) Index. This composite index was based on household access to amenities such as mobile phones, LPG, TV, computers, internet, two-wheelers, four-wheelers, and septic tanks, similar to indices used in global community classification (Gan, 2022). Three villages close to the average in each category were selected, along with one village closest to the overall average, making a total of seven villages.

Table 1.1 Profile of Sample Villages

Sl. No .	Level of Development	Mean Index of Development		Sample Villages	Development Rank
		All Villages	Sample Villages		
I	Most Developed (Lunglei)				
1	Low	-0.98	-0.76	S.Mualcheng	7
2	High	0.76	0.77	S.Tawipui	1
3	Total	-0.14	-0.15	Zotuitlang	5
II	Least Developed (Hnahthial)				
4	Low	-0.31	-0.22	Tuipui (Darzokai)	6
5	High	0.60	.78	Rawpui	2
6	Total	0.25	.16	Leite	3
7	Total	0.00	.05	S.Vanlaiphai	4

Source: Computed

Selection of Community Leaders

Within these selected villages, leaders were identified using a combination of positional and reputational approaches (Shalowitz et al., 2009). Leaders of Village Councils, YMA, MHIP, MUP, and major churches were listed through the positional approach. Additional leaders were nominated using snowball sampling, a technique proven to be effective in capturing informal leadership (Álvarez, 2024). This ensured comprehensive coverage of leadership in the selected villages.

Selection of Households

Alongside leadership, household representation was ensured through a systematic selection process. Household lists were compiled with the assistance of Village Council presidents. Households were classified into poor and non-poor categories, consistent with global community development research (Gan, 2022). They were then selected systematically. At least 30 households were selected, proportionally distributed across categories.

Tools of Data Collection

Social mapping, timelines, and services-and-opportunities mapping were used to capture spatial, temporal, and socioeconomic contexts of village life (Banyard et al., 2022). Complementing these participatory tools, structured interview schedules were designed for both leaders and households, a practice commonly used in leadership research (Shalowitz et al., 2009). Social network data were collected through name generators and name interpreters embedded in the leader schedule, consistent with global network studies (Lin, 2001). A separate village schedule documented community infrastructure and development indicators. Data were collected digitally using *KoBo Toolbox* and the KoBo Collect mobile application.

Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data were processed in MS Excel and analysed with SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as averages, percentages, and cross-tabulations were used for preliminary analysis, in line with community leadership research (John & Gunter, 2016). Karl Pearson's product-moment correlation was employed to test the hypothesis concerning the relationship between social capital and community development.

To further examine structural dimensions, Factor Analysis using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was applied. This approach is a robust method for exploring multidimensionality across domains (Burroughs & Miller, 1961; Filzmoser, 2000). Before extraction, the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were employed to verify suitability. A high KMO value indicates that the data are factorable, while Bartlett's test confirms that the correlations are sufficient for structure detection; both are widely used in validation studies (Martín-Vázquez et al., 2024).

Factor scores were computed using the Bartlett method, providing more precise estimates of latent constructs (Schneeweiss, 1997). These scores were further analysed through one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to assess group differences. For multiple comparisons, the Least Significant Difference (LSD) post hoc test was applied, a standard technique for refining group comparisons (Dillon et al., 1989). A combined application of PCA, Bartlett scores, and ANOVA has been employed in psychosocial and quality-of-life studies to capture the multidimensionality of complex constructs (Bucci et al., 2018; Martín-Vázquez et al., 2024).

Finally, Social Network Analysis (SNA) was conducted using UCINET (Borgatti, Everett, & Freeman, 2002), consistent with global precedents in leadership research (Álvarez, 2024; Banyard et al., 2022). SNA provided insights into leaders' internal and external networks. The integration of descriptive statistics, factor analysis with Varimax rotation, Bartlett factor scores, ANOVA with LSD, and SNA ensured a comprehensive and multidimensional analytical framework (Riccia & Shapiro, 1983; Manzar et al., 2018). This analytical framework, together with the research design, constitutes the methodological foundations summarised below.

In this section, the methodological foundations of the study are presented, beginning with a description of the research setting and followed by an explanation of the design, sampling procedures, data collection tools, and analysis techniques. Building on the multidimensional methodological framework outlined above, this concluding section highlights the study's integrated approach. The combination of participatory approaches, structured surveys, advanced statistical analyses, and social network methods provides a comprehensive framework for examining the interaction among the rural leadership, social capital, and community development in Lunglei District. Taken together, the analyses, methodological synthesis, and concluding summary establish the rigour of the study and prepare the ground for situating the findings within the historical and infrastructural realities of Lunglei District.

Conclusion

The study found that rural leadership in Mizoram is hybrid, drawing legitimacy from both formal institutional authority and cultural values rooted in *tlawmngaihna*. Leaders are perceived not only as decision-makers but also as moral custodians of community well-being. Social capital was found to be both abundant and complex, structured in bonding ties within families and communities, bridging ties across groups, and linking ties to external agencies.

Villages with strong bonding, bridging, and linking capital, coupled with leaders who could effectively mobilise these resources, demonstrated better developmental outcomes. Conversely, where trust was fragmented and external linkages were weak, development lagged despite the presence of solidarity values.

Implications

Theoretical Implications: The study contributes a triadic framework of relational governance that integrates leadership, social capital, and development.

Policy Implications: The findings provide evidence for designing practical leadership training, strengthening participatory planning, and enhancing external linkages in rural Mizoram.

Practical Implications: For social work practice, the study offers culturally grounded insights into community mobilisation, highlighting the importance of leveraging values such as *tlawmngaihna* and practices like *hnatlang*.

Comparative Relevance: Lessons from Mizoram can be extended to other communitarian and hilly contexts where solidarity exists but development outcomes remain uneven.

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